

Ebola Guidance for Private Schools

Background

- Ebola is a severe, often fatal disease caused by a virus. A large outbreak is now occurring in the West African countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- **Ebola is not circulating in NYC.**
- Ebola is spread only by **direct contact** (through broken skin or mouth, eyes or nose) with:
 - The body fluids (blood, vomit, urine, feces, saliva, sweat, semen) of a person who is sick with Ebola
 - Objects soiled with the **body fluids** of a person sick with Ebola
 - The body of a person who died from Ebola
- **Ebola is not airborne.** You cannot be infected simply by being near someone who has Ebola.
- Ebola is only contagious **after** symptoms begin, and it is more easily spread by people who are severely sick. It is **very unlikely** that students or school personnel would be able to spread the disease at school.
- Ebola symptoms include fever, headache, muscle pain, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain and unexplained bleeding.
- Fever in people who traveled to the affected countries is likely to be caused by common infectious illnesses, like the flu, or diseases such as malaria or typhoid, and should be evaluated by a doctor.
- Anyone who gets sick after returning from an Ebola-affected country within 21 days should call 911 right away. New York City hospital staff will not ask about immigration status. Patients will be seen regardless of ability to pay.

Monitoring Returning Travelers

- All travelers to the U.S. from Ebola-affected countries are routed through five airports for screening.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working with local health departments, including the New York City Health Department, to screen people arriving from Ebola-affected countries. Healthy people with known exposures and no symptoms must report their temperature and any symptoms to public health officials twice a day for 21 days.
- Healthy students who recently returned from the affected countries can attend school and work during monitoring.
- **Schools do not need to monitor students.** Monitoring will be done by public health officials. If a person does not develop symptoms after 21 days, he or she is not at risk and does not need further follow up or monitoring.

Preparing Your School

- If your school does not have a nurse or school-based health clinic, identify a **principal's designee**. The designee is a member of the school's response team who will help with suspected Ebola cases.
- The **principal** or **designee** must select a room to isolate anyone who may be sick with Ebola while waiting for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to arrive. This room does not have to be a vacant room but should be one that can quickly be vacated for isolation purposes.

- If a school nurse is on site, the medical room should be used to isolate a student who could be sick with Ebola. The **principal** and **nurse** should have a plan to manage students who have medications and or scheduled treatments in the medical room, in the event that the room must be used for isolation.
- School **administrative staff** should ensure that contact information for parents, students and staff is updated.
- The **principal** or **designee** should share any Ebola-related plans with the **school nurse** and/or **School Based Health Center (SBHC) Provider**.
- **All school staff** should always treat any sick student or staff member with respect, and make him or her as comfortable as possible.

Handling Students with Ebola Symptoms

- Review the student's attendance history. *If a student has been attending school continuously for three weeks (21 days), he or she is not at risk.*
- Ask the student about travel history. If the student is unable to answer questions, call the parent. *If the student or parent indicates NO travel to an affected area, he or she is not at risk for Ebola.*
- If no one can identify whether the student traveled to an affected area, follow the steps directly below.

Handling Students with Ebola Symptoms AND Travel History

- If the student with symptoms traveled to an Ebola-affected area within the past 21 days, or if you cannot identify whether he or she traveled to an affected area, keep the student in the medical room with the door closed and with essential staff only. **Do not** move the student to another room. Keep other students and staff out of the room.
- Essential health personnel should put on protective equipment while in the medical room, maintain distance (at least three feet away) and avoid direct contact with blood or body fluids.
- Call the Health Department at **866-692-3641**. Be ready to give the following information:
 - The student's signs and symptoms
 - The dates and place of travel within the 21 days before the illness
 - Any school locations or items exposed to body fluids (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea)
- If the Health Department determines that the student does not need further evaluation for Ebola, take normal action for dealing with sick students.
- If the Health Department determines that the student does require further evaluation for suspected Ebola infection, the Health Department will notify 911 and arrange the response with EMS and the school.
- Tell the parent and principal about the situation. Have school staff keep other students and staff out of the room during screening.
- Keep the student in the room with essential staff only and with the door closed until medical help arrives. The student should never be left alone.

Precautions After an Ebola Case is Confirmed

- **All staff** should wash hands before and after seeing any students at school.
- **Nursing staff** should wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as defined by the school, and follow standard procedures. They should also discard used PPE in a red medical waste bag.

- If a room is contaminated with the body fluids of the sick student being isolated for suspected Ebola infection, **school staff** should close off the room to others. **No one should clean up the body fluids of a student with travel history and symptoms.** The Health Department will evaluate the situation and give the school further guidance about cleaning and/or reopening the room.
- Out of an abundance of caution, **school staff** should close classrooms and shared spaces where the student went that day until the Health Department has evaluated the situation. Depending on the public health assessment, a contractor or a custodian may be asked to clean those areas.
- **School staff** should stand by for further guidance. New York City agencies will work with New York State and CDC to issue guidance to school leaders and the community.

Precautions for Exposure to Blood or Other Body Fluids

- **All school staff** should stop working, and wash the affected skin with soap and water. Mucous membranes (e.g., eyes and nose) should be rinsed thoroughly with water.
- The **principal** or a **designee** should report the incident according to your institution's established protocol.

Key Messages to the School Community

- There are no enrollment restrictions. As set forth in Chancellor's Regulation A-101, no student may be denied enrollment based on race, color, creed, national origin, gender, gender identity, pregnancy, immigration/citizenship status, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnicity.
- Discriminatory statements made against any members of the school community are not tolerated, under any circumstances.

More Information

- For more information about protocols, contact the Health Department at 866-692-3681.
- To learn about Ebola, visit nyc.gov/ebola
- To order free public educational materials about Ebola, call 311.
- To read the CDC's travel recommendations, visit www.cdc.gov/travel.
- For information on how to talk to children about Ebola, visit:
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/how-talk-children-about-ebola.pdf>
 - <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/infections/Pages/Ebola.aspx>
 - <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4886/SMA14-4886.pdf>