COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control in Schools

Utah Department of Health
Healthcare Associated Infection/
Antibiotic Resistance Program

Schools can be instrumental in keeping their communities healthy

Learning objectives

Apply effective infection prevention practices in school settings:

- Maintain safe and clean environment conducive to learning
- Effectively prevent COVID-19 spread in the classroom
- Initiate cooperation and collaboration with students, teachers and other school staff to prevent infection
- Report any positive cases of COVID-19 and/or exposures to your school point of contact (POC)

Learning objectives

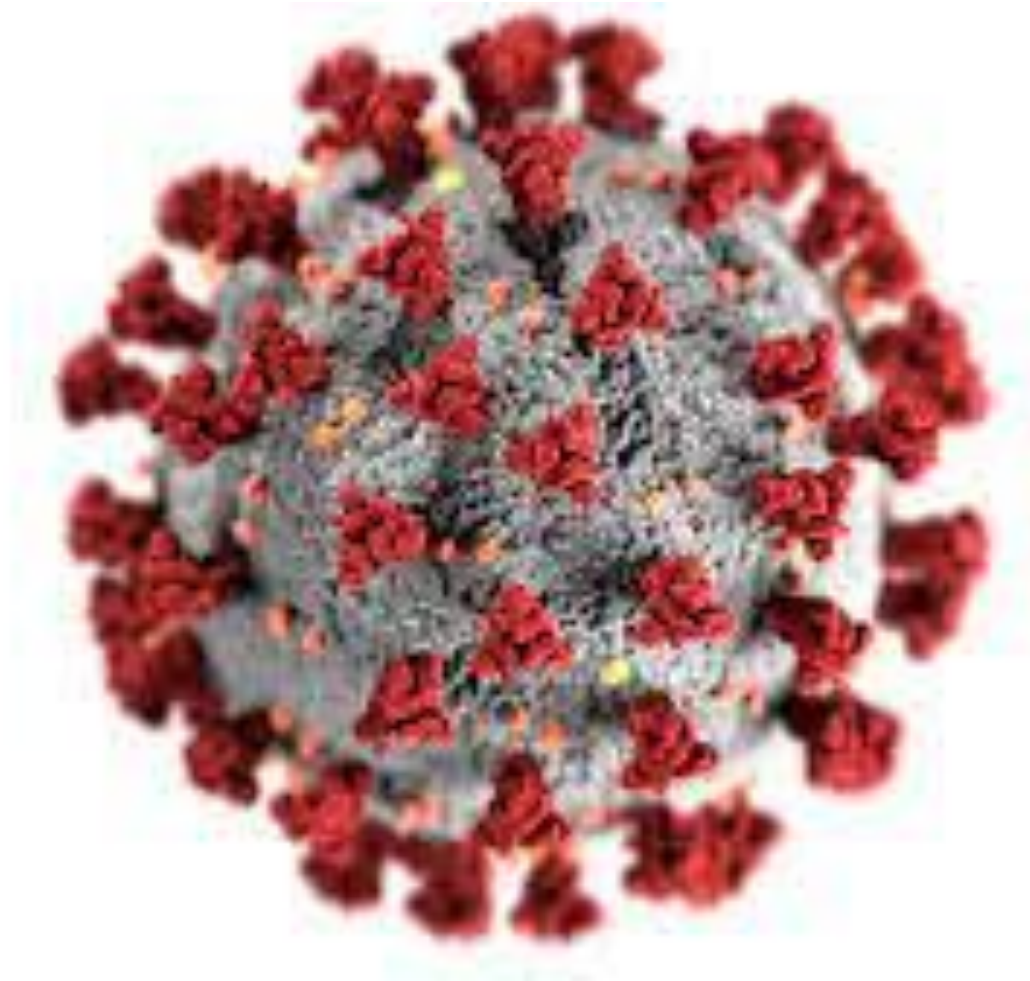Apply effective infection prevention practices in school settings:

- Follow your school district's COVID-19 school plan
- Work with your local health department for testing, isolation, quarantine and school closure guidance
- Understand privacy laws that protect personally identifiable information

COVID-19 Situation updates

- Utah situation: https://coronavirus.utah.gov/case-counts/
- U.S. situation: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html
- Global information: https://covid19.who.int/

COVID-19 Disease overview

What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats

- Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people

How is COVID-19 spread?

- Droplet transmission
- Contact with contaminated surfaces

Symptoms of COVID-19

- Fever or temperature 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- New cough
- Shortness of breath
- Decrease in sense of smell or taste
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches and pains

Human reservoirs

- Pre-symptomatic
  o a person has COVID-19, but has not developed symptoms yet

- Asymptomatic
  o a person has COVID-19, but does not have any symptoms and likely won't develop symptoms

- Symptomatic
  o a person has COVID-19 and has one or more symptoms

Good to know

- 80% of all individuals infected with COVID-19 will have NO signs or symptoms

- 10 % will have mild signs of symptoms

- 10% will become severely ill and may need hospitalization and put on to a ventilator or even experience death

How will your school help others **cooperate** with infection prevention strategies to avoid COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks?

Maximize cooperation

- Communicate
- Educate
- Monitor compliance

How does your school prevent infections when people are in close contact with each other?
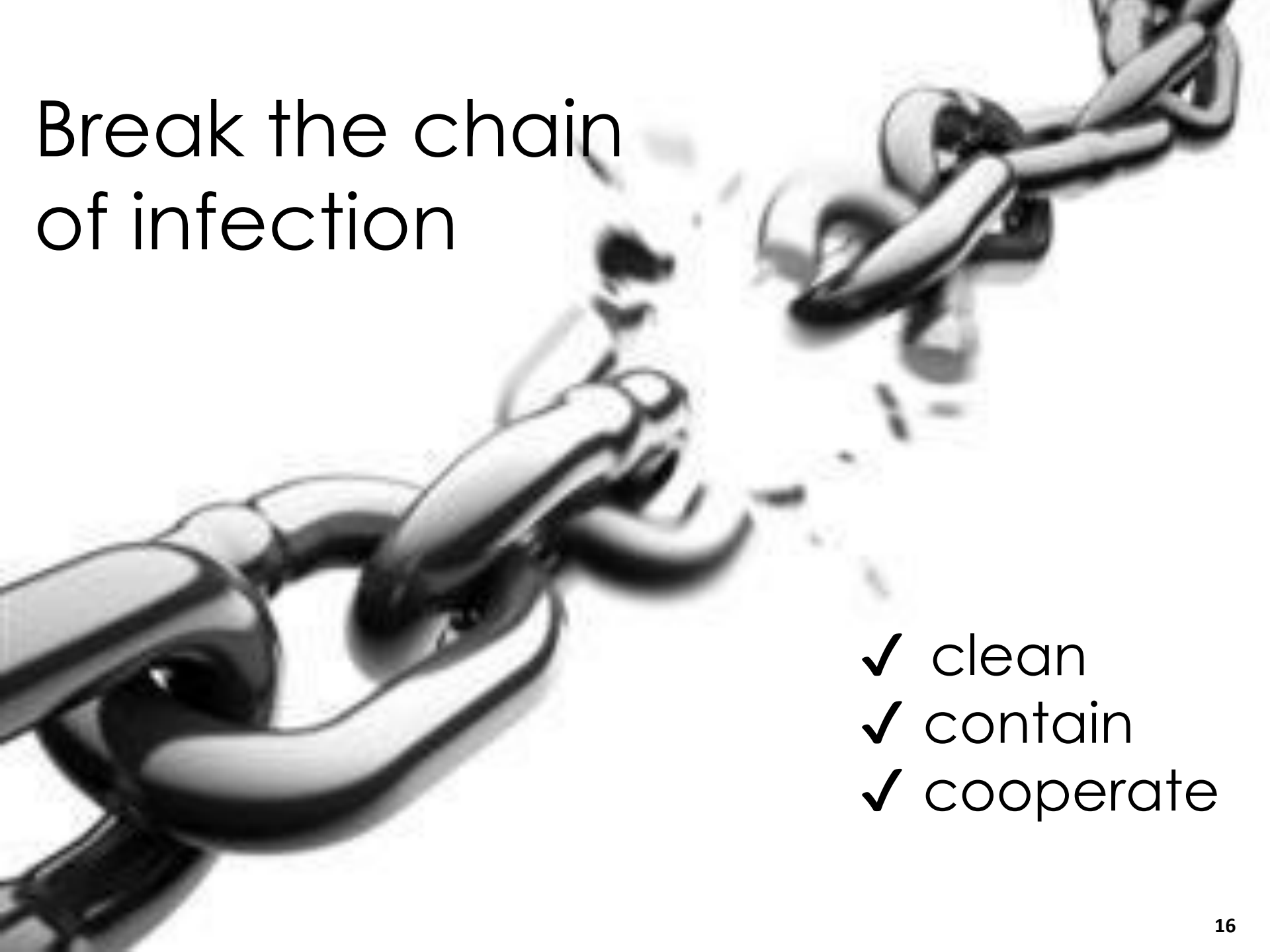
Prepare your school

- Consider using the [Hierarchy of Controls](#) – things you can do to lower the risk to students and employees

- Examples: ventilation and how you set up the spaces in your school and workspaces, policies for your school and workplace, and PPE

- Find where and how people in your school might be exposed to COVID-19

Break the chain of infection
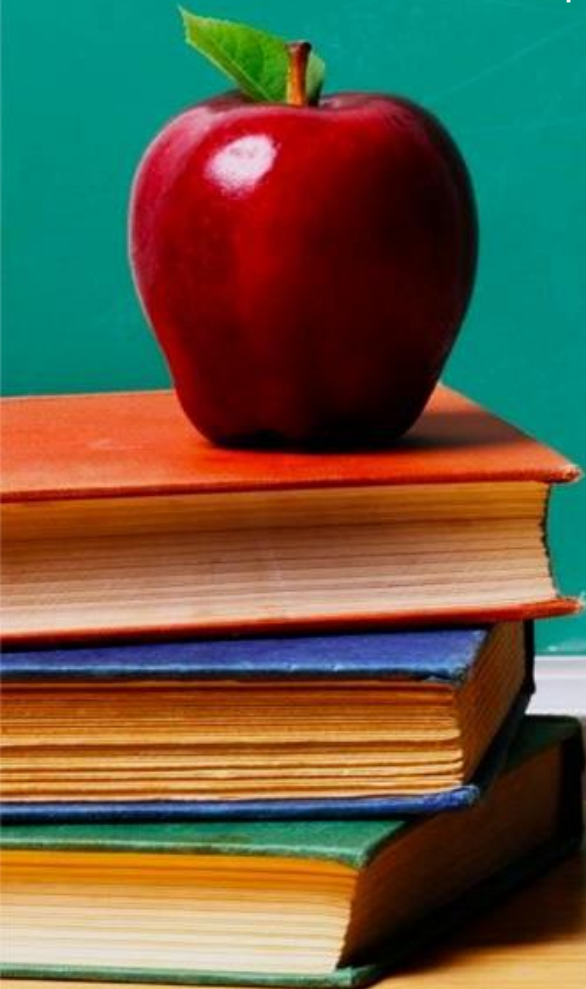
✓ clean
✓ contain
✓ cooperate

Routinely clean and disinfect

Frequently touched surfaces

- Door knobs
- Desks
- Cabinet handles
- Work stations
- Restrooms
- Buses

Equipment

- Lifts
- Wheelchairs
- Mats
- Slings

Cleaning and disinfecting after a positive case of COVID-19

- Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect
- If you can't wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible
- Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in these areas during this waiting period

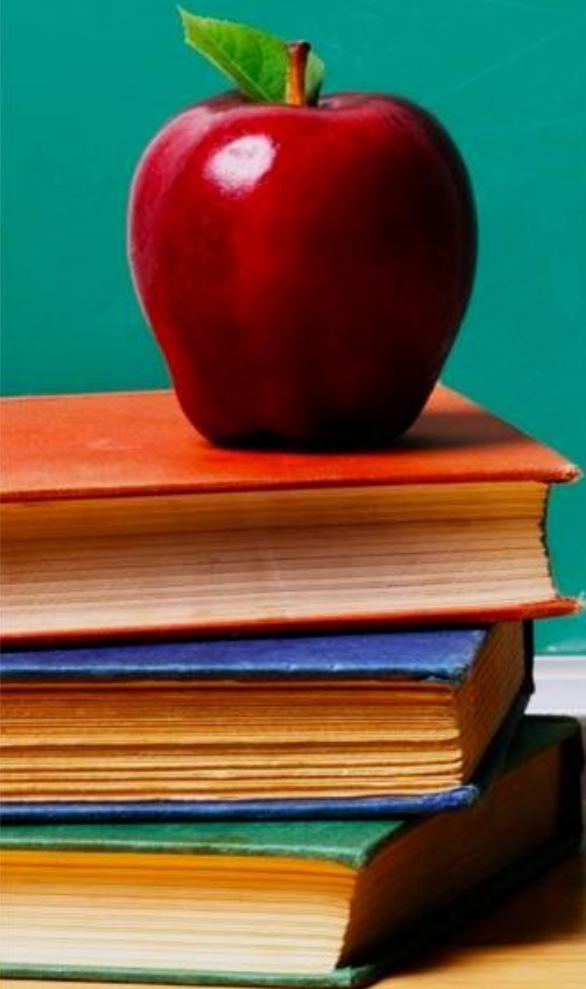# Use personal protective equipment (PPE)

One wipe - one application

EPA approved disinfectants

Prevention and containment

- Watch for symptoms (teachers, students, staff, parents, volunteers)
- Wear face coverings (mandatory for K-12)
- Practice and teach good hand hygiene
- Maintain physical distancing
- Stay home when sick
- Test appropriately
- Report cases and suspect cases to your school point of contact (POC)

Stay home when sick

- Students, teachers, employees, volunteers and visitors who are sick should not go to school

- Anyone who tested positive
  - Isolate at home until the health department has notified the school that his/her isolation is over

- Anyone who has been exposed
  - Quarantine at home for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the person who tested positive

When a student gets sick at school

- Immediately separate any student who gets sick at school with COVID-19 symptoms from other students in a pre-designated area

- Call parent(s) and instruct them to pick up their child right away

- Provide parent(s) prepared letter informing them of need for COVID-19 testing

Exclude students according to school district criteria

Face coverings (masks)

- [Mandatory](#) for all Utah schools K-12; exemptions allowed in certain situations
- Make sure cloth face coverings (masks) fit properly
- Make sure the mask is secure and doesn't slip once it's on
- Mouth and nose should be fully covered
- Face coverings should fit snugly against your face without gaps
- Make sure you don't have difficulty breathing while wearing it

Masking is a smart choice

Video: Cover smart. Do your part. Slow the spread.

Hand hygiene - one of *the* most effective ways to prevent infection

Physical distancing

KEEP DISTANCE

6 feet or 2 meters

Information for parents

- Check their child for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before school

- Take their child's temperature every day before school

  o If their child has a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, the child has a fever

- Keep their child home from school if he or she feels sick or has symptoms of COVID-19

Information for parents

- Follow quarantine guidance if their child or anyone who lives in their home is exposed to someone with COVID-19

- Tell the school if their child has a health condition that their child at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19

- The health department will call parents of students at higher risk for severe illness if they are exposed at the school
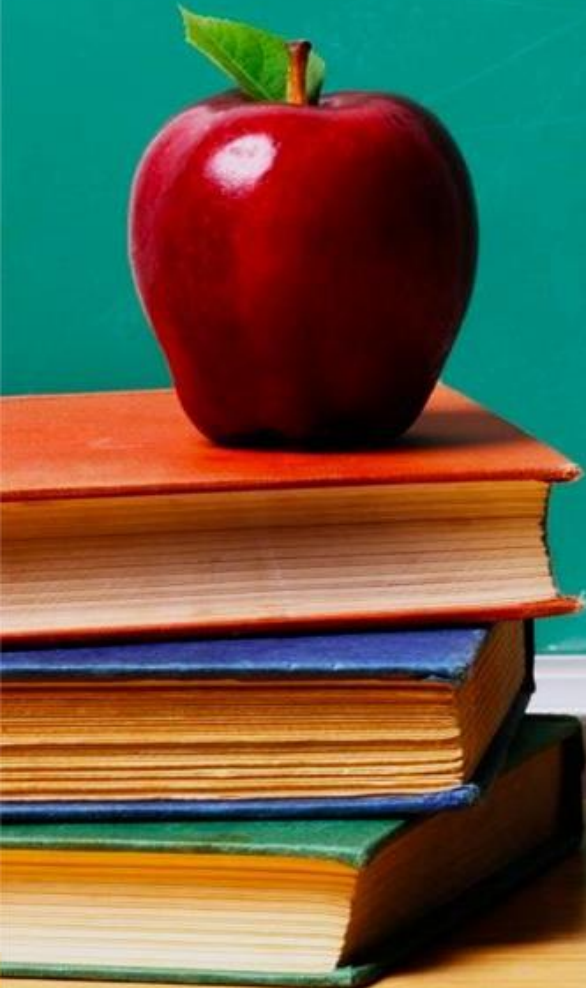
Information for parents

- Review and update their child's Individual Healthcare Plan, Individualized Education Plan, 504 plan with the school
- Help their child clean his or her cloth face covering or mask

COVID-19 testing in schools

- Test any COVID-19 symptomatic student, teacher, staff or volunteer in the school

- May test any student, teacher, staff or volunteer who was in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19

- Close contact is any person who was within 6 feet (2 meters) of someone who tested positive for 15 minutes or more

COVID-19 testing during school outbreaks

- During a school outbreak, test all close contacts, *regardless of symptoms*

- Wait to test close contacts until *5-7 days after their last exposure* to the person(s) who tested positive

- All close contacts must finish the 14-day quarantine period, even if they have a negative test

COVID-19 school outbreak definitions

- Classroom outbreak: Three (3) or more people tested positive for COVID-19 and are connected by the same setting, exposure, and 14-day time period

- School outbreak: 15 people tested positive for COVID-19 across multiple settings in the school (more than one classroom) and are connected by the same time period, or

  o 10% of the student population, whichever is lower

Anticipate a COVID-19 vaccine by summer of 2021

Infection risks in schools can be effectively decreased by:

- Maintaining a clean environment
- Containing infective organisms
- Maximizing cooperation

References

- Utah Department of Health (2020). COVID-19 School Manual. https://coronavirus.utah.gov/education/school-manual/.

- CDC (2020). COVID-19, Schools and Childcare Programs. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html.

- CDC (2016). Guide to Infection Prevention for Outpatient Settings.

- CDC (2009). MDRO Prevention and Control.

Helpful Resources

- Utah State Board of Education. (2020). https://www.schools.utah.gov/coronavirus.

- Aronson, S.S. & Shope, T.R. (2019). Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, 5th ed. American Academy of Pediatrics.

- Caring for Our Children (2019). National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 4th ed. American Academy of Pediatrics.