

Age-appropriate COVID communication for the classroom



Table of contents

Introduction

page 03 ›

CHAPTER 1

Early elementary school students (K-3)

page 04 ›

CHAPTER 2

Older elementary school students (grades 4-6)

page 06 ›

CHAPTER 3

Discussing the pandemic out of the classroom

page 08 ›

Introduction



The global pandemic created a world full of fear and risk for adults. How much worse must it be for children, especially young kids?

Their lives have changed dramatically—attending school virtually, not being able to see family and friends—and they may not understand why.

This guide gives pointers on age-appropriate communication about COVID-19 in the classroom for grades K-6.

Early elementary school students (K-3)



At this age, children need [brief, simple explanations](#) that don't go into too much detail. Additionally, you don't want to create fear or anxiety; children are probably scared enough as it is.

Their parents might have lost their jobs or taken pay cuts. In any event, there's probably a great deal of stress at home, and you don't want to bring that into the classroom.

Start off by explaining that COVID-19 is a virus that has never before been seen in humans. Describe in the simplest terms what COVID-19 does—it can make people feel sick by causing fever, a bad cough, and sometimes a sore throat. People with COVID-19 can feel aches and pains in their bodies, and they can feel very tired. They can be sick for weeks.

The first question kids will ask teachers is, “Will I get sick?” The next question will be, “Will my family get sick?” These can be difficult questions to answer.

Experts from Stony Brook Children’s Hospital advise adults to admit that it’s difficult to know who will get the virus and who won’t

However, they should point out that many people who get COVID-19 won’t get too sick, and they’ll recover quickly. However, people who are very old or already sick can become very ill from the coronavirus.

At this point in the conversation, it’s important to bring up the basic steps kids can take to prevent the spread of the virus:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Don’t touch your face
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow
- Wear a mask in school and in other public places, and if you’re around people who are likely to get sick

Older elementary school students (grades 4-6)



By the time kids are nine or ten years old, they're ready for somewhat longer, slightly more complex explanations. However, the same advice for younger children holds true: you don't want to make kids scared or stressed.

Teachers can tell their students what coronavirus is and what it does. Then, they can talk about [what a virus is](#)—a microscopic germ that can cause people to become sick. There are thousands of viruses, including the common cold and the flu.

This is also an excellent opportunity to talk about [how the coronavirus got its name](#) (from the crown-shaped protein on its exterior). At this age, kids can understand how viruses work by invading other organisms and replicating themselves.

As with younger grades, teachers should mention that healthy people typically recover from COVID-19 quickly and don't have any lasting effects. However, it's important to emphasize that the elderly and people who are already sick are at greater risk for catching COVID-19.

At this age, children are ready to learn about how the virus started to spread and the measures governments have taken to keep people safe. Teachers should emphasize that the virus can't spread if we don't help it. Reviewing basic hygiene measures (washing hands, coughing into your sleeve, wearing a mask, maintaining social distance) still matters at this age.

Now is also a great time to discuss the concept of media literacy as well as setting boundaries on how much media coverage to take in. The media's job is to grab our attention, but journalists and reporters tend to focus on the worst of a situation and amplify that so it's all the public focuses on. Limiting how much media kids watch reduces their anxiety.

Discussing the pandemic out of the classroom



Parents and caregivers will doubtlessly have similar conversations with their children about these topics. Teachers can help guide these discussions by providing the right resources.

With educational communication tools, teachers can share reliable websites, podcasts, and videos about the subject that are age-appropriate for their students.

School communication tools integrate with [learning management systems](#), the digital backbone of virtual learning. LMS are the repository for syllabi, assignments, assessments, and supplementary resources; parents can use them at home to have meaningful discussions with accurate information.

About RingCentral

RingCentral's educational communication tools allow you to share information easily and effectively with multiple channels and LMS integrations.

To learn more, [get a demo](#).

With RingCentral, learning is always in session.

Learn more about RingCentral for Education at ringcentral.com/education.

For more information, please contact a sales representative.

Visit us at

ringcentral.com/education

or call 844-569-2989.

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of cloud Message Video Phone™ (MVP™), customer engagement, and contact center solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. 20 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002. ringcentral.com