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Guidance for School Administrators during Prolonged Elevated Student Absenteeism

Schools that experience greater than or equal to 15% absenteeism among students may also experience prolonged and higher rates of absenteeism among students and staff. School administrators may benefit from consistent guidance to plan steps that can be taken if the school continues to experience elevated absenteeism. Closing the school is the school administrator's authority. Maine CDC is available to consult with schools at any time by calling 1-800-821-5821. The following questions are intended to provide guidance to schools as they consider disease control activities and potential closure.

1. Are the majority of absent students ill with a common infectious disease?
2. Is the number of absent students less than the number being served by programming?
3. Is there sufficient staff to continue programming in a safe and structured environment?
4. Are there other prevention and control strategies that can be implemented in advance of closure or significantly changing programming?
 - a. Consider environmental or programming changes in cafeteria, gym, or classroom activities that may curb transmission, such as suspending combined classes, reading buddies, close contact activities, and afterschool events.
5. Will transmission of the illness be interrupted by the school closure?
6. If school closes, how will parents and families accommodate a closure?

Last updated 9/2019