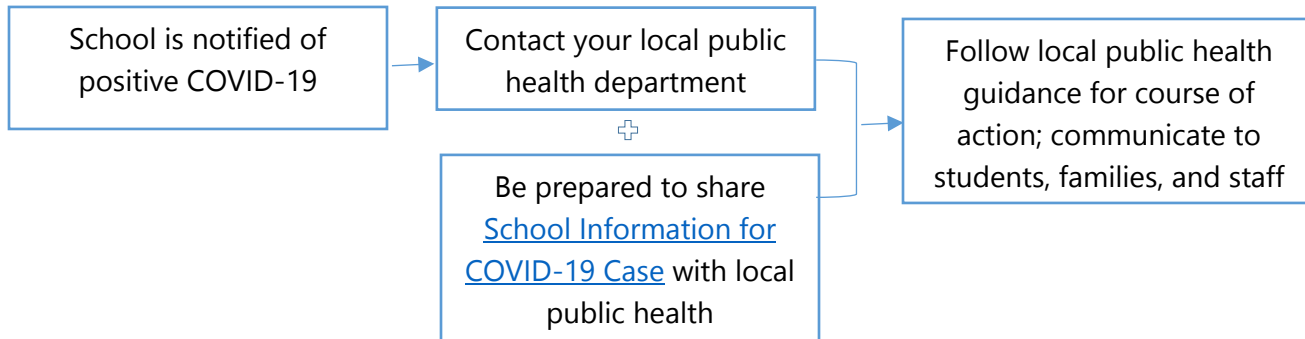


## COVID-19 SCHOOL COMMUNICATION GUIDE

The following communication plan is a guide for schools to use when communicating various activities and responses related to COVID-19. This is not all inclusive, but gives a range of scenarios and template to use through various response efforts for students, staff, and families.

General recommendations: Communication about cases should maintain confidentiality in accordance with the ADA, HIPAA, and FERPA and should include messages to counter potential stigma and discrimination.



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### Roles and Responsibilities

Local Public Health Department	School
Contact investigation of positive case and contact tracing	Identify areas where there might have been close contacts and share information with local public health <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Roster of potential close contacts with names of student(s), guardian(s), phone(s), and email(s)</li></ul>
Contact notification and instruction	Ask students, families, and staff to follow instructions given by local public health
Recommend initial and additional courses of action	Follow and communicate recommendations
Provide letters to positive cases or close contacts indicating when they can safely return to school	Do not allow individuals back to school before the public health department letter indicates they can do so safely
Answer health-related questions	Answer school-related questions

### Limitations

PHD cannot share information on (+) or suspected cases of parents, caregivers, or household members

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### Potential Courses of Action Based on Scenario\*

\*examples only, not intended to be inclusive

Scenario:	Objective of Communication	Templates and Audience

First exposure in the school regardless of risk level	<p>Notify students and families of confirmed case</p> <p>Reassure that local public health is collaborating with the school to identify any students or staff that were in close contact</p> <p>Reassure that individuals who were at risk of exposure will be contacted with 1-2 days</p>	<a href="#">Letter/Email for Positive Case</a> (All)
Exposure – no close contacts	<p>Notify students and families of confirmed case</p> <p>Reassure that local public health is collaborating with the school to identify any students or staff that were in close contact</p>	<a href="#">Letter/Email for Positive Case</a> (All)  <a href="#">Letter/Email for Positive Case with No Close Contacts Identified</a> (All)
Ongoing exposure – close contacts identifiable	<p>Notify students and families of confirmed case</p> <p>Reassure that local public health is collaborating with the school to identify any students or staff that were in close contact</p> <p>Reassure that individuals who were at risk of exposure will be contacted with 1-2 days</p>	<a href="#">Letter/Email for Positive Case</a> (All)
Exposure – close contacts not identifiable and risk of spread is unknown or high	<p>Notify students and families of confirmed case</p>	<a href="#">Letter/Email for Positive Case</a> (All)  <a href="#">Letter/Email for Short-Term Dismissal</a> (All)

## School Information for COVID-19 Case

Local public health will ask for the following information in order for them to better understand the level of potential spread in your school. *Gather as much information as possible. Local public health will gather more details during their investigation and contact tracing efforts.*

- Name of student and date of birth
- Last day at school
- Was student showing symptoms at school?
- Was the student consistently wearing a cloth face covering?
- Daily structure of
  - Transportation to school (e.g. drop-off, walk/bike, bus)
  - Classroom and daily flow (e.g. sits in a group of cohorted students, classroom size, moves about the building to different classrooms, desks or seating are spaced six feet apart)
  - Communal areas (e.g. does student go to the cafeteria, gym, or other areas where high levels of student mixing occur)
  - Transportation from school (e.g. drop-off, walk/bike, bus)
  - Before or after school activities (e.g. sports, art classes, after-school child-care on-site)

PHD will begin an investigation to determine if schools need to prepare a roster of potential students and staff that may have been in close contact. This does not need to be gathered on every case (e.g. if the student wasn't infectious while at school), but if it is needed the roster should include the following information about close contacts:

- First and last name
- Guardian contact (if a minor)
- Email and phone

## Letter for Positive Case in School

Dear Parent, Guardian & Staff Member:

XXX School is committed to keeping families informed, and it's our goal to be transparent within the bounds of our students', staffs', and community's rights to confidentiality. We are writing to update you on the most current developments regarding COVID-19.

Today, we were informed by South Central Public Health District that an individual within our school community has tested positive for COVID-19. Please keep his/her health and recovery in mind.

Health officials are working with us to identify and contact those who may have come into close contact with the individual. An epidemiologist team member from local public health will be notifying parents, staff, and faculty who had closest contact to the individual testing positive for COVID-19. At this time, if you are not contacted by email or phone then your student is not considered to be at any significant risk and you do not need to have heightened concern.

We have protocols in place for positive cases, which includes the following:

- Communicating directly to our school community
- Intensifying cleaning and disinfection protocols per CDC and FDA guidance
- Coordinating with South Central Public Health on our next course of action, which is dependent on the level or risk to our school community. Such courses of actions could include:
  - Low-risk: no further action and normal school operations continue;
  - Medium risk: some students and staff may have had an increase in risk of exposure, and they may be contacted with further instruction on home isolation or to monitor symptoms for 14 days;
  - High-risk: multiple students and staff have been identified as a close contact and a short-term closure of school is needed to stop the potential spread.

We will continue monitoring any developments and plan accordingly in partnership with local public health. We will update you as we have more information. In the meantime, please seek information from credible sources during these challenging times:

- <https://phd5.idaho.gov/> Public Health 208-678-8221 [Central District Health](#); Informational Call Center 208-321-2222
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [cassiaschools.org](http://cassiaschools.org)

We encourage you to continue to take care of yourselves and one another.

Sincerely,

## Letter/Email for Positive Case with No Close Contacts Identified

Dear Parent, Guardian & Staff Member:

XXX School District is committed to keeping families informed, and it's our goal to be transparent within the bounds of our students', staffs', and community's rights to confidentiality. We are writing to update you on the most current developments regarding COVID-19.

South Central Public Health has completed their contact tracing efforts and concluded that no close contacts were identified (close contact is defined as being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes). We commend our students, families, and staff for their efforts in maintaining our safety protocols and mitigations strategies, and emphasize the continued need to do so while at school and out in our community.

In order to keep our school safe, please continue to monitor for signs and symptoms of illness and to take the following COVID-19 precautions:

(Include any state or regional standard recommendations, such as Idaho Rebounds):

- Engage in physical distancing of at least six feet
- Wear face coverings in public places
- Stay home if sick
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces and objects regularly

Sincerely,

## Letter for Short-Term Dismissal

Dear Parent, Guardian & Staff Member:

XXX School District is committed to keeping families informed, and it's our goal to be transparent within the bounds of our students', staffs', and community's rights to confidentiality. We are writing to update you on the most current developments regarding COVID-19.

Health officials have been working with us and have identified a cluster of COVID-19 illnesses at our school and are recommending a short-term dismissal of students and most staff. At this time, we are closing the school until XXXX to allow for XXXXX (e.g. staff and students to stay home and monitor symptoms for 14 days).

We have protocols in place for positive cases, which includes the following:

- Communicating directly to our school community
- Intensifying cleaning and disinfection protocols
- Coordinating with South Central Public Health on our next course of action

Schools can re-open safely after short-term closure. We will continue monitoring any developments and plan accordingly in partnership with local public health. We will update you as we have more information. In the meantime, please seek information from credible sources during these challenging times:

- <https://phd5.idaho.gov/> Public Health 208-678-8221 [Central District Health](#); Informational Call Center 208-321-2222
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [cassiaschools.org](http://cassiaschools.org)

We encourage you to continue to take care of yourselves and one another, and to continue following COVID-19 community precautions and mitigation strategies.

Sincerely,