

March 15

By executive order, Gov. Doug Burgum today (Sunday, March 15, 2020) ordered the closure of North Dakota K-12 schools in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 based on guidance from public school superintendents, medical experts and the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH).

Out of an abundance of caution, public and private schools will be closed March 16-20. The decision was made in an effort to reduce the rate of infection and give the state an opportunity to gather more data, better assess testing and treatment capabilities and plan for education in the event of an extended COVID-19 pandemic. The situation will be reassessed at the end of the week.

State officials have the following recommendations:

- Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **recommendation** that groups or individuals should cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more.
- Stay home when you're sick, cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands often.
- Get plenty of rest, drink fluids, eat healthy foods and manage your stress to help prevent getting COVID-19 and recover from it if you do.

Stay informed: [ND Department of Health](#) and the [US Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)

Practice daily preventative care: [Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

Remain calm: While the progression of COVID-19 is still emerging, the CDC is reporting that for the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to the virus at this time, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

HOTLINE: For questions related to COVID-19 the public can call the NDDOH health hotline at 866-207-2880 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday

what is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is the name for the disease caused by the recent spread of a Novel Coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a member of a large family of viruses. Many of them infect animals, but some coronaviruses from animals can evolve (change) into a new human coronavirus that can spread from person-to-person. This is what happened with the current novel coronavirus which causes the disease known as COVID-19. Diseases from coronaviruses in people typically cause mild to moderate illness, like the common cold. Some, like the SARS or MERS viruses, cause serious infections like pneumonia. The name of this new virus is SARS-CoV-2; the disease caused by this virus is known as COVID-19.

How does the virus spread?

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
- How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread") in some affected geographic areas.

How can I protect myself from acquiring the virus?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Be aware that facemasks are not recommended for healthy individuals.

What is Mapleton School doing to respond to COVID-19?

- Staying in regular communication with state health officials. Regularly monitoring national and state organizations, including the Center for Disease Control (CDC), North Dakota Department of Health and Cass Public Health.
- Monitoring and reacting to changes in travel recommendations from official government agencies.
- Keeping our community informed by sharing best practices and expert guidance on public health infection control.

Has Mapleton School implemented any travel restrictions?

Yes. Starting immediately, MPS staff/students who have traveled to any country with a Level 3 Travel Notice from the CDC must stay away from schools and self-monitor for 14 days. The situation is changing rapidly and the list is subject to change. Prior to returning to school after international travel, we advise you to follow the procedures in place from the North Dakota Department of Health for proper steps regarding any self-monitoring that could be required.

If you have personal travel plans monitor the travel recommendations at travel.state.gov and cdc.gov for updated information.

How is Mapleton School reducing the risk of exposure?

We have provided information about the international COVID-19 outbreak and steps being taken along with recommendations on how to minimize the risk of acquiring infection for this as well as the common cold and influenza. The CDC also provides guidance on this topic at these sites:

- [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)
- [COVID-19 Symptoms](#)
- [Prevention and Treatment](#)

- [What to Do If You Are Sick With COVID-19](#)
- [Other Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19](#)

Is MPS restricting visitors to schools?

Because US health officials still consider the risk of contracting COVID-19 in North Dakota to be low, there has been no reason to restrict visitor access to the schools but this could change from day to day.

Per the declaration by ND Governor Burgum, Mapleton School will be closed to students from Monday, March 16 through Friday, March 20. This closure is inclusive of all programs, meetings, rentals, practices, and contests. The Daycare will be operating their childcare at school until further notice.

The main office will be closed until further notice.

School administration will be discussing plans for the continuity of education and essential services during this closure. We will communicate all plans with you as soon as decisions have been finalized.