

This guide offers Vermont's school administrators and school nurses a list of suggested activities related to COVID-19 to support student health and learning while schools are closed during the pandemic.

Stay up to date on COVID-19 information

As the situation continues to evolve with COVID-19, important and accurate information is regularly updated on the [Health Department](#) and [CDC](#) websites. The Health Department's COVID-19 webpage hosts current Vermont data, news releases, frequently asked questions, as well as guidance for specific groups such as schools and childcare.

- Visit regularly and become familiar with the Health Department and CDC's current guidance and recommendations related to schools and childcare.
- Ensure that accurate health and wellness information is shared with the school community.
- Work with administrators, school personnel, and other school nurses to align public health messaging sent to families electronically, by phone and shared on school and school district or supervisory union websites.
- Share translated COVID-19 information (13 languages) found on the Health Department website with families, as appropriate.

Public health safety strategies

A school nurse's healthcare, public health knowledge, and skills can help support and implement COVID-19 mitigation strategies. School nurses can support the school community as a local resource for questions, training, and problem solving while operationalizing recommended strategies.

- Support training and education for students, staff, and families on:
 - Following the governor's Stay Home, Stay Safe Order, and social distancing, as well as regularly washing hands and not touching your face.
 - When to go to the doctor's office or hospital.
 - Defining terms, e.g. close contact, contact tracing, isolation
- Follow school communication policies, e.g. media, social media, when COVID-19 contact information is discussed, HIPAA (personnel), FERPA (student).
- Act as a liaison to the Health Department when COVID-19 close contact situations arise (in coordination with, and as directed by, school and administrative leaders).
- Offer to provide distance learning to students about COVID-19 or other health related topics.

Schools supporting childcare for essential workers

School nurses can be a resource by training and providing consultation on recommended [Health Guidance for Childcare and Schools Providing Childcare for Essential Persons](#).

- Train childcare personnel how to perform daily health check-ins and implement prevention strategies outlined in the guidance document (linked above).
- Support problem solving and decision making related to staff and child exclusion.
- Act as a liaison to the Health Department for the childcare setting when dealing with COVID-19 close contact situations.

Care and service coordination for children and families

School nurses are important partners for identifying students or groups within the school community who may be disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. School Nurses have a crucial role in coordinating health-related services during the pandemic by reaching out to families, school personnel and other providers who are integral to students and their underlying health care needs.

- Ensure that student medications and health supplies stored in the school setting are returned safely home.
- For students with special health needs:
 - Update Individual Healthcare Plans, Emergency Action Plans, 504s, or IEP health goals to account for changes related to COVID-19 and school closure.
 - Collaborate with special educators, physical therapists, and occupational therapists to coordinate services and health messaging.
 - Help students to identify personal goals for health, manage their chronic health conditions, and connect online for activities with peers.
- Host virtual office hours regularly for consultation with students, families, and staff:
 - Contact parents for permission to meet with students
 - Offer accurate COVID-19 information social and emotional support
 - Facilitate access to health care and the medical home, mental health services.
- Provide information about how COVID-19 impacts individuals with underlying chronic health conditions.

Collaborate within the school and community

School nurses and other specialized instructional support professionals (like school counselors or social workers) can collaborate to address education, social and emotional, resource, and community needs during the pandemic.

- Collaborate with your Office of Local Health.
- Establish a relationship or continue to collaborate with your school's medical consultant in the community to address health issues.
- Virtually meet with building or LEA administrator to discuss solutions to COVID-19 challenges. e.g., staff illness and notification protocols, implementation of every day prevention measures, handling and distribution of learning materials and nutrition programs.
- Promote the use of Help Me Grow and 211 (linked below) to connect families with needed services and resources (e.g. food and diaper banks, housing, basic needs)
- Collaborate with community partners (e.g. food shelf, temporary housing)
- Participate in planning for schools reopening.

Professional Collaboration and Learning for School Nurses

- Stay in contact with or join your peers and professional networks
- Search state and national organization websites for discussion groups and topics
- Improve your professional, school health and safety knowledge, e.g. continuing education, Agency of Education licensing competencies.

COVID-19 Resources

- [Vermont Department Health COVID-19 -](#)
 - [Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
 - [Translated information for New Americans](#)
- [Agency of Education COVID-19 - VT](#)
- [Building Bright Futures, VT](#)
- [Child Development Division COVID-19](#)
- [Children and disasters: -- FEMA](#)
- [Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication \(CERC\) Online Training -- CDC](#)
- [Department of Mental Health COVID-19 - VT's \[local mental health crisis line\]\(#\)](#)
- [Help Me Grow Vermont, 211 x 6](#)
- [Let's Grow Kids](#)
- [National Association of School Nurses](#)
- [National Association of State School Nurse Consultants](#)
- [School EOPs In-Depth: Planning for Infectious Diseases - REMS](#)
- [Vermont State School Nurses' Association](#)

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