Guidance for Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Overview:
The reality of our current public health situation is that all schools will more than likely encounter cases of COVID-19 throughout the year. If this happens, it will be up to the school, in consultation with the Office of Education and local health officials, to determine the best course of action regarding closures, quarantine, and what, if any, additional mitigation strategies should be implemented. This document should serve as a guide in helping school administrators make the best decision for the health and safety of all community members.

First Steps:
If a case is reported in the school community, the following steps should be taken:

The School Will:
1. Contact the Office of Catholic Education
2. Contact the MSDH hotline at 1-877-978-6453 to report the case. If MSDH is made aware of a case before the school, they will contact you.
3. Make arrangements for substitute teachers and/or distance learning during the isolation period
4. Assist with identifying close contacts (those who were less than six feet away from the person for more than fifteen minutes without a mask)
   a. Close contacts should stay in isolation for 14 days
5. Notify the parents of the class and other exposed students.
   a. This notification can be targeted based on the group size and number of students and staff members this person was in contact with

Students or School Personnel known to have been in contact with someone (outside of school) who tests positive for COVID-19 will:
1. Not attend school or activities for 14 days after the last contact with the affected individual.
2. Follow the guidelines for student/personnel that have been infected, if symptoms develop.

Students or School Personnel who test positive for COVID-19 and are demonstrating symptoms will quarantine at home and not return to school until:
1. They have been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 72 hours AND
2. At least fourteen days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Students or School Personnel who test positive for COVID-19 and are NOT demonstrating symptoms quarantine at home and not return to school until:
1. At least fourteen days have passed since the date of the positive COVID-19 test, assuming no subsequent symptoms have not developed since the positive test results.
Decision Tools for School Closures

1. **Group/Classroom Quarantine:** If an outbreak occurs (more than three cases within a group) all group members should be quarantined for fourteen days
   a. This strategy may include asking one grade-level or class to stay home for the fourteen days
   b. If this occurs, distance learning measure should be in place to minimize disruption of instruction

2. **Situations that may Merit School-Wide Closure:**
   a. Multiple simultaneous outbreaks (more than one group or grade level is impacted)
   b. The schools encounter difficulty continuing in-person education work due to student or staff absences
   c. School-wide closures will be a minimum of 14-days, then assessed daily to determine the soonest possible date for a safe return.

Things to Consider in Identifying Close Contacts:
The seven characteristics of a situation should be used to determine if an event or program should be allowed to occur. These seven characteristics can also assist in asking appropriate questions to determine the level of risk a school community has assumed if there is a positive case.

If a student or staff member in your school tests positive, consider the following:

1. **Movement:**
   a. Did the student move around the building, and if so, was it controlled and directed?
   b. Did the student move through multiple locations within the school, exposing people and surfaces to the virus?

2. **Duration:**
   a. How long was the student in contact or close proximity with others?
   b. Were they in less than six feet away from others for more than fifteen minutes?

3. **Proximity:**
   a. How close was the student to other students in their classroom or the school throughout the day?
   b. Were they able to maintain six feet or more?

4. **Group Size:**
   a. How many people shared spaces with this student?
   b. Were they isolated with just their class or small group?
   c. Did they attend before or after school care where they may have interacted with others?

5. **Respiratory Output:**
   a. Did the student wear a mask?
   b. Did they participate in activities with others that involved a higher respiratory output? (singing, running/ playing, etc.)

6. **Touch:**
   a. What high traffic areas/ items did they touch? (doorknobs, handrails, keyboards)
   b. Were these areas disinfected after use?

7. **Congestion:**
   a. Was the student able to avoid high congestion areas? (hallways in between classes, dismissal, carpool, etc.).