Baltimore County Public Schools

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between coronavirus and COVID-19?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified on/about December 31, 2019, in Wuhan, China. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have a fact sheet about coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) available.

Where can I get the latest information on places that have been affected by COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintains a webpage with up-to-date information about the number of cases and latest science.

What is Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) doing to protect students and staff?

- Maintaining ongoing communication with staff from the Baltimore County Department of Health: Staff from the Office of Health Services receive daily updates (in addition to as needed information) on guidance from the CDC and the Maryland Department of Health about our COVID-19 response and plan. As guidance changes, BCPS procedures and protocols are reviewed and updated to ensure that they are consistent with the latest guidance.

- Providing regular updates to school nurses: Staff from the Office of Health Services e-mail school nurses about recommended practices (such as reinforcing handwashing) as well as any changes in protocols and procedures.

- Reviewing and reinforcing school cleaning: Operations staff have been reminded of the importance of adherence to cleaning and disinfection protocols and the need for frequent checks and restocking of handwashing supplies, e.g., soap and paper towels. In addition, staff have verified that BCPS is using recommended products and has a sufficient supply on hand.

- Establishing a COVID-19 Task Force: A task force, including representation from across the organization, has been convened and will meet regularly to coordinate a timely and thorough response.

- Educating and reminding students and staff to regularly and frequently wash their hands: Posters with handwashing techniques are being posted in schools and offices around the county. Students and staff are being reminded to wash their hands regularly. Hands should be washed before all meals, after coughing or sneezing, after using the
Restroom, and before and after using shared items such as math manipulatives, computers, and other shared educational materials.

What can parents do to protect their children?

- **Reinforce handwashing and be a good handwashing role model:** Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to partner with their child’s school staff to model, educate, and remind students about handwashing and respiratory etiquette. Details on **When and How to Wash Your Hands** are available for your perusal, as well as **Handwashing Tips for Families**.

- **Practice good hygiene:** Model best practices for coughing or sneezing. To help stop the spread of germs, the CDC recommends covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands. Wash your hands with soap and water after each cough or sneeze. A video on proper **Cough and Sneeze Hygiene**, is available that demonstrates best practices for coughing and sneezing hygiene.

- **Keep sick children home from school:** Be sure you have a thermometer in your house. If your child has symptoms of illness, check his/her temperature. If it is 100˚F or higher, your child should stay home until the fever is gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine like Tylenol. If you haven’t already done so, work with your friends and family to come up with a plan for someone to be with your child when he/she is sick and unable to attend school.

Should field trips be cancelled?

We are coordinating with the Baltimore County Department of Health to take public health actions, as necessary, to keep the community safe. We have been advised that at this time, there is no need to cancel field trips. Should a field trip be planned to an area with a community spread of COVID-19, BCPS will review the proposed trip with the Baltimore County Department of Health to determine if the trip should be cancelled.

Should I wear a mask or have my child wear a mask?

Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask:

- CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
- Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
- The use of facemasks is crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).