

Protocols for Potential Exposure - Coronavirus

As the US and the State of Maryland continue to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 virus, it is essential that each school has in place a plan to respond to knowledge of individuals traveling back from high risk areas on the possible exposure from a potentially infected individual to the virus. Originally guidance issued to the schools involved addressing students, particularly foreign exchange students, who were returning from Christmas break from impacted countries. As the response and circumstances have evolved, it is strongly recommended that each school have in place a consistent response protocol. To that end the following guidelines are being recommended for establishment in each school.

1. Each school is to proactively communicate with your school community, including students, parents, faculty and staff, that if they should believe a child or a member of the staff or faculty has **potentially been exposed** to the COVID-19 virus, whether through travel or from someone who is potentially infected, that they immediately notify the school administration. Critical to this communication is an affirmation that this potential **exposure does not necessarily warranted immediate quarantine from the school.** Share resources with the school community to help families understand when to keep children home. The guidance in the following link from the American Academy of Pediatrics can be helpful for families. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>external icon
2. If an individual reports or you become aware a student, faculty member or staff member was possibly exposed, the individual can likely be allowed to remain at school. First, the individual in question cannot be displaying any of the noted symptoms, including flu like or respiratory system ailments. For guidance on the symptoms to monitor, refer to the CDC guidelines (LINK). Moreover, the individual identified for monitoring must agree to report to the school nurse or other designee for a daily evaluation. This evaluation, which follows basic CDC protocols, includes the taking of temperature and an assessment for any possible symptoms of a flu or respiratory like illness. The responsible medical person is to maintain a simply record which documents the daily visit. If a person subject to monitoring fails or refuses to participate in the monitoring process, then they can be held out from the school. Remember that **your school nurse or other designee is not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19.** Rather, the objective is for the school to monitor at risk individuals and if symptoms appear, to immediately refer the individual for additional medical monitoring and evaluation. However, during the monitoring period, if the individual who possibly passed this virus to the at risk individual begins to show symptoms, then the at risk individual who is being monitored is to report this change in status to the school and must at that point be held out from school. This person is to remain out of school either till such time as the potential individual who was the source of the virus has been screened and verified as not having the COVID-19 or the at risk individual being monitored has completed the 14 days observation/self-quarantine period. Of course, if during the additional self-quarantine period the student or staff member shows related symptoms they must remain out of school till they are cleared by a health professional.
3. Continue to actively monitor those countries for which travel warnings have been issued. If you learn that one of your students, faculty or staff members, or a member of their households are

returning from any of the impacted countries, promptly notify that individual they are subject to the 14 day monitoring requirement. Please refer regularly to the following webpage to remain current as to which countries are being added to and hopefully in the near future take off of the travel warning listing. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

4. If an individual student is identified as meeting the criteria to be held out of school for a period of self-quarantine, the school should notify their Associate Superintendent. The school administration and Associate Superintendent will then assess each case to determine the plan of action for continuity of the student's education and how to handle the absence, per policy. If a teacher or staff member is required to be placed into self-quarantine, the school is to notify the appropriate Human Resources contact and discuss with the contact how the recording of the absence will be handled.
5. Review the usual absenteeism patterns at your school among both students and staff. Alert your county health officials about large increases in student and staff absenteeism, particularly if absences appear related to respiratory illnesses (like the common cold or the "flu," which have symptoms similar to symptoms of COVID-19). Carefully monitor your school's rate of absenteeism. Notify the Department of Catholic Schools and the Office of Risk Management should you determine a need to advise your county health department of an increase in absences. Review attendance and sick leave policies. Encourage students and staff to stay home when sick.

The Department of Catholic Schools and the Office of Risk Management will continue to provide updates as appropriate. If you have any questions regarding the guidelines relative to the identification and screening process, please contact Tom Alban. With questions relative to a particular student and their educational needs, please contact your Associate Superintendent. If you have a question about an employee and their status, please contact your Human Resource contact.