

Teachers & Staff:

The information below applies to all desktop computers, laptops, winbooks and chromebooks ...

How to Sanitize a Chromebook Defending your students and staff from Coronavirus and other illnesses starts with keeping the thing they use most—their technology—clean.

Why Clean Your Chromebooks In the US, over half of all student mobile devices are Chromebooks. That's well over 30 million devices touching the hands of students every day. Due to their prominence in the classroom, being able to sanitize Chromebooks properly is a critical skill, but most of us have never been taught how.

You can't just drench a computer in Lysol® or scrub it down with cleansing wipes (well... I guess you could, but it probably wouldn't work after that.) Cleaning your technology takes a little more finesse. You want to be thorough and effective, while avoiding any damage to the screen, keys, and internal components.

Coronavirus? You might be worried that Coronavirus could be clinging to products and packaging manufactured in China, Korea, and surrounding Asian countries, but according to experts, there's no need to fret. For starters, Coronavirus is primarily transmitted respiratorily. While it *can* be transmitted by touching infected surfaces, it's much less likely to spread by this method. Even if somehow it did get on the surface of devices coming from Asia, it's highly unlikely it would survive weeks of intercontinental travel. According to Dr. Patricia A Stinchfield, Vice President of the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases (NFID), "The virus on materials [you] ordered would not survive the trip... Outside the body, we believe this virus only survives on an object minutes to an hour or so, not the days it takes your goods to travel the globe." ²

That being said, taking extra precautions to keep commonly used objects (such as student devices) clean and washing your hands after handling them is always recommended.

5 Steps to Sanitizing a Chromebook

Step 1: Power off the device. You will be applying liquid solutions to your Chromebook, so powering it off is a must.

Step 2: Remove any accessories or plug-ins such as cases, USBs, and headphones. Once removed, cases can be separately disinfected with sanitizing wipes or spray.

Step 3: Clean the screen with an LCD-safe solution applied to a microfiber cloth.

Strong alcohols can eat away the coating on LCD screens. However, LCD-safe solutions such as 0% isopropyl alcohol (diluted with distilled water), hydrogen peroxide, and benzalkonium chloride can be used to properly disinfect Chromebook screens. Never use Windex® or similar products, which contain ammonia, and never use any solutions containing acetone, ethyl alcohol (ethanol), ethyl acid, or methyl chloride. Also, while diluted vinegar may be safe for removing dirt and smudges from LCD screens, it's not an effective disinfectant against many types of common germs, including those that cause colds, flus, and viruses.

To clean, wet a microfiber cloth in LCD-safe solution so that it's damp enough to feel wet, but not damp enough to create any drips (drips are bad. In extreme cases they can ruin the bottom edge of your screen if they get sucked between the layers of the LCD through capillary action). Rub the microfiber gently on the screen in a back-and-forth motion, using the broadest strokes you can. Avoid small circular motions, which can sometimes leave buffed-out spots or whorl marks on the screen.

Never use paper towels, kitchen rags, or any type of cloth other than microfiber. These could damage your screen.

Step 4: Use 70% isopropyl alcohol applied to a soft cotton rag to wipe down the keyboard and external chassis. DO NOT spray your device with disinfectant. It's important that the solution is applied to a rag or cloth first so that liquid doesn't seep into the keyboard. This can damage the keyboard itself or important components housed beneath. CAUTION—70% Isopropyl alcohol is highly flammable, so keep it and anything covered in it away from any sources of ignition.

Step 5: Wait for the alcohol solution to completely evaporate before turning your Chromebook back on. The 70% isopropyl alcohol in the solution is non-conductive (meaning there's no need to worry about that part affecting the electronic components of the device). It's the other 30%, which consists mainly of water, that *is* conductive. Because of this, it's important that you power down your device pre-cleaning and wait until the alcohol is completely evaporated before turning your Chromebook back on. If you're like us, you may be thinking, "why don't I just use a higher concentration of alcohol to speed the drying process?" Well, counterintuitively, the disinfectant properties of isopropyl alcohol drop off rapidly at concentrations higher than 70% , so in this ³ case, stronger isn't better.

It's Cleaning Time! Disinfecting your technology is never a bad idea! However, in the middle of an outbreak as concerning as Coronavirus, it's more important than ever to take extra steps to defend your school. By expertly sanitizing classroom Chromebooks, you can become a virus-fighting superhero and get closer to shutting down outbreaks that threaten your students and staff.