

Dear school partners and stakeholders,

We acknowledge that the last two weeks in particular have seen the culmination of countless hours of deep discussion, thoughtful planning, and community engagement in preparation for fall instruction. We see and appreciate your commitment to the health and wellbeing of your students and staff. [Public Health – Seattle & King County \(PHSKC\) supports school districts across King County that have made the tough decision to begin the school year with online learning.](#) Below are some updates from the Public Health—Seattle & King County (PHSKC) Schools and Child Care Task Force to support you and your colleagues during this challenging time, including:

1. Communication resources for families
2. Guidance and tool updates
3. Regional public sector employees extend teleworking until 2021
4. Update from Health Officer, Dr. Jeff Duchin
5. CDC report emphasizes COVID-19 can cause prolonged illness, including in younger people

1. Communication resources for families

PHSKC continues to develop messaging to support children and families during the Coronavirus pandemic. Included below is current messaging you may consider sharing with your communities:

We can all help to get kids and teachers back in the classroom: *Our ability to reopen schools safely is directly related to what's happening in our communities. By social distancing, [keeping your quarantine crew small](#) and minimizing interactions with others outside your home, washing hands frequently and wearing a face covering, you're supporting our work to get everyone back to class. For tips on how to enjoy the rest of the summer while slowing COVID-19 spread, visit kingcounty.gov/covid or the [Public Health Insider](#).*

Messaging from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) also emphasizes that [fewer, shorter and safer interactions with others](#), keeping distance, and wearing a mask can flatten the curve and help prevent further restrictions. [See their recent blog here.](#)

2. Guidance and tool updates

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released [additional guidance for schools](#).
 - This informed recent updates to the [school reopening guidance](#) from the State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH).
- OSPI released [reopening guidance for special education](#) on **July 30**.
- PHSKC's toolkit for school administrators to support school reopening planning and decision-making is still in progress. In light of many districts' recent decisions to do fully remote instruction in the fall, PHSKC hopes to publish a version of the toolkit in **August** at the earliest. This toolkit aims to provide the following:
 - Communication tools such as fact sheets and template letters to families
 - Resource lists for testing and insurance access
 - Checklists and decision matrices for administrators

3. Regional public sector employers extend teleworking until 2021

King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties, the cities of Everett, Kenmore, Redmond, Seattle, Shoreline, and Tacoma, and the Port of Seattle and Port of Everett are taking a united approach

to slow the spread of COVID-19 and maximize physical distancing by extending teleworking for eligible employees until 2021. The impacts of this approach will likely impact many of the students and families you serve.

4. Update from Health Officer, Dr. Jeff Duchin

On July 24th, 2020, Seattle and King County Health Officer Dr. Jeff Duchin gave an update on the COVID-19 outbreak in King County as the current seven-day average of new cases reached the highest level since the beginning of April. Dr. Duchin addressed the importance of minimizing the number of close contacts people have outside the house and emphasized the need for making long-term behavior changes:

“We need to fundamentally rethink the way we go about our lives, the way our environments are structured, to decrease the risk of COVID-19 and to reset our expectations about when we might get back to our pre-COVID lifestyles. It’s not going to happen in the near future and we need to come to terms with that. We need to think through how we as individuals, as families, businesses and as community members can interact as safely as possible and respect one another by taking the prevention measures very seriously. The alternative will ultimately be increasing numbers of serious illnesses for some of our most vulnerable community members and bad outcomes that will inevitably occur even among healthy younger people.”

You can view the entire press conference here: <https://youtu.be/7rlolu2C4lk>

5. CDC report emphasizes COVID-19 can cause prolonged illness, including in younger people

Unlike early in the pandemic, most of the recent increase in positive COVID-19 cases in King County have been in young people. In the last two weeks, over 65% of the positive cases were in people under the age of 40. People in this age group have lower likelihood of underlying health conditions and hospitalizations. However, the CDC released findings of a recent telephone survey that indicates more than one-third of people diagnosed with COVID-19 but did not have to be hospitalized had not returned to their usual state of health within 2-3 weeks of being tested. Among those between the age of 18-34 with no chronic medical conditions, one in five had not returned to their usual state of health. The CDC’s takeaway message? “Recovery from COVID-19 can take a long time, even in young adults.” Please share this message widely, especially in networks that include young adults. You can refer to the entire [CDC report here](#).

Thank you again for your deep and ongoing commitment to the health and wellbeing of the children, families, staff, and communities you serve.

In gratitude,

The Public Health—Seattle & King County Schools and Child Care Task Force

In addition to the resources linked below, please subscribe to our [Public Health Insider](#) blog to receive regular updates about the COVID-19 outbreak and response.

King County:

- [Schools and Child Care COVID-19 webpage](#)
- [Guidance for Child Care Administrators](#)

Washington State:

- [Department of Children, Youth, and Families Coronavirus - COVID-19 Updates](#)
- [Department of Health COVID-19-related information on childcare, schools, colleges, and universities](#)
- [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance & Resources](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Flowcharts to guide decision making for [schools, youth programs and camps, and child care programs](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
- [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#)
- [Schools and Child Care Programs: Guidance to Plan, Prepare, and Respond](#)
- [FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents](#)
- [Checklist for Teachers and Parents](#)