



RÍKISLÖGREGLUSTJÓRINN  
ALMANNAVARNAEILD



Embætti  
landlæknis  
Directorate of Health

Reykjavík, 5 March 2020

**Re: Information on the COVID-19 coronavirus — pre-school and primary school cafeterias**

A variety of precautionary measures have been adopted in order to hinder the spread of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. One factor that must be considered is the cafeterias in pre-schools and primary schools.

In general, coronavirus is considered to spread through physical contact and through respiratory droplets, much as seasonal flu is transmitted. Coronavirus can be transmitted when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or blows their nose and a healthy person breathes in the droplets or spray from the infected person. It can also be transmitted if a healthy person's hands are contaminated with droplets or spray and the person then touches their face.

It has not been confirmed that people are contagious before they experience symptoms, but some people experience mild symptoms or none and can still be contagious. Viruses live for a short time on hard surfaces outside the body (for a period of hours rather than days). As a result, jointly used surfaces such as kitchen supplies and appliances and water pitchers could conceivably transmit infection if an infected person sneezes on them, coughs on them, or touches them with unwashed hands. It is considered safest that food be served by school employees, who should use disposable gloves while at work. It is recommended that school authorities discuss and decide on more detailed procedures.

It is vital to emphasise the importance of hand-washing and use of hand sanitiser. Children's ability to wash their hands thoroughly differs according to their age and other factors.

More detailed information can be found on the Directorate of Health website:  
<https://www.landlaeknir.is>.

Respectfully yours,  
Department of Civil Protection and Emergency Management