



State of New Jersey

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Updated: November 9, 2020

Subject: Reporting of absenteeism and other information related to COVID-19

Dear School Partner,

Schools play an important role in students' educational achievement, health, and wellbeing. Along with state, local health officials, parents and caregivers, schools have a significant role in slowing the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) while protecting students, teachers, and staff. With the current COVID-19 pandemic, as K-12 schools assess risks and benefits of different instructional formats, it is extremely important to have systems in place for monitoring the transmission of COVID-19 within your institution. In partnership with the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) is expanding our existing influenza-like illness surveillance for schools into an active surveillance system to monitor COVID-19 in K-12 public and private schools. Public health reporting is weekly and can be reported by individual schools or by school districts on behalf of multiple schools (individual school level data is required). Schools (or school districts if reporting on behalf of individual schools) should enroll in the active surveillance system by November 13, 2020 and begin reporting data on November 17, 2020.

Enrollment

For existing school users who report into the Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS) for influenza-like illness (ILI), nothing additional needs to be done (same login at [CRDSS log-in page](https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage): <https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage>). Instructions to report for COVID-19 have been included below.

For schools who aren't CDRSS users, go to CRDSS log-in page: <https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage>. Under "System Announcements" complete the [SIC Module Training Video](#). Then complete the [user agreement](#) (https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/resources/manuals/User_Agreement.pdf) and return to CDS.COVS.RPT@doh.nj.gov. You will be contacted with further instructions and next steps.

COVID-19 Surveillance Reporting:

Similar to the existing Influenza-like Illness Reporting, every week, schools should report data on the number of students who are absent on Tuesday of that week due to COVID-19. Additional questions include the number of COVID-19 positive staff and students (that schools are aware

of) both for the previous week and cumulatively since the beginning of the school year, and if the school is working with the local health department on an active COVID-19 outbreak. Data must be entered into CDRSS by noon on Wednesdays. Detailed reporting instructions are available on the [CRDSS log-in page](https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage): <https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage>. Go to “System Announcements” and under “Training” refer to the Surveillance for Influenza and COVID-19 (SIC) Module Guide and complete the [SIC Module Training Video](#).

While some of this data might be readily available to school nurses, administrative staff within schools can play an important role in entering data on behalf of a school or district. As a reminder, the active surveillance reporting does *not* replace the need for schools to notify their local health department when they become aware of COVID-19 cases or possible outbreaks.

Information Sharing

NJDOH will provide weekly state, region, and county counts on the [COVID-19 public dashboard](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml) (https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml) “Schools” tab, as well as limited school-level case data. If a school has fewer than 10 cases, in order to protect privacy, the exact number will be suppressed. Absenteeism data will also be shared in [weekly ILI reports](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/flu-stats/index.shtml) (<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/flu-stats/index.shtml>). Schools can view and export their own data from CDRSS, which can be used to monitor ILI and COVID-19 within their school or district.

For questions on what and when to report, review the training materials that can be found on the CRDSS log-in page: <https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/login/loginPage>. For questions on user accounts or any additional questions regarding reporting email CDS.COVS.RPT@doh.nj.gov

Your participation in the COVID-19 School Active Surveillance Program is invaluable in providing public health officials and the public with the necessary information on the impact of COVID-19 in school communities in New Jersey and will help ensure students continue to have safe and healthy learning environments.

Thank you,

Deepam Thomas, MPH
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CC: New Jersey Department of Education