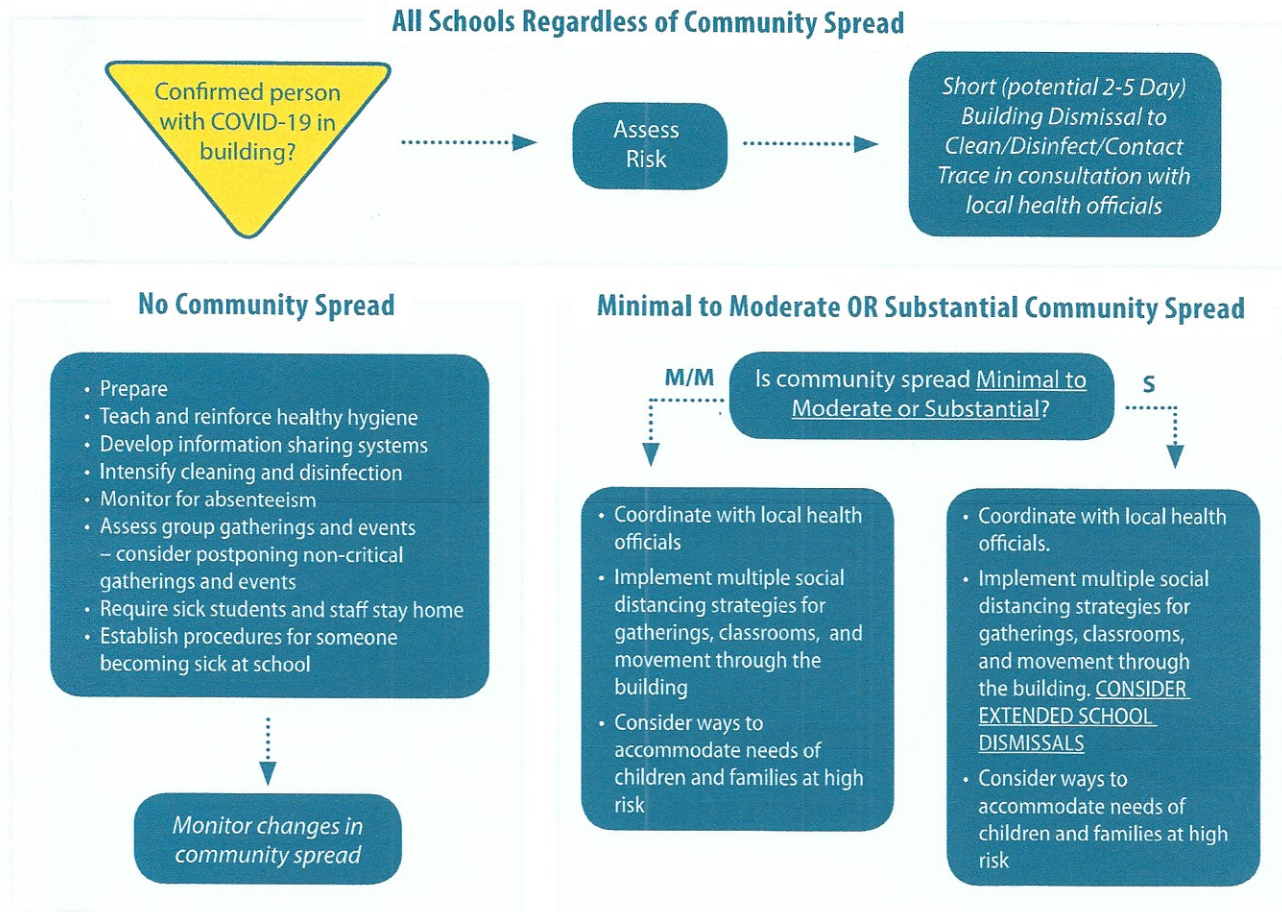


How should schools prepare for, and respond to, COVID-19?

Schools should be prepared for COVID-19 outbreaks in their local communities and for individual exposure events to occur in their facilities, regardless of the level of community transmission, for example a case associated with recent travel to an area with sustained COVID-19 transmission. The following decision tree can be used to help schools determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for their current situation.

School Decision Tree



When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission

Any school in any community might need to implement short-term closure procedures regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, CDC recommends the following procedures regardless of the level of community spread:

- ✓ **Coordinate with local health officials.** Once learning of a COVID-19 case in someone who has been in the school, immediately notify local health officials. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for their child care programs or schools.
- ✓ **Dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days.** This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school. This allows the local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.
 - Local health officials' recommendations for the scope (e.g., a single school, multiple schools, the full district)

and duration of school dismissals will be made on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the specific cases in the community.

- During school dismissals, also cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs, and large events (e.g., assemblies, spirit nights, field trips, and sporting events).
- Discourage staff, students, and their families from gathering or socializing anywhere. This includes group child care arrangements, as well as gathering at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

√ **Communicate with staff, parents, and students.** Coordinate with local health officials to communicate dismissal decisions and the possible COVID-19 exposure.

- This communication to the school community should align with the communication plan in the school's emergency operations plan.
- Plan to include messages to counter potential [stigma](#) and discrimination.
- In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

√ **Clean and disinfect thoroughly.**

- Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Additional information on cleaning and disinfection of community facilities such as schools can be found on [CDC's website](#).

√ **Make decisions about extending the school dismissal.** Temporarily dismissing child care programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the further spread of COVID-19 in communities.

- During school dismissals (after cleaning and disinfection), child care programs and schools may stay open for staff members (unless ill) while students stay home. Keeping facilities open: a) allows teachers to develop and