



CENTRAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
4605 North Polk Avenue · Fresno, CA 93722
Phone: (559) 274-4700 · Fax: (559) 271-8200

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Richard Atkins
Yesenia Z. Carrillo
Phillip Cervantes
Naindeep Singh Chann
Terry Cox
Jason R. Paul
Richard A. Solis

SUPERINTENDENT

Andrew G. Alvarado

March 9, 2020

Dear Central Unified Families,

On Saturday, Fresno County Department of Public Health announced Fresno County's first confirmed case of COVID-19. While the overwhelming majority of individuals who contract COVID-19 experience symptoms similar to the flu, it has caused some deaths in at-risk populations (the elderly and those with otherwise compromised health). As of today, public health officials' best practice guidance to schools is to **avoid** school closures or cancellations of classes or events as those are not effective measures to stop the virus at this time.

We will continue to follow the recommendations of the California Department of Public Health, Fresno County Department of Public Health, and the Centers for Disease Control. This plan is consistent with our past practice in similar situations in our history (such as the disinfecting of schools during a norovirus outbreak as well as the recommendation for students and staff to stay home if they are ill). Fresno County's Department of Public Health is communicating with us daily, and we are collaborating with their team to ensure our actions reflect current best practices in this evolving situation. We recognize that it is not a question of if, but of when, we will have students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 (just as we had occur during the outbreak of the flu or norovirus in the past). We also want to continue to communicate important information to our Central Unified community as soon as we receive updates from our county and state health agencies.

As information about COVID-19 changes rapidly and almost daily, we've included some frequently asked questions and answers below to help provide clarity. We will update you with any new information as we receive it.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is being done at Central Unified sites to prevent the spread of illnesses like the flu and COVID19?

It's important to follow common-sense health practices. This remains the most effective method to avoid the spread of COVID-19. In addition, our teaching staff encourages our students to wash their hands frequently with soap and water. We're posting information on proper hand-washing techniques on all campuses and in restrooms and arranging time before and after lunches and recess for additional handwashing by students.

Our classrooms, common spaces, common touchpoints, and restrooms are cleaned daily. Our custodial staff continues to disinfect classrooms with an EPA-approved disinfectant (products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses.) We are keeping soap dispensers and towels stocked in restrooms throughout the district. District administration reevaluates and adjusts the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting based on recommendations from our local and state health agencies.

District Administration

*Ketti Davis, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services · Jack Kelejian, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Steve McClain, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business Officer*

Additionally, students and staff are asked and recommended to stay home if they are sick, cover their mouths if coughing, and avoid sharing drinks or food.

What is the most important thing to do?

Always follow the steps to stopping germs:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and can stay home, we recommend that you do. It is still cold and flu season and COVID-19 is not the only reason for us all to stay vigilant about being healthy!

Visiting other places

If you visit a country or place (keep in mind, the CDC could declare warning areas within America) that is at Warning Level 3 or Alert Level 2 according to the CDC, you must report this to the school nurse and your Principal. Your child will be required to stay home and away from fellow students for 14 days **after your return** to Fresno and before coming back to school. This is the standard self-quarantine period recommended by the CDC. At the moment these countries include China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan. Any absence due to quarantine or illness will be excused.

Please check here for up to date travel warning information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Should we stay home if we have a fever?

We recommend that all children and staff members with a fever of (>100.0 F) or higher should remain home from school and other activities until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the assistance of medication.

Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe (high fever, difficulty breathing).

Hand Sanitizer vs. Hand Washing?

We will not be placing hand sanitizer in each classroom at this time. It simply does not compare to hand washing. The most effective way to combat germs is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap. We are staying vigilant about keeping our soap dispensers and towels stocked for all students to access.

Do we need masks?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend routine use of a face mask or respirator.

What if someone in Central Unified is exposed to the risk of COVID-19?

This may be inevitable. However, it is important to note that we unknowingly are exposed to threats to our health every day. We will remain vigilant about investigating all reported cases. Should a confirmed case of COVID-19

exist in our district, we will work in consultation with the expert government agencies listed above to take the necessary next steps. This situation will be handled on a case by case basis.

If I decide not to send my student to school or come to Central Unified, will absences be excused?

We understand community concern about student health and safety. Some families have asked about keeping their own child home based on the fear of contracting COVID-19 at school. This is certainly an option any family may consider. However, per Education Code at this time, we are unable to mark an absence excused for this reason. Our normal protocol remains in place. If a student is out for an extended period of time, a doctor's note may be required. We have asked principals to work with teachers to provide makeup work for students. Any absence due to quarantine or illness will be excused.

Will you cancel school activities and events?

No. Until there is guidance from the expert government agencies listed above or we have an outbreak that warrants this decision, we will continue all school activities as scheduled.

Will you cancel school trips?

No. Until a travel advisory is issued for the specific location or advice given by the government agencies listed above or we have an outbreak that warrants this decision, we will not cancel any trips.

Will you close schools?

This is an extreme measure that would be disruptive to our students, staff and families. This decision would be made in consultation with the expert government agencies listed above.

How should I talk to children about Coronavirus?

For now, keeping calm and reducing fear is essential. Stay open to their questions and explain that COVID-19 is similar to a flu virus. Reinforce to them the CDC recommended steps to stop the spread of germs:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Here is a Brainpop video on COVID-19 for students: <https://youtu.be/ywU2rK2sdyg>

Where should I check for information?

Please use only official government agency outlets to obtain information:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

<https://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health/covid-19>

Who can I call if I have questions?

Your school nurse has updated information or call 559-313-4403.