



August 23, 2021

Dear Pinal County Superintendents and School Leaders:

Thank you for your continued efforts to support onsite, in-person education by maintaining healthy school environments. This letter is to clarify the role of local public health per Arizona Revised Statute (A.R.S.) and the Arizona Administrative Code (A.A.C.) with regard to outbreaks of infectious diseases in schools, and does apply to the Novel Coronavirus.

In order to limit the spread of an infectious disease outbreak (in this case Novel Coronavirus), it is our role to conduct case investigations and require quarantine or isolation when a person has tested positive for, or is exposed to COVID-19. This is not a suggestion, nor is it optional. Isolation and quarantine authority are granted to Pinal County Public Health Services District (PCPHSD) as outlined below:

ARS 36-624. Quarantine and sanitary measures to prevent contagion

When a county health department or public health services district is apprised that infectious or contagious disease exists within its jurisdiction, it shall immediately make an investigation. If the investigation discloses that the disease does exist, the county health department or public health services district may adopt quarantine and sanitary measures consistent with department rules and sections 36-788 and 36-789 to prevent the spread of the disease. The county health department or public health services district shall immediately notify the department of health services of the existence and nature of the disease and measures taken concerning it.

AAC R9-6-361. Novel Coronavirus (e.g. SARS or MERS)

A. Case control measures:

1. A diagnosing health care provider or an administrator of a health care institution, either personally or through a representative, shall isolate and institute both airborne precautions and contact precautions for a novel coronavirus case or suspect case, including a case or suspect case of severe acute respiratory syndrome or Middle East respiratory syndrome, until evaluated and determined to be noninfectious by a physician, physician assistant, or registered nurse practitioner.
2. A local health agency shall:
 - a. Upon receiving a report under R9-6-202 of a novel coronavirus case or suspect case, notify the Department within 24 hours after receiving the report and provide to the Department the information contained in the report;
 - b. In consultation with the Department, ensure that isolation and both airborne precautions and contact precautions have been instituted for a novel coronavirus case or suspect case to prevent transmission;
 - c. Conduct an epidemiologic investigation of each reported novel coronavirus case or suspect case; and
 - d. For each novel coronavirus case, submit to the Department, as specified in Table 2.4, the information required under R9-6-206(D).

B. Contact control measures:

A local health agency, in consultation with the Department, shall determine which novel coronavirus contacts will be quarantined or excluded, according to R9-6-303, to prevent transmission.

The full text of Arizona Administrative Code Title 9 Health Services; Chapter 6. Department of Health Services Communicable Diseases and Infestations can be viewed at: https://apps.azsos.gov/public_services/Title_09/9-06.pdf

The full text of Arizona Revised Statute Title 36 can be viewed at: <https://www.azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=36>

Schools are responsible for excluding students, faculty and staff that local public health identifies as cases or close contacts that need to be in quarantine or isolation. Please continue to report COVID-19 cases, suspected cases, and close contacts to our Pinal County Public Health Infectious Diseases Epidemiology Surveillance (IDES) team via secure link.

Instructions and forms for reporting to Pinal County Public Health can be found at:
<https://www.pinalcountyz.gov/publichealth/CoronaVirus/Pages/SchoolsandChildcare.aspx>

(This site also has school resources and CDC links with updated information)

Pinal County Public Health Services District follows the CDC considerations for case investigations and contact tracing for K-12 schools and institutions of higher learning found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/contact-tracing.html>. (As noted on this website, this guidance “is meant to supplement-not replace-any federal, state, tribal, local or territorial privacy or public health and safety laws, rules and regulations with which K-12 schools and IHEs must comply.”)

Pinal County Public Health appreciates the close cooperation that exists between Pinal County school leaders and our public health department. Thank you for your partnership in assisting us detect, prevent, and respond to infectious diseases.

Sincerely,



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Director
Pinal County Public Health Services District