March 9, 2020

Dear Erie County Families:

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff are our top priorities. With the recently elevated discussion regarding the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the news, we would like to reinforce preventive safety measures we all can take to minimize the spread of illness in our schools and community.

We encourage our students, staff, and families to be mindful of key preventive measures. The CDC offers some tips on its website that can be useful in avoiding the spread of COVID-19 and other types of illnesses. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has also released some additional information at health.pa.gov.

In addition, please remember that if children are sick, they should not be at school. Students need to be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to class after any illness. Keeping children home when they are sick is critical to prevention.

Finally, we know that now is a time of the year when there are a large number of optional school trips happening for our students. While we have not made any decisions to cancel any of these trips, we are closely monitoring the situation and taking guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Health and local Emergency Management officials. If new recommendations are provided, we will immediately notify our districts’ students, staff, and families.

If you have any questions, please visit the CDC website at https://www.cdc.gov or contact the PA Department of Health at 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258). Thank you for your attention to this important communication.

Sincerely,

Superintendents of Erie County School Districts

Mrs. Sheri Yetzer, Corry School District
Mr. Brian Polito, Erie School District
Dr. Erick Kincade, Fairview School District
Mr. Richard B. Emerick, Fort LeBoeuf School District
Mr. Richard Scaletta, General McLane School District
Mrs. Donna Miller, Girard School District
Mrs. Kelly Hess, Harbor Creek School District
Mr. Shane S. Murray, Iroquois High School
Dr. Michele S. Hartzell, North East School District
Mr. Jim Gallagher, The Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie
Mrs. Darcie Moseley, Millcreek Township School District
Mr. John Hansen, Northwestern School District
Mr. Mathew Bennett, Union City School District
Mr. Ken Berlin, Wattsburg Area School District

Cc: Dr. H. Fred Walker, Erie County Technical School
Dr. Dean Maynard, Executive Director, IU5

"The Mission of the North East School District is to challenge, empower, and engage all students to develop and achieve personal and career aspirations, to pursue lifelong learning, and to be responsible and accountable citizens in a dynamic world."

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
RELEASE DATE:  2/27/2020
CONTACT:  Dr. Michele S. Hartzell, Superintendent, mhartzell@nesd1.org

The North East School District will continue to be proactive to ensure that we follow all universal precautions to prevent the spread of colds and the flu. The North East School District sanitizes all common and student areas as part of our three shift custodial protocols. In addition, we follow Board Policy 203 (Immunizations and Communicable Diseases), and will continue to follow recommendations by the Pennsylvania Department of Health as well as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). We have included a few flyers with more information on everyday preventive measures as well as a copy of the district policy and information on the coronavirus published by the PA Department of Health. More information can also be found on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov.

"The Mission of the North East School District is to challenge, empower, and engage all students to develop and achieve personal and career aspirations, to pursue lifelong learning, and to be responsible and accountable citizens in a dynamic world."
Everyday Preventive Actions Can Help Fight Germs, Like Flu

CDC recommends three actions to fight flu.

1. The first and most important step is to get a flu vaccination each year.
2. If you get sick with flu, take prescription antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them. Early treatment is especially important for the elderly, the very young, people with certain chronic health conditions, and pregnant women.
3. Take everyday preventive actions that may slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses, like flu. This flyer contains information about everyday preventive actions.

How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching his or her own mouth, nose, or possibly eyes. Many other viruses spread these ways too. People infected with flu may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to spread flu to someone else before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick. Young children, those who are severely ill, and those who have severely weakened immune systems may be able to infect others for longer than 5-7 days.

What are everyday preventive actions?

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you or your child gets sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you (or your child) stay home for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using a tissue, throw it in the trash and wash your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs that can cause respiratory illnesses like flu.
- If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.
- If an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs, follow public health advice. This may include information about how to increase distance between people and other measures.

For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu

or call 1-800-CDC-INFO
What additional steps can I take at work to help stop the spread of germs that can cause respiratory illness, like flu?

• Find out about your employer’s plans if an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs and whether flu vaccinations are offered on-site.
• Routinely clean frequently touched objects and surfaces like doorknobs, keyboards, and phones, to help remove germs.
• Make sure your workplace has an adequate supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes.
• Train others on how to do your job so they can cover for you in case you or a family member gets sick and you have to stay home.
• If you begin to feel sick while at work, go home as soon as possible.

What additional preventive actions can I take to protect my child from germs that can cause respiratory illness, like flu?

• Find out about plans your child’s school, child care program, or college has if an outbreak of flu or another illness occurs and whether flu vaccinations are offered on-site.
• Make sure your child’s school, child care program, or college routinely cleans frequently touched objects and surfaces, and that they have a good supply of tissues, soap, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs, and disposable wipes on-site.
• Ask how sick students and staff are separated from others and who will care for them until they can go home.

Everyday preventive actions can help slow the spread of germs that can cause many different illnesses and may offer some protection against flu.
Authority

In order to safeguard the school community from the spread of certain communicable diseases, the Board requires that established policy and administrative regulations be followed by students, parents/guardians and district staff. [1][2]

Definitions

Certificate of Immunization - the official form furnished by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The certificate is filled out by the parent/guardian or health care provider and signed by the health care provider, public health official or school nurse or a designee. The certificate is given to the school as proof of full immunization. The school maintains the certificate as the official school immunization record or stores the details of the record in a computer database.[3]

Medical Certificate - the official form furnished by the Pennsylvania Department of Health setting out the immunization plan for a student who is not fully immunized, filled out and signed by a physician, certified registered nurse practitioner or physician assistant, or by a public health official when the immunization is provided by the Department of Health or a local health department, and given to a school as proof that the student is scheduled to complete the required immunizations.[3]

Guidelines

Immunization

All students shall be immunized against specific diseases in accordance with state law and regulations, unless specifically exempt for religious or medical reasons.[1][2][4] PLEASE REFER TO AP203 FOR A LIST OF CURRENT PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS.

A certificate of immunization shall be maintained as part of the health record for each student, as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.[5]

A student shall be exempt from immunization requirements whose parent/guardian objects in writing to such immunization on religious grounds or whose physician certifies that the student’s physical condition contraindicates immunization.[1][4][6][7]

Admission to school or continued attendance - If the knowledgeable person designated by the school administrator is unable to ascertain whether a child has received the immunizations required under Pennsylvania Department of Health regulation at 28 PA Code§23.83 (relating to immunization requirements) or under subsection (e) or is exempt under Pennsylvania Department of Health regulation at 28 PA Code §23.84 (relating to exemption from immunization), the school administrator may admit the child to school or allow the child’s continued attendance at school only according to the requirements of the following subsections:

- A child not previously admitted to or not allowed to continue attendance at school because the child has not had the requirement immunizations shall be admitted or permitted to continue attendance at school upon presentation to the school administrator or school administrator’s designee of a completed certified immunization
document or immunization record, upon submission of information sufficient for an exemption under PA Department of Health regulations at 28 PA Code §23.84 or upon compliance with the guidelines found in the sub section regarding provisional admittance to school.

(1) **Multiple dose vaccine series** - If a child has not receive all of the antigens for a multiple dose vaccine series described in PA Department of Health regulations at 28 PA Code §23.83 on the child’s first day of attendance for that school year, the school administrator or the school administrator’s designee may not provisionally admit the child to school unless the child has at least one dose of each multiple dose vaccine series required under PA Department of Health regulations at 28 PA Code §23.83, and one of the following occurs:

(i) The child receive the final dose of each multiple dose vaccine series required under PA Department of Health regulations at 28 PA Code §23.83 within 5 school days of the child’s first day of attendance, and the child’s parent or guardian provides a certificate of immunization on or before the 5th school day.

(ii) If the child needs additional doses of a multiple dose vaccine series to meet the requirements of 23.83, the child receives the next scheduled dose during the 5 school days referenced in subparagraph (i), and the child’s parent or guardian provides a medical certificate on or before the 5th school day scheduling the additional required doses.

(iii) If the child needs additional doses of a multiple dose vaccine series to meet the requirements of 23.83, but the next dose is not medical appropriate during the 5 school days referenced in subparagraph (i) the child’s parent or guardian provides a medical certificate on or before the 5th school day scheduling the additional required doses.

(2) **Single dose vaccines.** If a child has not received a vaccine for which only a single dose is required on the child’s first day of attendance for that school year, the child may not be admitted to school.

As stated, a student who has not been immunized in accordance with state regulations shall not be admitted to or permitted to attend district schools, unless exempted for medical or religious reasons, or provisionally admitted by the Superintendent or designee after beginning a multiple dose vaccine series and submitting proof of immunization or a medical certificate on or before the fifth school day of attendance.[1][4][5][6][7]

**Vaccination Requirements for Student Attendance in Pennsylvania Schools** - For the 2018-19 school year, the state of Pennsylvania amended the requirements for vaccinations for students enrolled in public schools. A listing of all the current requirements is included as an attachment to this policy. In the event that these requirements change, this information will be updated in the attachment. (See Attachment A)

**Homeless students** who have not been immunized or are unable to provide immunization records due to being homeless shall be admitted in accordance with the provisions of applicable law and regulations.[5][8][9]

Foster care students shall be admitted in accordance with law and regulations, and shall have thirty (30) days to provide proof of immunization, a medical certificate detailing the plan to complete a multiple dose vaccine series or to satisfy the requirements for an exemption.[5][10]

A student who is transferring from a school or county outside the commonwealth and cannot immediately provide records shall have thirty (30) days to produce those records without being excluded from attendance.[5]

A limited waiver of vaccine requirements may be granted in the event of a disaster impacting the ability of transferring students to provide records or in the event of a nationally recognized vaccine shortage.

It shall be noted that, even if a student is exempted from immunizations, s/he may be excluded from school during an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease.

Monitoring of immunization requirements shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent or designee and the school nurse.[1]

The Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Ensure that parents/guardians are informed prior to a student's admission to school, or a grade requiring additional immunizations, of the requirements for immunization, the requisite proof of immunization, exemption available for religious or medical reasons, and means by which such exemptions may be claimed.[1][5][6][7][8][12]
2. Designate school personnel to review student medical certificates in accordance with law and regulations to ensure compliance with full immunization requirements.[3][5]

3. Annually review state standards for immunization and direct the responsible district personnel accordingly.

4. Investigate and recommend to the Board district-sponsored programs of immunization that may be warranted to safeguard the health of the school community. Such program shall be subject to Board approval and may be conducted in cooperation with local health agencies.

The Superintendent or designee shall report immunization data electronically to the Department of Health by the current PA Department of Health deadline of December 31 of each year. If the district is unable to complete the report electronically, the Superintendent or designee shall report the immunization data on the required form to the Department of Health by the current PA Department of Health deadline of December 15.[13]

**Communicable Diseases**

The Board authorizes that students who have been diagnosed by a physician or are suspected of having a disease by the school nurse shall be excluded from school for the period indicated by regulations of the Department of Health for certain specified diseases and infectious conditions.[14][15][16]

The school nurse shall report the presence of suspected communicable diseases to the appropriate local health authority, as required by the Department of Health.[17][18][19]

The Superintendent or designee shall direct that health guidelines and universal precautions designed to minimize the transmission of communicable diseases be implemented in district schools.

Instruction regarding prevention of communicable and life-threatening diseases shall be provided by the schools in the educational program for all levels, in accordance with state regulations.[20]

Parents/Guardians shall be informed of and be provided opportunities during school hours to review all curriculum materials used in instruction relative to communicable and life-threatening diseases.[20][21][22]

**Health Records**

A comprehensive health record shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the district. The record shall include the results of required tests, measurements, screenings, regular and special examinations, and medical questionnaires.[23][24]

All health records shall be confidential, and their contents shall be divulged only when necessary for the health of the student or to a physician at the written request of the parent/guardian.[25]
Legal

1. 24 P.S. 1303a
2. 28 PA Code 23.81 et seq
3. 28 PA Code 23.82
4. 22 PA Code 11.20
5. 28 PA Code 23.85
6. 28 PA Code 23.83
7. 28 PA Code 23.84
8. Pol. 200
9. Pol. 251
10. Pol. 255
11. 28 PA Code 27.77
12. Pol. 201
13. 28 PA Code 23.86
14. 28 PA Code 27.71
15. 28 PA Code 27.72
16. Pol. 204
17. 28 PA Code 27.1
18. 28 PA Code 27.2
19. 28 PA Code 27.23
20. 22 PA Code 4.29
21. 22 PA Code 4.4
22. Pol. 105.1
23. 24 P.S. 1402
24. Pol. 209
25. 24 P.S. 1409
Pol. 105.2

AP203 PA Vaccination Requirements.pdf (884 KB)  AP203 Infectious Diseases - Universal Precautions.pdf (336 KB)
BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common throughout the world. These viruses can live in animals, such as camels, cats and bats, and at times, evolve and infect people, before spreading through human to human contact. Human coronaviruses spread just like the flu or a cold—through the air by coughing or sneezing; through close personal contact, like touching or shaking hands; by touching an object or surface with the viruses on it; and occasionally, through fecal contamination. This has occurred previously with the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreaks.

WHO DOES THE ISSUE IMPACT?

People most at-risk of contracting a coronavirus are those who have traveled to places where the virus is occurring. In the case of the novel coronavirus, that location is China, and particularly the Wuhan area and the Hubei province.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The department frequently exercises and prepares for a potential infectious disease outbreak. We have been monitoring the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak in China using information from our federal and local partners and are preparing our response teams in case of an outbreak here. We have talked with health care partners about the potential spread of the coronavirus into the United States and how they will work with public health to evaluate potential cases.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of the COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

The symptoms may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **Cover** any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands!
- **Clean** surfaces frequently, such as countertops, light switches, cell phones and other frequently touched areas. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- **Contain**- if you are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.

RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit [https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx](https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx)
The latest information on the coronavirus in the U.S. and worldwide can be found on the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov)
Additional information from the CDC on what to do if you are sick can be found [here](https://www.cdc.gov)

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