

Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education
John A. Wilson Building | 1350 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Suite 307 | Washington, DC 20004

How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Disease (Updated March 11, 2020)

This document provides guidance for routine cleaning of school and child care site facilities, as well as the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and personal hygiene products as part of the District's Coronavirus (COVID-19) response that been developed following interim environmental cleaning and disinfection recommendations put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to guard against the spread of COVID-19.

While the connection between touching contaminated surfaces and contracting the virus has not been fully established, these recommendations are in line with advisement to guard against the spread of influenza. It is currently believed that, under most circumstances, the virus can remain infectious on a surface between 2-4 hours.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND SANITIZING

Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

SIMPLY DO ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

It is important to match your cleaning and disinfecting activities to the types of germs you want to remove or kill. Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including wiping down walls and ceilings, frequently using room air deodorizers, and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended. These processes can irritate eyes, nose, throat and skin; aggravate asthma; and cause other serious side effects.

UTILIZE SPECIAL ATTENTION CLEANING PROTOCOLS FOR SURFACES AND OBJECTS THAT ARE TOUCHED OFTEN

Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting which include daily cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting specific areas like bathrooms. Staff should be directed to adopt the following measures to ensure greater attention on safety and frequently touched surfaces.

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- Use gloves
- Keep areas well ventilated
- Pay particular attention to cleaning on all frequently touched surfaces in common areas and restrooms, including but not limited to doorknobs and push/pulls, light switches, elevator buttons, tables, sink faucets, toilets, chairs, and any other common area hard surfaces
- After cleaning is performed staff will perform a disinfection of each cleaned surface, such as through the use of a disinfectant spray
- Increase sanitizing protocols for items that may be placed in children's mouths like toys or nap mats
- Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with bodily fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. Remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

CLEAN AND DISINFECT CORRECTLY

Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs. Rinse with water, and follow with an EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs.

If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both **cleans** (removes germs) **and disinfects** (kills germs) instead. Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant. Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain amount of time (e.g., letting it stand for 3 to 5 minutes).

Use disinfecting wipes on electronic items that are touched often, such as phones and computers. Pay close attention to the directions for using disinfecting wipes. It may be necessary to use more than one wipe to keep the surface wet for the stated length of contact time. Make sure that the electronics can withstand the use of liquids for cleaning and disinfecting.

CONDUCT REGULAR "DEEP CLEANINGS"

Cleaning staff will be directed to adopt the following practices on all vertical and horizontal surfaces in addition to the Special Attention practices outlined above:

- Staff will wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning
- If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and should not be used for other purposes
- Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products and the use of gloves
- Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection

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- For disinfection, staff will refer to the list of CDC-recommended chemicals
- If unavailable the following mixture can be utilized if appropriate for the surface –
Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, staff will remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces.

If a facility is closed on the advisement of DC Health, the agency responsible for the facility will seek DC Health's guidance on the proper cleaning response. In most cases, this will likely mean a deep cleaning of the facility (or affected areas) is required before it can reopen.

Schools should alert DME DME.dismissaladvice@dc.gov and their agency partner at OSSE, PCSB, DCPS, AISGW, or Archdiocese of Washington, when a deep cleaning due to closure is required and complete.

HANDLE WASTE PROPERLY

Follow your school's standard procedures for handling waste, which may include wearing gloves. Place no-touch wastebaskets where they are easy to use. Throw disposable items used to clean surfaces and items in the trash immediately after use. Avoid touching used tissues and other waste when emptying wastebaskets. Wash your hands with soap and water after emptying wastebaskets and touching used tissues and similar waste.

PURCHASE APPROVED SUPPLIES

All site managers and school operations leaders are responsible for following CDC guidelines to secure approved cleaning products, PTE and Hygiene products. This includes the following:

- **Masks and Gloves** Supplies of masks and gloves should be reserved for healthcare workers, first responders, and cleaning staff as needed. General staff do not need to be provided with access to masks and gloves.
- **Soap, Hand Sanitizer and Tissues** All staff must have regular access to hand sanitizer and tissues (ideally anti-viral). Facility managers will ensure restrooms are always fully stocked with hand soap and paper towels.
- **Disinfectant Wipes / Spray Agency** All staff must have regular access to disinfectant wipes and/or spray (ideally anti-viral), primarily to clean personal workspaces.
- **Cleaning Contracts and Products** Facility managers should ensure that new cleaning contracts or modifications to existing contracts to carry out enhanced cleaning (Special Attention and Deep Cleaning) as outlined in this memorandum meet the guidelines recommended in the CDC. Managers should verify that cleaning companies are following CDC guidelines in full.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Centers for Disease Control Coronavirus Webpage

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control Community & Home Cleaning

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/home/cleaning-disinfection.html>

DC Health Coronavirus Webpage

<https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>