



## Frequently Asked COVID-19 School Nurse Questions

### 1. How can schools return medications to students/families during the period of extended school closures?

Schools may ask parents to come to school to pick up medications that were not sent home with students at the time of school closure. Arrangements for doing so must include plans to maintain social distancing. Personal communications with the Wisconsin Department of Justice and the Department of Drug Enforcement indicate schools may mail a student's personal medication(s) to their address of record. (Danielle Basil Long Opioid Initiatives Advisor WI Department of Justice, email, March 19, 2020.)

### 2. Are there any recommendations for school staff handling paperwork or paper assignments returned by students?

Schools along with other agencies and businesses use paperwork or other things that can potentially be contaminated by the SARS-CoV2 virus. While a recent study did document how long the virus can live on certain substances under laboratory conditions, it did not indicate the potential for becoming infected from that source (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>).

In order for infection to occur the surface and related environmental factors would have to be favorable to sustain the virus for a period of time. Additionally, the person that is originally handling the items would have to be ill with the virus while producing sufficient respiratory related secretions (sputum, etc.) to get those secretions on the item. The CDC states that while it is known that coronavirus has the ability to live a certain amount of time on various surfaces in certain conditions, this is not thought to be the main method of transmission: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Ftransmission.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Ftransmission.html)

In order to get a virus from an object that met the criteria above, the person receiving the object would then need to touch the area that was contaminated while the virus was still viable and then touch their own eyes, mouth or nose with sufficient quantity to become infected. The virus would not be in the air from the object – that comes from breathing near a person who has the virus and has aerosolized it by coughing or sneezing, so a mask is not needed to handle objects that come in. Staff need to follow the current related guidance for protective measures remembering to not touch their faces and to wash/sanitize hands regularly when handling things.

### 3. How can school nurses help our local or state public health departments during this time of school closure?

The Department of Health Services (DHS) suggests that school nurses willing and able to volunteer time contact the Wisconsin Emergency Assistance Volunteer Registry (WEAVR).

WEAVR is a web-based volunteer registration system for health care and behavioral health professionals. School nurses who are interested in offering their skills and expertise during the state's COVID-19 response can register on the [WEAVR website](#). You will be contacted via the WEAVR system as opportunities arise. For general information and answers to questions, nurses can visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services WEAVR web page](#).

3/26/2020

**4. Are there any infection control recommendations for food service workers and school staff assisting with providing meals to students and families during this period of school closures?**

School districts are referred to DPI's [Child Nutrition Program COVID-19 Information](#) webpage for information to navigate the options for serving children meals in a non-congregate setting in during school/center closure due to COVID-19.

It is important that food service workers know to self-monitor their own health, report symptoms to supervisors, and self-quarantine for 14 days if symptoms are present. Staff should not, under any circumstances, report to work if feeling ill or presenting with symptoms. Be sure that staff members are also informed of any school-specific or local health reporting requirements. Specific questions regarding COVID-19 illness, symptoms, and reporting should be directed to the local health department.

Because if one member of the meal preparation team becomes ill it means most likely that all team members must stop working and self-quarantine for 14 days, schools should consider setting up different teams for meal preparation and/or distribution. Schools with limited food service staff may be able to utilize volunteers or other school staff to assist as needed or be part of the separate teams. For example:

- If Team A works Monday, Wednesday, and Friday then Team B works Tuesday and Thursday.
- If one team needs to stop working for 14 days, then the other team can take over for all days Monday through Friday.
- Small teams are better than one or two large teams.

Consider ways to minimize close person-to-person contact and maximize social distancing during meal preparation and service. The [FDA Food Safety and the Coronavirus Q & A](#) provides suggestions on how staff members may distance themselves from each other while working. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Meal Pick-Up Methods

Consider how the [CDC's prevention strategies](#), particularly those pertaining to close contact with others, could be applied to meal distribution. If possible, food service staff should maintain six feet of space from those picking up meals. For example, staff could place bags on a table in a neutral zone for families to pick up. Food service staff should stand at least six feet away to check off meals. Remind families as they are picking up meals to practice social distancing with each other. One suggestion is to place a marker, such as a piece of tape or a sign on the floor, at the six feet mark so everyone knows the six foot boundary.