

Updated Protocols for a Positive Case in Maine Schools

11/30/2020

As the current situation with COVID-19 in Maine continues to rapidly evolve, the Department of Education is committed to providing our colleagues in the field with the most updated information and the resources, systems, and supports that are needed as you work to mitigate and address the impacts on your schools.

To that end, and in partnership with Maine CDC, we have created a school-focused team of DOE close contact enrollers, created a single hotline number for reporting cases, and developed a portal through which close contact information can be shared with our team of contact enrollers.

These improvements will necessitate revisions to the current Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for a positive case in schools. The SOP is under review with our colleagues at CDC, and will be finalized soon. In the interim, we wanted to provide you with clear steps to access these new protocols in the event you have a confirmed positive case in your school.

If you receive confirmation of a positive case within your school, please call the **phone number sent to Superintendents and School Nurses via email on 11/25/2020 and 11/30/2020**. This dedicated line will be monitored by those who can assist you with next steps. If your call is sent to the voicemail of the staff person, then they are likely on a call with another school; please leave a message with your name, school or school administrative unit (SAU) you are calling about, and your phone number; our team will call you back as soon as possible. The hotline staff members will work to verify the positive case and provide you with initial next steps.

Once you feel confident in the veracity of the reported positive case and your identification of close contacts to that person, a list of those close contacts should be generated, following the School Close Contact Tracing Template that is located on our [resources webpage](#). The template indicates the information that will be needed by the Contact Tracing Team. School personnel must notify the close contacts or their parent/guardian of the quarantine requirement, inform them that their call will be followed up by contact from the Contact Tracing team, and then send the template list to the DOE Contact Tracers email, DOE-contact-tracers@maine.gov. For privacy reasons, please do not provide the name of the positive case on this email communication.

The DOE Contact Tracing team will then reach out to each individual on the close contact list, reinforce the messaging about quarantine, evaluate the family's need for additional social services, and enroll them, with their consent, into the Sara Alert system. Once a person is enrolled in the system as a close contact, they cannot be removed.

If you need additional guidance on your contact tracing, you may wait for the CDC case investigator to talk through the case with you and confirm their determination of close contacts. Case investigators will call the phone number provided when the positive case is reported (see above), but it is important to note that at this time there may be a delay in hearing from the case investigator, given the current rate of daily cases.

We have established these new systems in response to the suggestions and feedback you have shared with us, and we thank you for your continued partnership and leadership during this difficult time.