Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Who can school administrators and superintendents’ contact at Alberta Health Services (AHS) during the COVID-19 pandemic?

There are several points of contact at AHS for schools during the COVID-19 pandemic:

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<th>Team</th>
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| Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) Team | School administrators and school authorities should contact this line when:  
  - They want to reach AHS for guidance or decision making support related to COVID-19   
  - They aren’t sure who to contact within AHS related to COVID-19   
  - Student absenteeism related to illness is greater than or equal to 10%  
  
  The CEIR phone line is for use by school administrators and school authorities only. It is not intended for calls from parents, school staff or other school community members. | 1-844-343-0971  
  8 am to 10 pm, 7 days per week.                                                                                                                                 |
| Public Health Inspectors                          | Public Health Inspectors can provide advice and answer questions about how to apply outbreak prevention measures. | Schools can find information to contact their local Environmental Public Health Office here. |
| Communicable Disease Control Team                 | Schools with an active outbreak will work with this team.                        | Schools will be provided with specific contact information for this team when they have an active outbreak. |

What type of support will schools who call the CEIR team receive?

- School administrators who call the CEIR team will be asked to leave a message, and will be called back by a health professional within 8 hours during hours of operation.
- The nurse will discuss the reason for their call, and will provide relevant information and refer onto the other teams within AHS as relevant. This may include referrals to:
  - Environmental Public Health for questions about applying outbreak prevention measures and questions about student illness related to nausea and vomiting
  - Communicable Disease Control (CDC) for questions about COVID-19 cases in staff/students and questions about student illness related to a rash
What should school administrators do if they’ve heard about a COVID-19 case within their school community, but they have not been contacted by AHS?

- School superintendents will be contacted by AHS CDC team members when a case is determined to have been at school when infectious. The AHS CDC team contacts the individual who has tested positive and conducts an investigation of the case before the school is contacted. The school will not be called if it is determined that the student was not at school when infectious.
- School administrators are not required to call AHS to report cases that they’ve heard about. If AHS information or support is needed, administrators can call the CEIR line.

Can schools access test results for students?

- If a school superintendent or administrator reaches out to AHS, including through the CEIR line, there will not be a disclosure of confidential patient information. The school should not expect to be told a student’s test results. AHS team members are able to give some general advice and recommendations.
- AHS notifies all people tested for COVID-19 of their test results by either text message, autodialer, and/or phone call.
- Persons wanting to access their own test results (or those of their child) can get more information about how to find out their results by visiting ahs.ca/testing.

Who advises an individual that they are a close contact of a positive case and must isolate?

- AHS Public Health contacts all positive cases of COVID-19, or the guardians of a minor, to notify them of their status, to provide advice as to how they can protect themselves and others (including instructions for isolation), and to start the contact tracing process.
- AHS Public Health will work with schools to determine which students have been in close contact with a positive case (e.g., grade-level cohorts or other class groups), and which school staff members are close contacts.
- Close contacts (or their parents/guardians) will be notified via email or phone call by AHS Public Health within 48 hours after confirming a positive case within the school. Email addresses are provided to AHS by the school. Where email addresses are not available, AHS will make phone calls to students/parents/guardians.

What should schools tell staff/students/parents who have health questions?

- Parents and school staff with questions about their own health or the health of their child should contact their primary care provider, call Health Link at 811, or visit ahs.ca/testing.
- Individuals looking for general COVID-19 information are encouraged to visit ahs.ca/covid or alberta.ca/covid19.