

# COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for cleaning and disinfecting in schools and child care programs. This guidance is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for schools, workplaces, and community locations.

## Resources

- [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)
- [CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting: Plan, Prepare, and Respond \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html)

---

## How COVID-19 spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets. When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although the virus cannot enter the body through the skin, the respiratory droplets carrying the virus can get into your airways or mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth to infect you. The virus can also be spread if you touch a surface contaminated with virus and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth, although this is not the primary way the virus spreads.

---

## Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff.

- Cleaning removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.

## COVID-19 CLEANING AND DISINFECTING GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

- Disinfecting kills most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

### **Routine cleaning and disinfecting**

Clean and disinfect at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched surfaces and objects such as:

- Face shield
- Door knobs and handles
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Handles on equipment (e.g., athletic equipment)
- Push-buttons on vending machines and elevators
- Shared toys
- Shared remote controls
- Shared telephones
- Shared desktops
- Shared computer keyboards and mice
- Bus seats and handrails

Note: Computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect the keys but enable use of the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.

## Cleaning cloth face coverings and face shields

- Cloth face coverings should be laundered as needed and changed if visibly soiled.
- The CDC provides guidance for the use and care of cloth face covering and face shields. Review the [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>).
- Face shields should be cleaned following manufacturer's instructions.
  - While wearing gloves, carefully wipe the *inside*, followed by the *outside* of the face shield or goggles using a clean cloth saturated with neutral detergent solution or cleaner wipe.
  - Carefully wipe the *outside* of the face shield or goggles using a wipe or clean cloth saturated with EPA-registered hospital disinfectant solution.
  - Wipe the outside of face shield or goggles with clean water or alcohol to remove residue.
  - Fully dry (air dry or use clean absorbent towels).
  - Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.

---

## When a student or staff member becomes ill

When a student or staff member develops any symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19 in a school or child care setting:

- Isolate the person in a separate room while they wait to be picked up or until they are able to leave the facility on their own. Ensure that they have hygiene supplies available, including a cloth face covering / face shield, facial tissues, and alcohol-based hand rub.
  - Remind staff who are monitoring the student or staff member with symptoms to wear a cloth face mask and practice social distancing. Close off the space used for isolation after the ill person leaves. **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area.
- Open the space for use after proper cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as high-touch surfaces, and items they have touched (e.g., individual desk, cot, recently used toys, shared equipment).
- Wear gloves when cleaning, and wash hands after removing gloves.

## General precautions for the cleaning staff after an ill student has been in your facility

The risk of getting COVID-19 from cleaning is low. The following are general precautions for cleaning staff, given that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring:

- Staff should not touch their face while cleaning and only after they can wash hands after cleaning.
- Cleaning staff should wear uniforms (or designated work clothes) and disposable gloves when cleaning and handling trash. Cleaning staff should change clothes at the end of a shift. It may be helpful for them to keep a change of clothes at work.
- Clothing worn while cleaning should be placed in a plastic bag until it can be laundered. Laundering should be done as soon as possible and done safely at home.
- Cleaning staff should thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after gloves are removed.
- Staff who are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting should be trained to use disinfectants safely and effectively and to safely clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluids – blood, vomit, feces, and urine.
- All cleaning staff should be trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with [OSHA’s Hazard Communication Standard 29 CFR 1910.1200 \(www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200\)](https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.1200).

### Resource

- [Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 for Facilities Service and Cleaning Staff \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/cleanfaq.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/cleanfaq.html).

---

## Cleaning and disinfecting products

- Use soap and water or another detergent to clean dirty items. Then, use a disinfectant.
- Use an EPA-registered household disinfectant and follow the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure safe and effective use of the product.
- [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\) \(https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19\)](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19)

## COVID-19 CLEANING AND DISINFECTING GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

- Many products recommend:
  - Keeping the surface wet for a period of time (see the product label).
  - Wearing gloves and ensuring good ventilation during use of the product.
- Use diluted household bleach solutions, if appropriate for the surface. However:
  - Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
  - Use eye protection or have immediate access to an eyewash station.
  - Leave solution on a surface for at least 1 minute.

To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of water OR
- 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water

Make only enough diluted bleach solution that can be used in 24 hours. After that, the solution may not be effective.

Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol can also be used for cleaning.



Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](http://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
625 Robert Street North PO Box 64975, St. Paul, MN 55164-0975  
Contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us) to request an alternate format.

06/18/2020