



DCSS Facilities Dept. Response to COVID-19: CDC Guidance & Frequent Questions with Answers

Updated and edited as our awareness grows...

CDC General Protocols to Maintain Clean and Disinfected Facilities and Buses

We must all teach and reinforce good hygiene measures, such as handwashing, covering coughs, and wearing face coverings, to all stakeholders, including all school system personnel and all students. We seek to combat COVID-19 with our combined 30,000 active employees and students by being mindful of our individual actions and by doing our best to assist the district's custodial efforts to clean and disinfect our buildings daily. **The Douglas County School District has and will continue to:**

- Provide hand soap (and hand sanitizer), paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in bathrooms, classrooms, and frequently trafficked areas
- Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and (bus) entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols will be communicated frequently
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use. Outdoor high-touch surfaces, such as playgrounds, will be cleaned and disinfected each day. The CDC guidelines recommend cleaning and disinfecting high-touch areas such as handlebars, slides, swings, etc. in playground areas
- Allow students and staff to bring hand sanitizer and face masks/coverings to use from home. The more proactive all stakeholders are concerning their own facility and bus usage, the less likely the virus can spread
- Disable and provide covers for all water fountains and features to ensure safety. Flush all main waterlines internally and externally to eliminate the possibility Legionnaire's disease.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly with increased circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, as long as this does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff
- Conduct deep cleaning of schools and buses prior to students/staff returning and frequently thereafter; schedule additional cleanings during weekends and during school holidays/breaks

CDC Guiding Principles for COVID-19: Actions taken by the District

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Our schools are implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

- **DCSS is Cleaning and Disinfecting Buildings and Buses**
 - We [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) are limited when possible, or cleaned between uses.
 - When transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used by schools, drivers practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings). The guidance for cleaning and disinfecting school buses and other transport vehicles follows. [bus transit operators](#).
 - We have developed a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
 - We are ensuring [safe and correct use](#) and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children. Using products that meet EPA disinfection criteria.
 - Cleaning products are not used near children, and staff ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

- **DCSS is Monitoring Use of Shared Objects**
 - We discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
 - We keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually located areas, labeled containers, and or cubbies.
 - We ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
 - We avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

- **DCSS Meets Ventilation Recommendations**
 - We ensure ventilation systems are operating properly, and we increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. We do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.

- **DCSS Meets Recommendations for Water Systems**
 - To minimize the risk of [Legionnaire's disease](#) and other diseases associated with stagnant water, the waterlines for sinks, faucets, drinking fountains, and decorative fountains have been flushed. The drinking fountains within schools are being disabled and covered to prevent illness and unauthorized use.

- **DCSS has Modified Layouts**
 - We space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
 - We turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
 - We create distance between children on school buses when possible (e.g. seat children one child per row).

- **DCSS Uses Physical Barriers and Guides**
 - We provide a physical barrier, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g. reception desk in school main offices).
 - We provide physical guides, such as signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one way routes” in hallways).

- **DCSS Schools Devise Plans for their Communal Spaces**
 - Schools will close communal use shared spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds with shared playground equipment if possible; otherwise, they will stagger use and [clean and disinfect](#) daily.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Our school district will implement additional strategies to maintain healthy operations.

- **Gatherings, Visitors, and Field Trips**
 - We’re pursuing options to convene sporting events and participation in sports activities in ways that minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to players, families, coaches, and communities.

- **Sharing Facilities**
 - We are limiting overall use of facilities by non-DCSS entities at this time and requiring any organizations that share or use the school facilities to also follow our guidelines and protocols as outlined.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick.

- **Clean and Disinfect**
 - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after [cleaning and disinfecting](#)
 - Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.

- **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**

- In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators will notify [local health officials](#), staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- We will inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.

DCSS Operational Response to COVID-19: Frequent Questions with Answers

What happens when an employee, student or visitor is suspected of having coronavirus?

- The lead nurse and assistant superintendent of student services are informed, along with the superintendent. A tracer investigation is undertaken to identify potential people and areas of infection. The assistant superintendent of operations is made aware and a bioremediation company is contracted immediately to eradicate the virus in the areas identified along with any additional potential areas of contamination.

Is a bioremediation company called every time a request is made?

- No. Our bioremediation protocols are implemented with the positive identification of coronavirus or by direction of the superintendent or lead nurse. Suspicions and rumors are addressed and investigated by the lead nurse and the county Health Department; however, general fear cannot drive the need to remediate every time a suspicion arises. Reports are welcomed, some have validity and others don't. The lead nurse and the DC Health Department determine the risk level. The cost of each remediation costs thousands of dollars, and remediation is only effective as long as the next contaminant stays at bay. A remediated surface today can become contaminated the next day.

Is the school system sanitizing buildings throughout the current pandemic?

- The school system contracts with American Facility Services to clean schools. These professionals remained on the job throughout the quarantine and have worked diligently to continually disinfect and clean all district facilities. All facilities have been wiped down each week since schools closed, with attention given to minute details. Since that time we have contracted with bioremediation companies, have constructed and installed front office desk shields, and have secured a contract to purchase electrostatic sprayers.

How are Douglas County schools, facilities and buses being cleaned?

- Buildings and buses are being thoroughly cleaned by hand-wiping and fogging equipment using high grade cleaners and disinfectants. Cleaning and disinfecting starts from the ceiling, working down to surfaces and all fixtures, and then floors.

What specific products are being used to disinfect buildings and buses?

- Transportation uses a product called Halt, which is a disinfectant and is widely used on a national level to clean and sanitize buses. Buses are also being fogged using the same chemical. School facilities are cleaned using Halt as well. This is a hospital grade cleaner and disinfectant and can be used to clean multiple spaces.

How will restrooms be made safer?

- If logistically practical, we are recommending that every other restroom stall is used inside of restrooms, thereby leaving an unused stall between each student. Unused stalls will be blocked off. Most schools already have sensors for water flow in sinks and for toilet flushes. We will be diligent to make sure to remind students of the necessity of handwashing and the importance of properly discarding their own trash and wastes

When did the Douglas County district begin disinfecting its facilities and buses?

- The school system has always practiced regular cleaning and disinfecting of facilities and buses. Concerning CV-19, the school system began intensive cleaning the day the coronavirus became an official pandemic. March 13th marks the day schools were closed and subsequently cleaned and disinfected with mitigation of CV-19 as the focus.

Are there other agencies using similar products to combat the spread of CV-19?

- The Douglas County Fire Department and the Douglas County Health Department use Halt to clean their facilities and apparatuses. These agencies are in partnership with the school system.

What protocols, procedures and measures are taking place daily to ensure environments remain sanitized?

- During the closing of the 2019-2020 school year, all visitors to our school facilities and to our offices were announced, giving our custodial team advance notice to substantially clean areas that were exposed to potential viral contaminants. This continues to be an ongoing process in communication. We've continued this practice throughout the summer months and are taking precautions using social distancing and regular disinfecting as schools resume their required functions. We are wearing P.P.E. (personal protective equipment) as essential workers continue to work in our system facilities.

Were there any documented cases, prior to closing, stemming from the school district in the beginning of this pandemic?

- One documented case of CV-19 was affiliated with a school and was positively diagnosed and investigated on March 13th. All other potential cases initially received stemmed from travelers outside of our schools but residing in the community.

Will the school district provide PPE (personal protective equipment) for students, teachers, staff, bus drivers, school nutritionists and parents?

- We have actively secured PPE for all, including bus drivers and school nutritionists for the start of the school year. Providing PPE for all students, staff, visiting parents and teachers every day during the school year is our highest goal – there have been national shortages; however, PPE is available in several markets and can be constructed from materials at home. We are actively seeking ways to continue providing PPE for all. In the meantime, please be safe and seek PPE to assist in our efforts as well.

Will the school system provide hand sanitizer for students, teachers, bus drivers, school nutritionists and administrators?

- We are providing hand sanitizer to schools and in our offices. Hand sanitizer is not always readily available, however. There have been shortages and a lack of availability in the hand sanitizer market. We do supply hand soap without availability issues.

What measures will be in place for social distancing if it's required upon return to schools?

- Social distancing rules are recommended by the C.D.C. (Center for Disease Control) and by W.H.O. (World Health Organization). The district and the schools will provide guidance if social distancing is a requirement upon return to "normal" operations. District leaders and principals will devise plans based upon their building design, schedules and student populations. These strategies may vary depending on the school.

Has the number of custodians employed by the school system increased as a result of this pandemic?

- We have maintained our number of custodial staff by contract. The number of custodians allotted per facility depends on the square footage of the facility. With schools being relatively empty the past months due to the pandemic, custodial staff were able to liberally apply disinfectants while maintaining safety. When regular school operations resume, we will maintain our current custodial contract and employ other safety and distancing measures recommended by the C.D.C. and W.H.O. to combat the potential of viral contamination.

How will the district ensure that infected and or asymptomatic students and or personnel and or community members do not spread CV-19?

- Being that CV-19 is coined the "invisible enemy," it is very difficult to detect who is asymptomatic or who is a new carrier. We ask that our community continually monitors its behavior outside of school to reduce the chances of bringing the virus to our campuses. We ask that anyone feeling ill, has a fever or exhibits symptoms to remain off campus and to check in with a medical expert before returning. The school system does not have the medical means to test all personnel, all visitors and all students every day.

Does the school system have any measures in place to identify potentially infectious candidates?

- The school district follows protocols established by the C.D.C. and W.H.O. When it's suspected that someone is a risk or has been exposed, then we follow the investigative protocols provided by these organizations. District personnel are aware of the signs of potential infection and ask that everyone remain diligent in their reporting and observations of each other while maintaining safe practices. Because we educate and employ in excess of 30,000 people, we implore our community to assist us through their own diligence, with a watchful eye for others and our surroundings concerning mitigation of this pandemic. The Health Department provides testing to positively identify CV-19.

Are there any other stock cleaning supplies the district or custodial contractor provides to schools due to CV-19?

- The school district has purchased extra sanitizing wipes, in bulk, for schools to utilize at their discretion. Nationally, sanitizing wipes are in high demand. The district has also purchased disinfectant spray and aerosol for each school's front office; these products are equivalent to Lysol and are also in high demand.

What are some specific recommendations by the Georgia Department of Education and the C.D.C. for children/students to combat contracting or spreading CV-19?

“While some children/infants have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. We can encourage students to help stop the spread of CV-19 by teaching them to:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and to wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty or have been potentially exposed.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects (e.g., tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles).
- Launder items, including washable plush toys, as appropriate and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely. [Please note that] dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.”

What are some strategies for monitoring Students and Staff?

- Students, teachers, staff and bus drivers are prescreened frequently
- Schools have developed a drop-off plan to monitor students each morning and will isolate any student displaying symptoms thought to be related to coronavirus
- All personnel will undergo similar protocols to ensure safety

What are some considerations for custodians reopening schools?

- Door handles and other high-touch school surfaces will be cleaned more frequently
- Custodial staff will deep clean regularly
- We have secured extra cleaning supplies and disinfectants
- We have secured extra toilet paper
- We have secured electrostatic sprayers

Will transportation be an issue?

- Yes, social distancing suggests approximately 15 - 20 kids per bus given CDC guidelines
- The time for pickup and departures could be impacted significantly given social distancing
- With the national bus driver shortage, there potentially are not enough drivers to social distance on buses and maintain standard pickup and delivery times
- Students are highly encouraged to wear face coverings if choosing to ride the school bus

Which soap products are the district using for cleaning hands, particularly in restrooms?

- Ecolab soap
- Disinfectant wipes, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant spray may be available
- Paper towels

Are you cleaning surfaces first and then applying disinfectants?

- We clean first while applying disinfectant as we clean
- We clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if the area is visibly dirty. Then, we use an EPA-approved disinfectant
- We strictly follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the products and keep surfaces wet for the period of time suggested
- Custodians make sure we have good ventilation during use of the products
- Disinfectants are frequently used on high touch surfaces during the day, however
- We use a process called electrostatic spraying as another disinfecting step when positive cases are identified or if large-scale cleaning is required
- Custodians and cleaning contractors are following OSHA protocols
- Schools consider countertops, rails, tables, backs of chairs, light switches, toilets, faucets, door knobs, computers/tablets, smart boards, and phones to be “high touch” surfaces

Are there items in the schools that need to be washed (like fabric) to clean and disinfect?

- All cleaning rags and all uniforms are laundered and disinfected. Equipment is also cleaned and disinfected
- Costumes, dress up materials and puppets, along with couch cushions in classrooms, are disinfected between uses
- Soft surfaces such as carpet, floor rugs, and drapes are shampooed and disinfected
- Bean bag chairs are disinfected
- Faculty and staff are using face covers and some wear gloves, some also use protective eyewear. Disposable items are properly discarded and reusable PPE are washed and disinfected. Any gowns worn are washed and disinfected

Are cleaning staff trained to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Yes, cleaning staff are frequently trained to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19, along with other potential contaminants

Are cleaning staff provided with specific instructions on what to do if they suspect they have COVID-19 symptoms or if they observe anyone else?

- Yes. They are required to immediately report to their immediate supervisor, and the lead nurse and assistant superintendent of student services are contacted so that standard protocols may be initiated

How does the cleaning staff dispose of personal protective equipment and used cleaning materials?

- Items are bagged and placed in the dumpster
- Biohazard bags may be provided by the Health Department in known cases
- Disposal of unknown potential contaminants is ongoing through trash disposal
- PPE goes in a trash bag, and the cleaning agents go down the slop sink
- If we must contract bioremediation services, they clean the buildings at night or whenever most feasible and dispose of their own materials

Is the district disinfecting trash cans?

- Schools disinfect classroom trash cans at least once per day

Is the district using any new technology systems to clean and disinfect the schools and buses?

- Yes, backpack units that spray disinfectant are utilized
- We're currently exploring sensors to take temperatures and to disinfect
- Electrostatic spraying is being utilized
- Foggers are currently being utilized

How are buses being cleaned and disinfected?

- Cleaning wipes with disinfectant are a norm for buses
- Commercial sprayers have been used in the summer but will be utilized more frequently
- We're following prescribed recommendations from the CDC
- We focus on the high touch areas on buses
- Buses are being wiped down with Halt
- We utilize foggers with a Halt solution

What are the "high touch" areas of a bus that need special attention?

- All surfaces, doors, railings, seat surfaces including backs of the seats, floor of the bus
- Top edge of seats
- Windows
- Support bars, steering wheels
- Walkways

Does the DCSS use (UV) Ultraviolet light to combat COVID-19 contamination?

- No. The use of UV light has not been approved and has not been recommended by the CDC. UV light has been used in hospitals and some transport systems to kill bacteria.
- UV light can be a skin irritant to some people during the day and cannot be monitored for safety during overnight use. We will investigate UV light if it's a CDC recommendation.

CrisisGo (www.crisisgo.com) facilitated the COVID-19 School Crowdsourcing Project, and 200 district representatives around the country provided the following commentary based upon 300 questions over six weeks of study. Here are some “operational” findings for cleaning:

“Over six weeks, this group has answered over 300 questions about challenges and opportunities presented by this pandemic. The crowdsource group was made up of over 200 districts representing mostly small-to-medium-sized school districts. Rural and suburban districts were mostly represented, but some urban district schools participated as well. There was a small amount of participation from private and charter schools. *SUMMARY: Custodians, food service staff, instructors, aides, office staff, and bus drivers will perform daily cleaning and disinfecting.*

One Real Question From the Survey with Real Participant Answers Across the Country:

How frequently would you recommend classrooms be cleaned & disinfected per day?

- 2-3 times, or based on state guidelines and those issued by Public Health
- After each period
- After every class.
- Each time there is a rotation of classes
- FULL clean and disinfection daily. Door knobs at minimum 2x daily, students can help with desktop disinfection 2-3x daily
- Haven't discussed yet but will take recommendation of CDC.
- Ideally after every class leaves. If the class is stationary, when they go to lunch or gym or encore class.
- Twice: before school starts and at the end of the day is the practical answer. What's needed is to clean in between each new set of students.
- We will clean major touch points multiple times during the day. The classroom materials will be sprayed with Lysol each evening. The cleaning crew will probably have to modify their cleaning plans as well. We may change to vacuuming every other day so the crew can focus on cleaning surfaces more thoroughly.
- With schools now closed for the year we will clean and disinfect once and then tag the room, so no one enters. Once school resumes, we will plan on disinfecting each night with custodial staff and have teachers disinfect high touch areas between classes”

Kwame A. Carr, DCSS Assistant Superintendent of District Operations