



## **Guidance for School Nurses to Safely Send and Receive Resources Between School and Home During COVID-19**

*Note: This document is NOT a substitute for nursing judgment and does not dictate an exclusive course of action. State and district laws and policies should be followed. This guidance is based on current research available at the time of publication: 3/31/2020*

School nurses are essential healthcare providers in the community working on the frontlines of the COVID19 pandemic in schools. School systems are transitioning to an online or virtual format. Populations of students without internet access or home electronic devices exist and provide a challenge for instruction. Students living in poverty with limited access to healthcare and adequate nutrition are often the same students lacking the ability to receive online instruction due to limited resources. In order to address the educational needs of this population, school systems are sending home backpacks, instructional materials, including electronic devices, paper documents, food supplies, student medication, and other items based on the needs of the population.

Students with chronic diseases may need the medications and procedure supplies that were used at school sent home, such as for G-tube feeding, catherization, as well as supplies for diabetes management, asthma care, severe allergies. This list is not considered comprehensive and should be based on individual student needs. Diapers and wipes have been in short supply in the community. Families may need these supplies from school for their students with special health needs.

Guidance by the school nurse to the school community is needed to reduce the likelihood of disease transmission.

### **Decisions regarding the transfer of materials between school and home are based on evidence on the transmission of COVID19.**

(Refer to CDC's *Coronavirus (COVID-19) How to Protect Yourself* at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>)

- 1) According to the CDC, the primary route is person to person in close contact (within 6 feet)
  - a. When an infected person coughs or sneezes, respiratory secretions or droplets carry the virus
- 2) Based on research in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the coronavirus is stable for several hours to several days on surfaces including two to three days for plastic and twenty-four hours for cardboard (Van Doremalen et al., 2020).

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## **Sending resources from schools to families:**

- 1) Prepare materials to be sent home.
  - a. The location for material preparation should be cleaned and disinfected according to EPA guidelines with adequate space, light and ventilation for staff.  
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
  - b. Establish a screening procedure for staff assisting with the material preparation.
    - a. Staff preparing the materials should:
      1. Be symptom free, without a fever, cough, or shortness of breath. (Fever is 100.4+)
      2. Wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use 70% alcohol hand sanitizer prior to preparing materials.
      3. Staff preparing the materials should not have been recently exposed to another person with the COVID19, including a family member in isolation.
    - b. Staff should be trained by the school nurse on infection control basics, social distancing, hand washing, and use of gloves/facemasks if needed for preparation and delivery of materials.
  - c. Paper documents can be placed in large envelopes. Use envelopes that have a tie or use tape/labels to secure. Do not use envelopes that require moisture to secure.
  - d. Plastics, including electronic devices should be disinfected according to manufacturer recommendations.
  - e. Backpacks or cloth bags should be new or laundered if used.
  - f. Materials should be prepared at least 24 hours in advance for paper materials, and 72 hours in advance for plastic materials.
  - g. Medications and other health supplies may be returned to families at parent/guardian request.
    - a. School nurses need to document in accordance with legal requirements/medication policy.

1. For example, the date, time, number of pills, tablets, or items returned to whom, and verified by another person if required.
- 2) Options for sending materials: pick-up site at school location(s), dropping off at student homes, or mailing directly to students.
- a. For onsite pick up, consider community needs including transportation options of families, community bus routes, and walkable routes.
    - a. Focusing on Title 1 Schools as community hubs will reach families living in poverty.
    - b. If nutrition programs are occurring within the school system, consider partnering with these locations for instructional material pick-up.
    - c. Use family drop off lanes outside at schools and have families place the student name on the windshield for easy identification.
    - d. Create walking zones outside of school for in person pick up with tables to maintain 6 ft distance between staff and families. Use cones, chalk, or tape to direct families and assist them in keeping the required distance apart.
    - e. Instruct families that have an ill family member not to attend. Families can notify the school and send a replacement such as a neighbor or friend.
      1. A signed note by parent/guardian is suggested for permission.
    - f. Schedule pick-up times to spread out the number of people present at any given time to less than 10 persons.
    - g. Medications should be picked up at school sites by adult family member.
      1. A signed note by parent/guardian is suggested for permission.
  - b. Drop off procedures using school bus routes is an option for school systems, especially in rural or tribal areas that cover large geographic areas. Social distancing of 6 ft must be maintained with no direct contact.
    - a. Bus drivers or other staff may assist with material drop off, including food items at the curb in front of the student's home.
    - b. Teachers or other staff may drop off items at student homes, with previous notification.
      1. Safety of staff should be considered.
      2. Use of gloves is recommended if available.
      3. Staff should have access to hand sanitizer to use before and after each drop off location.



4. Materials should be left on a porch, driveway, or entryway for apartments/condos.
- c. Mailing materials through the USPS or others is an option to consider.
  - a. It is possible that the costs of mailing materials may be recouped through state or federal resources due to the emergency status of the pandemic.
    1. Follow school system policy for mailing materials.

**Returning materials from families back to school:**

1. If nutrition programs are occurring within the school system, consider partnering with these locations for return of instructional materials.
2. Use family drop off lanes at outside of schools and have families place the returned items in a bin with a teacher or grade level on the bin for easy identification.
3. Use return bins with wheels and lids to secure prior to moving into the school lobby or another central location.
4. Create walking zones outside of school for in person drop-off with tables to maintain 6 ft distance between staff and families. Use cones, chalk, or tape to direct families.
5. Instruct families that have an ill family member not participate, notify school and send a replacement such as a neighbor or friend.
6. Schedule pick-up times to spread out the number of people present at any given time to less than 10 persons.
7. Clean and disinfect tables and other equipment used in the drop off.
8. Allow materials to sit for 24 hours before they are accessed by staff if paper materials, and 72 hours for electronic devices.
  - a. Staff should use gloves for moving the materials to an interior location.
  - b. Staff should be trained by the school nurse on procedure(s) to clean and disinfect items meeting this requirement.
  - c. Custodial staff are resources for safe and effective cleaning materials effective against COVID-19.



## References:

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