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Riverside County
NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

Jose Arballo Jr.
Senior Public Information Specialist
(951) 712-3705
jarballojr@ruhealth.org

Brooke Federico
Riverside County Public Information Officer
(951) 743-0075
bcfederico@rivco.org

Riverside County Public Health officer orders schools closed to avoid potential COVID-19 exposure

Current case count is 12, additional four cases announced

Riverside County Public Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser today ordered the closure of the county's schools as officials continue to step up the fight against the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

"To further prevent the spread throughout the county, effective Monday, March 16, I am ordering a school closure, not a dismissal, of all Riverside County public schools. This order also applies to preschools, charter schools, private schools and all colleges and universities in Riverside County," Kaiser said.

"We applaud those school districts that have taken proactive choices to close their schools starting Monday, March 16, 2020, in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus in Riverside County," Kaiser added.

Individual school districts will have the discretion to determine essential personnel to support critical functions within their districts.

Today's order will be lifted on April 3 and classes will resume on April 6, unless another update is warranted before that time, Kaiser said.

"This is a difficult but necessary decision as we try to slow the spread of the virus. And I fully support it," said Riverside County District 4 Supervisor V. Manuel Perez.

There has been considerable consultation with our superintendents to determine the correct course of action, Perez added.

Riverside County has 12 confirmed cases – 10 in Coachella Valley and two cruise ship passengers who have not returned to the region since being diagnosed – and Kaiser has recommended seniors and those with underlying health issues in Coachella Valley limit non-essential travel. One of the Coachella Valley cases is considered "community spread," meaning health investigators have not determined the source of the infection.

Kaiser on Thursday ordered the cancellation of public gathering of 250 people or more in Riverside County as a means of slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). The order mirrors recommendations issued Wednesday evening by the California Department of Public Health.

Residents are urged to visit www.rivcoph.org/coronavirus for updated information. They can also find information on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/countyriver-sidedepartmentofpublichealth>) and on Twitter @rivcodoc.

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