



Human Services Council Covid-19 response and update

Due to growing concerns about the potential spread of the novel Covid-19 virus, the Human Services Council is following guidelines set by the CDC and governmental officials. Human Services Council is working hard to keep those we serve healthy and safe.

To this end, we have made some temporary changes to our service provisions that will be implemented immediately and will continue until further notice-

Children's Connection Update:

Staff will be calling all clients 24 hours prior to their scheduled appointments to confirm that the client and/or family members do not have any symptoms of illness (such as coughing, sore throat, fever, etc.) If anyone in the household is symptomatic, in person appointments will be canceled. For clients who are 10 years of age and older, counseling sessions over the telephone will be offered as an option for those that would like the support. All other meetings and investigations will be managed on a day to day basis. Clients who show up with symptoms will be sent home to avoid further spread of all infections. All mental health crisis situations will be assessed to determine the appropriate response.

Housing Program Update:

Our housing complex is regularly cleaned by our cleaning company and special care is taken by our housing staff to meet quality standards in place year-round that keep our building clean and safe. We will be increasing the hours of the cleaning staff during the next few weeks. Additionally, we are encouraging everyone to do their part in helping prevent the spread of germs and viruses.

Frequent hand washing and use of antibacterial hand sanitizer are encouraged and practiced throughout our buildings by staff and residents.

We encourage residents to minimize guest visits and all travel, and to be appropriately selective about where you physically appear. We are encouraging internal and external communication by phone and email wherever and whenever possible. This may mean residents may see less of our staff members for a time. Our commitment to serve our resident's needs remains a top priority and we will continue to do so however we can.

We are working closely with the City of Norwalk Housing Authority and Health Department to monitor the situation and prepare for the possibility that our daily program and work routines could be temporarily impacted if the situation significantly worsens. We will keep all residents and staff members updated with information as it develops.

Mentor Program Update:

The Superintendent of Norwalk Public Schools has directed schools not to allow mentors into schools due to proactively mitigating the COVID-19 spread in Norwalk and Fairfield County until further notice. Mentor Trainings and workshops have been postponed for the month of March. The End of Year Event is under review, with a decision to be made in the next two weeks.

The Mentor Program staff continue to operate at the Park St office during business hours with the ability to work remotely if necessary.

School Based Health Centers Update:

School Based Health Centers pay strict attention to infection control procedures regardless of outbreak, (SBHC Infection Control Policies and procedure manual)

Clinical staff are reviewing and following CDC updates for influenza and corona virus and communicating updates and developments to all staff. We have assured that we have adequate supplies of sanitizers and Personal Protective equipment; including masks for students who have cough or cold to cover their nose and mouth while in the center.

SBHC enrolled students who present with illness will be evaluated for risk per usual and treated or referred as appropriate. In cooperation with the school health nurses febrile students will be sent home until they are medically cleared to return. Infection control processes are adhered to without exception throughout the school year so that our students are safe and healthy and to prevent the spread of germs.

GENERAL HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

There are currently no vaccines available to protect against this virus. The Norwalk Health Department has recommended the following steps to help protect against the spread of this virus.

- **Wash your hands well and frequently.** Wash for at least 20 seconds, rubbing the front and back of your hands and in between fingers. (For children, suggest they sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice to themselves at a slow pace, so that they are washing long enough to be effective.) Wash more frequently than you do now. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub, and air dry. [Learn more about proper handwashing here.](#)
- **Avoid touching your face.** Viruses like COVID-19 or flu can enter our bodies if we get germs on our hands or fingers and then touch our mouths, nose, or eyes. It can be a tough habit to break, so start practicing now.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Viruses like COVID-19 spread through droplets when people cough, sneeze, and talk. By keeping your distance from people who are coughing, sneezing, or are otherwise ill, you can try to avoid those droplets.
- **If you or your child feel sick, stay home from work or school,** and call your doctor to determine the need for medical attention.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue,** then throw the tissue in the trash.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces** using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- **Practice other “infection protection” habits.** For example, replace handshakes with elbow-bumps or use no-touch greetings, push elevator buttons with your knuckle instead of your fingertip, don't share cups or utensils.

Additionally, we encourage everyone to regularly check the below websites for important updates and safety information.

City of Norwalk website: <https://www.norwalkct.org/1897/COVID-19>

Norwalk Board of Education website: <https://www.norwalkps.org/>

Connecticut State Department of Health website: <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH>

Center for Disease Control website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nCoV>

World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>