

COVID-19 Infection Control Manuals and
Guidelines for Schools
(Updated on May 8, 2023)

Preface

As of May 8, 2023, COVID-19 will be downgraded to Class 5 Infectious Disease under the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases (Act No. 114 of 1998) , marking a milestone in the battle against the infectious disease that has lasted over three years.

We would like to express our gratitude once again to the Boards of Education and school officials for their efforts in preventing the spread of this infectious disease and ensuring the continuation of school educational activities, despite the various restrictions they encountered.

After the downgrading to Class V Infectious Diseases, a basic policy is to continue the routine prevention measures such as ventilation and hand washing in normal times when the situation is calm, rather than evenly taking the conventional control measures. If there is an outbreak, necessary countermeasures should be taken temporarily depending on types of school activities.

This manual provides a basic policy to COVID-19 countermeasures in schools after the downgrading to Class V Infectious Diseases. The Boards of Education and schools can refer this manual and review the conventional control measures to match local situations, so that students can lead safe and fulfilling days at school.

Health Education and Shokuiku Division,
Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau,
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

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Chapter 1. The Policy of Infection Control Measures against COVID-19 in Schools

After COVID-19 is downgraded to Class V Infectious Disease, it will be important for schools to take measures to prevent the spread of the infection according to the actual transmission situation on the premise that school educational activities are to be continued.

To be specific, even during normal times when the disease is not prevalent, it is important to monitor the health of infants, children, and students (hereinafter referred to as "students"), to ensure ventilation, and to provide instruction on hand hygiene such as washing their hands. In the case of an outbreak of the infection in the community or at school, it may be necessary to temporarily consider countermeasures against the infectious disease depending on activity fields and try to continue school educational activities such as classes, club activities, and various events through adjusting educational content and activities so as to ensure education for students.

At that time, it is important for schools to understand that the risk of infection cannot be completely removed even if infection control measures are taken, and to establish a health management system, beforehand, in schools in cooperation with the Boards of Education and the Public Health Management Bureau, as well as with school physicians, school dentists, school pharmacists, and other specialists, referring the following information, so as to take appropriate measures when an infected person is identified.

1. Roles of School Administrators and Schools

(1) Roles of the Boards of Education, etc.

To prevent the spread of the infection in schools in the region and to take appropriate action in the event that an infected person is confirmed, school administrators and schools play the following roles.

- (i). In cooperation with the public health management bureau, collect information on the transmission situation in the region, and based on the situation, determine the need for temporary closures, etc.
- (ii). Grasp how the schools are coping with the situation, prepare necessary supplies, etc., try to establish a hygiene environment and provide guidance.
- (iii). Cooperate and collaborate with medical associations, dental associations, pharmacist associations, etc., as well as communicate and disseminate information to students' parents/guardians and the community as school administrators.

(2) Roles of Schools

School principals lead to establish a health management system as the responsible persons in cooperation with school health officers, school nurse, each class homeroom teacher, as well as school physicians, school dentists, and school pharmacists.

Based on that, in addition to providing guidance to students, it is important for schools to work as a whole, to monitor students' health during lunch time, breaks, and on the way to and from school, in cooperation with the local community, school support staff and the Regional School Collaboration Headquarters.

2. Cooperation with Families

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases at school, it is essential not to introduce viruses from outside, which requires the cooperation of students' families.

In this sense, it is important for schools, in cooperation with the PTA, etc., to actively disseminate information and gain understanding of students' families in preventing infectious diseases at school.

Chapter 2: Infection Control Measures Required even in Normal Times

Based on the measures ever taken against COVID-19, it will be effective to continue the compatible measures without disrupting school educational activities, even after the downgrading to Class V Infectious Diseases.

1. Guidance to Students

In their school lives, behavior of students during breaks, on the way to and from school, and other times when they are out of the sight of teachers and staff can pose a risk of infection. Accordingly, it is important to first provide them with knowledge of what they have to do to prevent infectious diseases so that they can understand it correctly and judge the risk of infection and take actions to prevent it by themselves.

In addition, the following items are generally required to prevent infectious diseases.

[What they need to have on hand]

- Clean handkerchief and tissues
- Mask, mask case, etc. (as necessary)

2. Health Observation of Students

In order to prevent the spread of infection within school, it is important to monitor the health of students to identify any health changes or signs of illnesses. This is also important in lessening the risk of infection to others.

[1] Remind Students and Teachers Not to Come to School If They Have Unusual Symptoms Such as Fever, Sore Throat, Cough, etc.

When a student has unusual symptoms such as fever, sore throat, or cough, it is important for both students and teachers not to come to school but rest at home. It is crucial for schools to actively disseminate information and gain understanding and cooperation from students' parents/guardians and guardians in preventing infectious diseases at school.

In such cases, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between symptoms of COVID-19 and those of allergic diseases, etc. Therefore, there is no need to uniformly restrict school attendance based on the presence of minor symptoms.

[2] Understanding the Health Status of Students, etc.

It is important to monitor the health of students in cooperation with their families. In this case, it is not necessary to have students check their body temperatures daily and submit them to schools. Other options may be to use ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to effectively monitor their health.

[3] Response to Students with Symptoms of Fever, etc.

If students present symptoms of fever, etc., please send them home safely and instruct them to rest at home until the symptoms disappear. Also encourage them to seek medical attention, ask their parents/guardians their medical examination results and take appropriate measures according to the situation.

At that time, please do not request them to undergo examinations at medical institution or for self-test with a test kit without the consent of the students themselves or their parents/guardians. This also applies to teachers and staff.

3. Ensuring Ventilation

Transmission routes of COVID-19 are said to include contact infection, inhalation of droplets, and aerosols emitted when coughing, sneezing, or talking, etc. Therefore, ensuring ventilation remains an effective infection control measure.

For this reason, ventilation should be provided at all times whenever climatically possible, or if difficult, frequently open all windows for several minutes at least once

every 30 minutes, and open windows located in two different places at the same time. Windows do not necessarily need to be opened wide during classes, but the degree of ventilation will vary depending on the climate, weather, and classroom layout, etc., thereby, please consult with your school pharmacist or other appropriate personnel regarding ventilation methods, as necessary.

[1] Method of Constant Ventilation

Wherever climatically feasible, try to ventilate constantly. Opening the corridor side and the window side diagonally allows effective ventilation. The opening width of the window should be 10 cm to 20 cm, but it may be possible to open the upper small window or the transom window at the corridor side to its full extent. It is also necessary to open the hallway window.

[2] When Constant Ventilation is Difficult

If constant ventilation is difficult, open the windows fully for a few minutes frequently (at least once every 30 minutes).

[3] Windowless Rooms

Ensure adequate ventilation by always keeping the entrance open or by using a ventilation fan.

[4] Large, High-Ceilinged Rooms Such as Gymnasiums

Ventilation is important from the perspective of preventing the spread of infection, and efforts should be made to ventilate even large, high-ceilinged rooms.

[5] Rooms with Air Conditioners

Air conditioners without a ventilation function only circulate air in the rooms and do not replace indoor air with outdoor air, so ventilation is necessary even when such air conditioners are used.

[6] Utilization of Ventilation Equipment, etc. and Points to Note

If ventilation equipment such as ventilation fans is used, always operate it.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to check the ventilation capacity of the equipment. Note that ventilation equipment alone is less capable to ventilate rooms with accommodation capacity of a certain number of people and must be used in combination with natural ventilation by opening windows, etc. in many cases. In addition, please make sure to clean the ventilation fan, fan blades, etc., as they will

not provide efficient ventilation if they are not clean.

If sufficient ventilation cannot be ensured, it is important to take complementary measures for ventilation, such as installing circulators, air cleaners with HEPA filters, etc., to ensure sufficient ventilation as much as possible.

[7] Points to Keep in Mind Regarding Ventilation in the Winter Season

Although it is difficult to open the windows in winter because cold air enters, it is necessary to ventilate rooms because the air becomes drier, and the droplets are likely to scatter, and it is also the time when seasonal influenza is prevalent. Try to ventilate at all times when climatically possible (if this is difficult, open all windows at least once every 30 minutes, and at least during every break).

a) Prevention of Health Problems Caused by a Cold Room Temperature

Since ventilation makes it difficult to maintain a room temperature, please be flexible about clothing at school, for example, instructing students to dress warmly to avoid health problems caused by a cold room temperature.

In order to prevent a room temperature from dropping too low, it is also effective to open the windows of other rooms that are not used at the moment and let fresh, slightly warmed air in through the corridors into the room with people (this is a method called two-stage ventilation).

b) Ventilation Methods According to Local Climatic Conditions

Ventilation methods may have to be changed according to local climatic conditions, etc. If necessary, please consult with your school pharmacist, etc. and ask what is appropriate.

c) Measuring Carbon Dioxide Concentration with a Monitor

In order to make sure you have adequate ventilation, please consult your school pharmacist and as an additional option, consider measuring the carbon dioxide concentration by using a CO₂ monitor.

4. Instruction on Hand Hygiene, Such as Handwashing

Infection can be spread by touching the eyes, nose, or mouth without washing hands after contacting things contaminated with viruses. For this reason, we must make sure that students understand the mechanism of contact infection, and instruct them to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with their fingers as much as possible, as well as to wash their hands as a way to avoid contact infection.

Specifically, it is important to wash hands frequently after coming to school, when entering the classroom, after using the restroom, and before and after school lunch. Wash hands well with soap and running water for about 30 seconds. Teachers instruct children/students not to share their towels and handkerchiefs with others but to use their own personal ones.

Hand sanitizers are supplementarily used to hand washing when hand washing under running water is not possible, so basically, you should instruct children/students to hand wash under running water with soap and water. In cases where students are sensitive to hand sanitizers or soap or alcohol sanitizers, you need to take care of such children/students by instructing them to wash their hands thoroughly with running water only.

Not only children/students but also teachers, staff, and people/visitors involved in schools should follow these prevention methods.

5. Instruction on Cough Etiquette

Cough etiquette means to cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, handkerchief, sleeve, or the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing to prevent infectious diseases from being spread to others. Please instruct children/students to practice cough etiquette appropriately so as not to spread droplets to others.



6. Handling of Masks

In school educational activities, students, teachers, and staff basically do not need to wear masks.

However, wearing masks is recommended in situations where it is socially recommended in general, such as when getting on crowded trains or buses during rush hours, when commuting to and from school, or when visiting medical institutions or facilities for the elderly during field trips, etc.

In addition, there are students who are concerned about infection and wish to wear masks due to various reasons, such as having an underlying disease, or who are unable to wear masks due to health reasons. You are required not to force such students to use masks but to give appropriate guidance to avoid discrimination or prejudice among children and students based on whether or not they wear masks.

Infants are not required to wear masks. However, please note that appropriate consideration should be given to infants who wish to wear masks for various reasons.

(Reference) Precautions When Removing the Mask

When removing the mask, do not touch the surface of the mask, and prevent viruses and other contaminants from sticking to your fingers. Hold the rubber band or the strings with your fingers, fold it in two with the mouth-side inside and place it on clean vinyl or cloth, etc. to keep it clean.

When disposing of the mask, do not touch the surface of the mask, but place it in a plastic bag and seal it by tying the opening of the bag.

7. Cleaning

Although disinfection is effective in killing and reducing viruses, the source of infection, it is difficult to completely kill viruses by disinfection in school life.

Rather than expecting a temporary effect of disinfection, it is more important to maintain a clean environment through cleaning and washing hands thoroughly. However, it is not necessary to perform daily disinfection procedures separately from cleaning.

○Key points of routine cleaning

- Check if the cleaning tools are kept in good and clean conditions and if appropriate ones are prepared fully.
- Toilets and washrooms do not have to go under special disinfections and can be cleaned in a general way with household detergents.
- For shared items such as utensils, tools, and cleaning equipment, instruct staff to

wash their hands before and after each use, rather than disinfecting the shared items themselves each time.

- Keep adequate ventilation while cleaning the room/place.

8. Improving Resistance to Infection

In order to increase immunity, children/students have to be instructed to have "adequate sleep," "moderate exercise," and a "well-balanced diet." Vaccinations are also expected to be effective in preventing the onset and severity of new coronavirus infection.

Chapter 3. Infection Control Measures During an Outbreak

As mentioned in Chapter 2, health observation, ventilation, and instruction in hand washing and other hand hygiene matters are important during educational activities. Meanwhile, in normal times when the infection is calm, other special infection control measures are not required.

On the other hand, if there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, it may be necessary to temporarily take measures according to the situation of the activity, referring to the following.

1. Handling of masks

When there is an outbreak of infection in a region or at school, teachers and staff may wear masks or encourage students to wear masks, but even in such cases, please do not force them to wear masks.

2. Keeping Physical Distance

Due to the nature of the activities, it is effective in schools to maintain physical distance between students in order to prevent infection. Especially in cases where there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, it is advisable to keep physical distance between students as much as possible, taking into consideration what kind of activities they are doing in class and what kind of facilities they are using.

In any case, cope with the situation with flexibility, such as adding proper ventilation, etc., rather than sticking to keeping a certain physical space between students.

3. Infection Control Measures for Each Specific Activity Setting

(1) Each subject

When there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, the following measures should be taken for any subject that has “relatively high risk of infection”, depending on the scene of activity, temporarily,

- refrain from vocalization and conversation at "close range", "face-to-face", and "speaking loudly".
- maintain physical distance between students so that they do not touch each other, etc.

“Educational Activities with a Relatively High Risk of Infection”

· “Group work in which students meet face-to-face, etc.” “Activities in which students speak loudly all together” [Common for all subjects]
· “Experiments and observations in which students work in groups” [Science]
· “Choral singing and playing wind instruments such as recorders and keyboard harmonica by students” [Music]
· “Activities of expression and appreciation such as collaborative production by students” [Drawing and Painting, Arts and Crafts]
· “Cooking practice by students in groups” [Home Economics, Technology and Home Economics]
· “Coordinated group gymnastics or exercises with close physical contact” [Physical Education, Health and Physical Education]

In addition, the following points are also to be noted.

- Students who require medical care (hereinafter referred to as "medically cared children") and students who are at high risk for progression of severe COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions (hereinafter referred to as "children with underlying medical conditions") and students whose parents/guardians are concerned about infection and wish to have their children keep away from participating in the class, should not be forced to attend classes and their wishes should be respected.

- Self-support activities at special support schools and childcare activities at kindergartens should be conducted with appropriate consideration, since there may be learning activities expected to have a high potential risk of infection, such as contact between teachers and students, or between students, etc.

(2) School Events Such as Ceremonial Events

In addition to the measures mentioned in (1) shown above, the following measures may be taken temporarily when holding ceremonies, athletic events, cultural events, etc. if there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school. In such cases, it is important to provide thorough explanations and disseminate necessary information to gain the understanding and cooperation of students and their parents/guardians.

< Infection Control Measures >

- Encourage participants to wash their hands and practice cough etiquette, etc.
- Prepare alcohol disinfectant, etc.
- Maintain physical distance between people so that they do not touch each other.

< Examples of Planned Out Methods of Holding Events >

- Use ICT systems and hold an event in a hybrid face-to-face and online style (e.g. some participants can communicate interactively via a web conferencing system or watch the ceremony at a separate venue)

(3) Club Activities

When conducting club activities, it is important to keep in mind the following points, in addition to the measures mentioned in (1) above., which may be taken temporarily if there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school.

- Teachers and club activity instructors should check the status of club activities to ensure the health and safety of students, rather than leaving it up to the students alone.
- Activity hours and rest days should be followed in accordance with the "Comprehensive Guidelines for School Club Activities and New Community Club Activities" (December 2022), while paying sufficient attention to the details of the activities.
- When participating in competitions, contests, etc., schools, together with the sponsoring organization, are responsible for preventing the spread of infection among students, teachers, etc., not only during competitions, performances, concerts, etc., not only during competitions, performances, and concerts, etc.,

but also when moving to the venue, during meals and accommodation, and when using changing rooms and meeting rooms at the venue, etc.

- When planning and conducting practice matches, joint practices, training camps, etc., the school as a whole, and not only the teachers, should take responsibility for preventing the spread of infection, taking into consideration the infection situation in the area.
- Be aware of activities taken before and after club activities, such as when students in the same club eat together.

(4) School Lunch and Other Mealtime Situations

It is important to instruct all students to wash their hands before and after meals, and to be careful not to spread droplets around when eating. If there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, the measures described in (1) above may be taken temporarily.

The same applies to high schools, etc., where students bring their own lunch, and to situations where teachers and staff eat meals.

(5) Commuting to and from School

Since it is difficult for teachers and staff to check how students are doing on their way to and from school, even during normal times when the infection situation has calmed down, it is important to recommend students to wear masks when using crowded trains or buses during rush hours, etc., and instruct them to wash hands and avoid touching their faces as much as they can right after returning home (or after arriving at school).

The following may be considered when using school buses.

- Open the windows regularly for ventilation, while taking into consideration the conditions of the users.
- Tell students to refrain from getting on the bus if they have unusual symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough, etc.
- Ensure students wash their hands and practice cough etiquette, etc

If there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, you may change the operation schedule of the bus or the method, so that you can avoid overcrowding without interrupting the school activities.

(6) Health Checkups

Health checkups are specified in the School Health and Safety Act (Act No. 56 of 1958) and must be conducted by June 30 of each school year in order to check the health status of students and take necessary measures.

However, in the event that it is not possible to conduct checkups by June 30 due to unavoidable circumstances, such as it not being ready due to the effects of COVID-19 in the 2023 school year, annual checkups should be conducted as soon as possible before the last day of the 2023 school year.

When conducting health checkups, especially when there is an outbreak of infection in the region or at school, it is advisable not to admit too many students at once, to leave as much space as possible between students when having them line up, and to instruct students to refrain from talking or speaking, etc.

In addition, properly disinfect the instruments, etc. necessary for the health checkups. It is important to fully cooperate with school physicians, school dentists, and related organizations to ensure a common understanding regarding the timing and method of conducting health checkups.

Chapter 4. Measures to be Taken Flexibly Depending on Transmission Trend
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1. Handling of Suspension of Attendance

If a student is found to be infected, the school principal may take measures to suspend his/her attendance based on Article 19 of the School Health and Safety Act, as well as when the student is suspected of being infected with or at risk of being infected with COVID-19, just as in the case of seasonal influenza, etc.

In the case of suspension of attendance, consideration will be given to take necessary measures as described in 4. below to ensure that the students do not suffer significant delays in their studies due to the inability to attend classes.

In addition, when a teacher, staff member, or student who was infected with COVID-19 comes to work or goes to school, he/she is not required to submit a negative test result to the school, and the school should not request him/her to submit a test result or a certificate of cure issued by a medical institution, etc.

For more details regarding the suspension of attendance, please refer to the

"Enforcement about Ministerial Order Partially Amending Enforcement Ordinance of School Health and Safety Act (Notification)" (Notification issued by the Director-general of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, dated April 28, 2023).

2. When Parents/Guardians are Concerned about Infection and Tell to Get Their Children Absent from School

First, please listen carefully to the reasons why the parents/guardians wish the child to be absent, fully explain the countermeasures against infectious diseases to be taken by the school, and make every effort to gain their understanding regarding the school's administrative policies.

If the school principal determines that there is a rational reason for the absence, such as when there is no other alternative as the child lives with an elderly person or a family member with an underlying medical condition, the absence will be treated as "the number of days when the school principals allow them to be absent from the school due to reasons not-attributed to the students nor their parents/guardians under an emergency disaster". In such cases, the school may enter the number of days of absence in the "days of Suspension, Bereavement Leave, etc." column on the cumulative guidance record, and leave the absence uncounted.

In the case where the principal falls in the column of "Days for Suspension, Bereavement Leave, etc. "with reasonable grounds, we can consider it as judging from the infection situation in the region and at school, the family situation of the elderly or those with underlying medical conditions, etc. (The period of absence is determined based on "the number of days when the school principal allow them to be absent from the school due to reasons not-attributed to the students nor their parents/guardians under an emergency disaster").In making such a judgment, please take into consideration the obligation to attend school, especially for elementary and junior high school students, and ensure that their learning is guaranteed.

In the case of medically cared children or children with underlying medical conditions, the school principal shall confirm the opinion of the child's doctor with the child's parents/guardian and decide that the child should not attend school and handle it as "the number of days when the school principals allow them to be absent from the school due to reasons not-attributed to the students nor their parents/guardians under an emergency disaster". The school may also choose not to count the absence as an absence by entering it in the "days of suspension of attendance" or "days of bereavement, etc." column of the school's cumulative guidance record.

In the case of kindergartens, etc., there is no column for "days of suspension of attendance, bereavement, etc." in the instructional record, so in these cases, the number of days not attended may be entered in the remarks column, etc., as "the number of days when the school principals allow them to be absent from the school due to reasons not-attributed to the students nor their parents/guardians under an emergency disaster".

3. Regarding Measures to be Taken in the Event of the Spread of Infection within the School

Since there is always the possibility of an outbreak of COVID-19 for the time being, it is important to continue to be vigilant against such an outbreak and to be prepared to deal with it at school.

There should be no discrimination, prejudice, slander, etc. against infected persons and their families, and sufficient attention should be paid to prevent such incidents from occurring. However, in the event such behaviors are seen or heard, it is necessary to provide guidance to the perpetrator from the perspective of respect for human rights and to provide adequate support to people who were targeted.

(1) Assessing the Infection Situation in the Region

It is important for school administrators to grasp the infection situation in the region in cooperation with the Public Health Management Bureau. Currently, by using the "Information System for Absentees and Infectious Diseases in Schools" of the Japan Society of School Health, it is possible to grasp the status of absenteeism of students in the surrounding area and share this information with the Board of Education and the public health center, etc. If you are the school administrator and your school is not a member of this system, please consider joining.

(2) Decision of Temporary Closure

In the event that a student or a staff member is infected, the school administrator shall decide on whether or not to temporarily close all or part of the school in accordance with Article 20 of the School Health and Safety Act, taking into consideration the possibility of the spread of infection.

In making a decision, it is important to clarify and publicize in advance the significance of the temporary closure in terms of infection control measures, the scope and conditions of the temporary closure, and to respond flexibly within the necessary extent and period, such as by first considering the closure of classes in which infected students are enrolled, while taking into consideration the need to

secure learning of students.

Specifically, it is important to proactively consider the feasibility of, for example, staggered school hours, staggered school attendance, online learning, etc., based on the developmental stage of students, etc., and to work on the continuation of learning before making a temporary closure of the entire school.

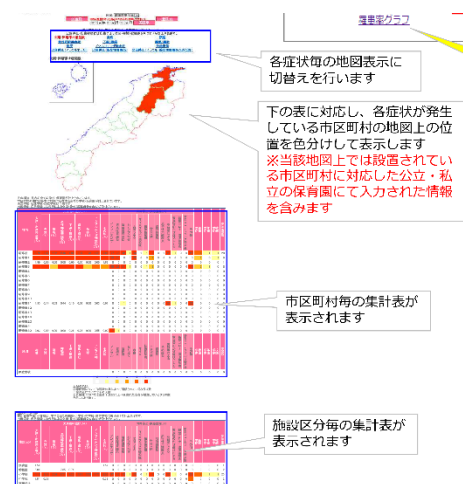
Additionally, consideration should be given to devising methods that allow certain students to attend school. This includes students who require special accommodations, such as students in the final grade who need career/academic guidance, and first graders who require face-to-face learning support from teachers. School owners need to take individual responses to each of their schools based on socioeconomic circumstances and other school and regional characteristics.

In addition, for details on temporary closures, etc., please refer to the "Guidelines for Countermeasures in the Case Where COVID-19 Infection of Students, Teachers or Staff is Confirmed at the Schools" as appropriate.

The Merit of “Information System for Absentees and Infectious Diseases in Schools”

Merit [1] Early Detection

- Daily data entry of information on absences due to infectious diseases enables early detection of infectious disease outbreaks.
- Information is color-coded and displayed on a map, allowing the Boards of Education, schools, and public health centers to grasp in real-time status of temporary school closings and suspensions of attendance at schools in the surrounding area.



Excerpt from "Practical Document of Information System for Absentees and Infectious Diseases in Schools" on Japan Society of School Health website

Merit [2] Information Sharing

- When there is a sudden increase in absenteeism or the onset of class closures, an alert e-mail is sent to relevant parties who have registered their e-mail addresses, enabling the Board of Educations, public health centers, school physicians, and other relevant organizations to grasp the status of infectious disease outbreaks on real-time basis and share information.

Merit [3] Time Saving

- The system can send the notice forms online (attendance suspension reports, monthly attendance suspension reports, temporary closure reports, etc.), making the procedure paperless and reduce the burden of the person-in-charge.

Merit [4] Data Utilization

- Input data is saved and can be used to create tabulations and graphs for infection control.
 - * The Japan Society of School Health is accepting applications. Please apply collectively by the department in charge of each local government, but not by facility units.
(Usage Fee: free of charge)

<https://www.gakkohoken.jp/system-information/archives/17>

*This page is based off of system for Article 1 schools and for reference only.

4. ICT-based learning guidance for students who are unable to attend school due to unavoidable circumstances

It is important to be prepared for emergencies so that students can keep their opportunities to learn even when they are unavoidably absent from school due to temporary closure or suspension of attendance.

In addition, it is important to ensure that these students do not fall significantly behind in their studies, maintain a regular lifestyle, and maintain the relationship between the school and the students.

Therefore, schools are required to take necessary measures in accordance with the infection situation, while taking into consideration the actual conditions of the region, school, and students. In particular, when students are unavoidably unable to attend school for a certain period of time, ICT terminals can be brought home to ensure opportunities for conversation during online morning meetings or health observations, study assignments can be distributed to ICT terminals to promote home study, and simultaneous interactive web conferencing systems can be used to connect teachers and students at home. It is important to ensure that there is a means of connecting school and home even when students are unable to attend school, and to ensure that there are no differences depending on where students live, so that communication with students does not cease and learning does not stop.

It is important for teachers to provide learning guidance and to monitor learning progress of students based on the guidance plan. Specifically, depending on the infection situation, it is important to provide instruction based on textbooks, which are the main teaching materials, while taking into account the actual conditions of the region, school, and students, and to combine teaching materials that can be used together with textbooks (e.g., digital or analog teaching materials, video-on-demand, TV broadcasting, etc.) or by utilizing ICT environment. In doing so, it is also possible to use digital textbooks for learners and digital teaching materials, etc., or combine them for instruction.

In addition, it is recommended to closely monitor students' learning status and achievements through the establishment of school attendance days, home visits, and the use of telephone calls and e-mails. Furthermore, when distributing assignments, please ensure that the content and quantity of the assignments are appropriate, taking into consideration the developmental stage and learning situation of the students.

For students who require special consideration due to their family circumstances, special measures should be taken to improve their ICT environment, encourage them to use regional learning support programs, or allow them to attend school in special

circumstances.

Regarding the above and other details, please refer to the following.

- "Regarding the guidance of students who are unable to attend school due to unavoidable circumstances such as infectious diseases or disasters (Notice)" (Notification issued by the Director-general of the Elementary and Secondary Education Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, dated February 19, 2021)
- "Regarding ICT-based learning guidance for students who are unable to attend school due to unavoidable circumstances (Administrative notification)" (January 12, 2022).

Chapter 5. Matters to be Considered for Infection Control Measures
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1. Assessing Mental and Physical Conditions of Students and Teachers, and Providing Mental Health Care, etc.

It is necessary to accurately assess the situation of students through detailed health observations led by the class homeroom teachers, school nurses, and the like. At the same time, the relevant teaching staff should respond systematically as a team under the leadership of the school executive officers, providing health counseling, etc. in cooperation with the school physician, and psychological and welfare support by the school counselor, school social worker, etc. At the same time, in consideration of the mental burden on teachers and staff who are on the front lines of control measures against infectious diseases and mental health care at schools, school executive officers are requested to give due consideration to the mental health of teachers and staff.

In doing so, if necessary, they may refer to "Kokoro-no-mimi," a portal site for workers' mental health, or other services that allow teachers and staff to consult confidentially under strict privacy protection.

2. Students in Need of Medical Care or Those with Underlying Medical Conditions

Among medically cared children, some of these children have breathing problems and are at high risk for worsening COVID-19. Therefore, the schools where the medically cared children are enrolled should decide on their attendance at school on an individual basis after consulting with their parents/guardians about the opinion of their doctor, if necessary.

With regards to the attendance of medically cared children, the schools will consult with the school physicians, etc. regarding support systems and the method of providing medical care, and will take sufficient safety precautions.

For children with underlying medical conditions, the schools should decide regarding their attendance at school after consulting with their parents/guardians regarding the opinion of their attending physicians, as needed.

In addition, for students with disabilities at special support schools, etc., contact with them is sometimes unavoidable during guidance, or many of them may come to school at the same time by school bus, etc. Therefore, appropriate measures should be taken in consideration of such circumstances and the type and severity of disabilities of the students. When schools take such measures, it is important to obtain advice from the school physicians as necessary, and to explain to the parents/guardians in advance regarding necessary contact with the students during guidance and assistance, etc., from the perspective of ensuring their safety.

3. COVID-19 Vaccine and School Education Activities

Vaccines for COVID-19 are administered to prevent the aggravation and onset of infections.

Vaccination is not compulsory, and the decisions of the students and their parents/guardians should be respected. However, in making such decisions, it is important to fully inform them of the target population of the vaccination, the effects and adverse reactions, and information on where to consult when they have questions. Therefore, it is important to cooperate with the local Public Health Management Bureaus to disseminate information on vaccination to their parents/guardians.

It is also important for teachers and staff who wish to be vaccinated to receive the vaccine in order to ensure their safety and prevent transmission of the virus from them to students.

On the other hand, it is not expected that any difference in school educational activities arise from whether a student has been vaccinated. In addition, it is important to instruct students and ask parents/guardians to understand that vaccinations should be given based on their own will and the consent of their parents/guardians, and considering that some people are physically unable or unwilling to be vaccinated for various reasons so that receiving or not receiving vaccinations never causes

discrimination or bullying.

It may be necessary to know the vaccination history of students for some reasons in school educational activities. In such cases, it is necessary to handle personal information with sufficient care, such as clarifying the purpose of collecting the information, obtaining the consent of the students and their parents/guardian, and devising a method of collecting information so that it can be kept confidential from others. Alternatively, the results of medical examinations, etc. may also be used. Furthermore, there is a possibility that the vaccination history may be obtained as part of health surveys, etc., accompanying health checkups, and in such cases as well, sufficient attention should be paid to the handling of personal information.