# Ideas for School Nurse Activities During the COVID-19  Pandemic

*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.*

COVID-19 is a public health concern, and as the eyes and ears of public health, school nurses understand this in the context of 21ˢᵗ century school nursing. Here are some activities school nurses can do while schools are closed.

- Stay current on the emerging COVID-19 to appropriately answer questions now and when schools reopen; also stay current on cases in your area.
- Coordinate with school administration and families to determine when and how students' school medication supplies can be picked up for use at home.
- As appropriate, outreach to students at-risk (for COVID-19) or social issues related to social distancing and offer guidance and information.
- Develop a system of communication for students and families to connect with you while schools are closed.
- Develop a list of resources that families may need during this time such as local food pantries, health centers, etc. Distribute the list to families, as these needs may be new to families and they are unaware of community resources.
- Keep parents, family and staff up-to-date by proactively pushing information out regarding the illness and how to address related stress and anxiety. This can include information on the disease caused by this novel coronavirus, prevention mechanism, or [myth busting](#) inaccurate information you have seen.
  - Proactively provide information and resources to other issues that arise in your population. For example, child abuse often rises in times of stress-providing resources and skills to cope during this time will be critical.
- Review and update policies and procedure manuals – particularly regarding communicable disease outbreak, emergency preparedness, when students should stay home, etc.
- Work with the information technology department to be sure you have access to student attendance rates (and add reasons for absences) for future events, and when schools reopen.
- Develop an evidence-based plan and process, based on CDC guidelines and in accordance with local health department recommendations, that will decrease anxiety and inappropriate screenings of children upon schools reopening.
  - Communicate and review the process with administration and teachers ahead of time, so everyone agrees, and role delineation is clear.

- Be proactive and create some processes that would have made it run smoother so you can be part of the solution during debriefing. This could include distance learning plans (what role school nurses would have), emergency shut down, communicable outbreak plan, or communication plan.
  - Also think beyond the school to the community and process or infrastructure changes, especially as they relate to school children, that worked or did not. Develop a plan to advocate for changes (once crisis is over) where needed.
- If wanting/able to do more frontline work check with the local health department for ways to assist. You could also join your state medical reserve corps or see what groups like the American Red Cross are doing. Work with established groups to be sure efforts are coordinated and not duplicating efforts.

## Other activities, not specifically related to COVID-19

- Learn new skills or stay up to date through online professional development. NASN E-Learning is one of many options.
- Review records of students with chronic conditions who may need 504 accommodations, individualized healthcare plans, or emergency care plans for the coming year or who are transitioning to a new school in preparation for when schools reopen; and begin the processes now.
- Review data from the current year to share with your administrators, teachers and school board. Be sure to include your new goal(s) for next year.
  - As required, begin preparation of required year end state reports. (See NASN templates for ideas on how to display data)
- Develop online trainings/podcasts for your schools on topics that you receive many questions on (such as why schools track immunizations, why schools have policies and what the policy is regarding medication, school rules regarding communicable disease/staying home from school)
- Help serve lunch or do other acts of service for the vulnerable in your community. Check in with the volunteer coordinator to determine needs and scheduling so as not to overwhelm social distancing efforts.

The Colorado Department of Education also provided suggestions to school nurses that had some similar suggestions for school nurses (lists were developed independently), as well as broadened beyond school nursing.

## Resources

- Resources for Schools, Workplaces & Community Locations: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html
- Communication Print Resources:  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html
- Health Promotion Materials:  https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html
- Social Distancing https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/
- Non-tradition health promotion ideas based on national health education standards (developed by Cairn Guidance and Kentucky SHAPE):
  - Elementary School
  - Middle School
  - High School