

News Release

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ADHS Enhances COVID-19 Reporting for Schools, Child Care, and Shelters

Emergency measure aims to improve public health response to outbreaks

To enhance the state's efforts to protect the health of children and others, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has issued an emergency measure requiring schools, child care centers and shelters to report outbreaks of COVID-19 to their local health departments.

The measure applies to public schools, charter schools, and private schools with students from kindergarten through 12th grade, as well as child care establishments and shelters.

Those facilities already are required to report to their local health departments cases of communicable diseases including mumps, measles, and chickenpox.

"Schools, child care centers, and shelters have always worked with public health and have been among the best reporters of communicable disease information," said Dr. Cara Christ, director of ADHS. "This emergency measure addresses the serious threat COVID-19 poses to our communities and allows public health and our schools to work together to keep our kids safe."

ADHS and the Arizona Department of Education worked collaboratively to develop the [Roadmap for Reopening Schools](#) and the [Guidance for Safely Returning to Schools](#). In this guidance, schools are encouraged to report an outbreak to their local health department. An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period among individuals who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not close contacts of each other in another setting.

"Procedures on how to report and handle cases of COVID-19 will help schools as they navigate this most unprecedented school year," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman. "This emergency measure gives schools the instructions they need to correctly report cases as we head further into the new academic year."

This emergency measure provides schools, child care establishments, and shelters with a required format and the authority for reporting COVID-19 outbreaks to public health within 24 hours of identification.

Public health works closely with these partners and will continue to provide technical assistance to facilitate communication of information to staff, faculty, children, and families.

For more information, please visit azhealth.gov/COVID19.