International School of Tucson

School Policy on COVID

Guidance on contact tracing and quarantine for students and staff with suspected or confirmed COVID 19

Updated July 2020
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1. Overview
Emerging body of literature shows that children are less susceptible to Coronavirus Disease (COVID) infection compared to adults. Data from the Arizona Department of Health Service (ADHS) show that as of 18 July 2020, 11 percent of cases were less than 20 years of age. However, studies also find that infection in children are more likely to be asymptomatic, thus underlying the importance of implementing appropriate measures to prevent the spread of the disease in the school such as wearing masks and maintaining appropriate social distancing.

Overall, The national accepted contagion rate in children is around 3% so very low, direct studies are showing contagion rates of 0.15% in childcare facilities and a 1.2% rate for staff (extremely low).

As a school we play an important role in protecting the health of our students and staff from COVID. This policy will provide guidelines to IST staff on how to identify and manage cases within the school setting in correspondence to national, state and local guidelines. Specifically, the information presented in this document will utilize available resources from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other relevant sources for school re-opening.

This policy includes:

1) strategies to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID at school
2) procedures identified COVID cases within the school
3) procedures for canceling school due to COVID

2. About COVID
This section of the policy provides information from the CDC on how the virus is spread and symptoms of the disease.

2.1 How it Spreads
Currently there is no vaccine to prevent COVID. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

\[\text{1 CDC, 4/10/20, \textit{study period February 12-April 2, 2020}, Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Children — United States.}
\[\text{2 ADHS, 7/18/2020, Data Dashboard — Arizona.}
\[\text{3 Davies et al., 6/16/20, (model fit to data from China, Dec 1 2019-Feb 1 2020), Age-dependent Effects in the Transmission and Control of COVID-19 Epidemics.}
\[\text{4 CDC, 7/18/2020, Get the Facts about Coronavirus.}
It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Although this is not believed to be the main route of transmission, it is important to take appropriate measures to help reduce the risk of spread through contaminated surfaces.

Symptoms of COVID
People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2.2 People Needing Extra Precautions
It is important that staff and students that are identified as higher risk for severe complications from COVID take appropriate precautions to avoid developing illness. Because COVID is a new disease, there is limited data and information about the impacts to those with underlying medical conditions. Based on the current information available, people with the following conditions are believed to have an increased risk for severe illness from COVID:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AT INCREASED RISK</th>
<th>MIGHT BE AT INCREASED RISK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic kidney disease</td>
<td>Cerebrovascular disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPD</td>
<td>Cystic fibrosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 This list does not include all possible symptoms. As we learn more about this disease, the list may be updated.
6 Please refer to the [CDC website](https://www.cdc.gov) for more information about risks of severe complications for these underlying medical conditions.
• Type 2 diabetes mellitus
• Obesity (body mass index of 30 or higher)
• Serious heart conditions
• Sickle cell disease
• Immunocompromised stated (weakened immune system) from solid organ translate

• Hypertension or high blood pressure
• Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
• Liver disease
• Pregnancy
• Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
• Smoking
• Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
• Type 1 diabetes mellitus
• Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines

Data also shows that children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease might be at increased risk for severe illness from COVID compared to other children.

On a case-to-case basis, IST will work individually with staff or students/families who are at high risk for severe complications to accommodate their educational and safety needs.

3. COVID Prevention
Disease prevention guidelines outline in this policy are adapted from recommendations and guidelines set force by national, state and local public health authorities. IST admin staff will work with the Pima County Health Department (PCHD) in slowing the spread of the disease and ensure students and staff have safe and healthy learning environment.

3.1 Community Monitoring of COVID
IST admin staff should continue close monitoring of COVID circulating within the community in collaboration with the Pima County Health Department. The best resource for current numbers is from the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS)7. Guidance provided from the CDC and from state

7 ADHS, Data Dashboard – Arizona.
and local agencies are based on the level of community transmission and procedures outlined in this policy should be revisited often. The three levels of community transmission include:

1) when there is no community transmission (preparedness phase),
2) when there is minimal to moderate community transmission, and
3) when there is substantial community transmission.

This policy is written for substantial community transmission.

3.2 Prevention at Home
The first set of guidelines outline what IST staff and students can do at home to reduce the risk of transmission.

3.2.1 Communication to staff, students and families
Prevention starts at the home. To date, data show that most children have developed COVID from an infected household and not through social contamination in a childcare/school setting. IST staff will communicate regularly with the IST student, families and staff about the necessity in which to carry out prevention measures at home in order to reduce the risk of spread within the school. Such messaging will include information about:

- Basic hygiene and sanitation educational information
- Social distancing guidelines as recommended by the CDC and state and local health departments, and as required by city/county ordinance
- Prevention policies implemented at IST
- IST sick policy
- IST policy for contact with an infected person
- Suspected/confirmed cases of COVID within the school

3.2.2 Sick Policy
IST will follow the Pima County Health Department’s guidelines for schools and childcare centers. It states that students or staff that have any of the following:

- fever (100.4°F [37.8°C] or greater),
- cough,
- runny nose,
- shortness of breath, or
- other respiratory symptoms
should stay home and not return until they are free of fever and other respiratory symptoms for at least 72 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). Chronic medical conditions like allergies or controlled asthma do not require exclusion from childcare. This recommendation applies regardless of whether the individual has been tested for COVID-19 or not and is advised to reduce overall risk of transmission of flu-like illness.

3.2.3 Policy for contact with a COVID case
If any student or staff has had a known exposure to a COVID case, they will not be allowed to attend school until tested negative or 14 days have passed after their last contact.

3.2.4 Travel/Social Gatherings
IST highly discourages students and staff from traveling or being in large groups during the school year to help reduce the risk of infection and transmission. Further guidance will be produced based on CDC and health notifications.

3.3 Prevention at School
These set of guidelines were developed to provide procedures in which IST will carry out to reduce the risk of transmission at the school.

3.3.1 School Entry/Exit Procedures
Physical temperature checks / verbal checks will be implemented at the entry of the school. Parents must confirm the child is not ill or has had no known contact with someone with COVID. There will be separate entrances for Nursery/PS and JS/MS.

For Nursery/ PS
To prevent congestion at the doors, unless entering precare. All preschool students should arrive between 8:00 and 8:30AM through the main doors. Pick up will be from the class between 3:15 and 3:45PM via the main doors. Parents are not to congregate in the hallways but immediately log in / out and then leave through the back fire exit. (Not the entrance). The school exit will be through the gate at the side of the outside classrooms until 0835 for arrivals and until 4pm for departures.

For JS/MS
JS and MS students should arrive between 7:40 and 7:55AM and log in at the TEMPORARY desk as normal by the science fire exit, students then enter through the fire exit straight to their first classroom. Parents will not enter the school unless essential. Pick up will be between 3:30 and 4:00PM via the fire exit, children will remain in their classes until called. Parents ask for each student at the desk and the student will be called.

For parents who have students at IST both in Nursery/PS and JS/MS, it is recommended that parents drop off JS students first.

From 4pm the main entrance will be used for all students.
3.3.2 Classroom Cohorts
Students will be separated by classroom. Each student cohort will remain in their designated classroom during the school day with exception of outdoor breaks including lunch and recess. When appropriate, teachers in JS and MS that move between classroom will maintain social distancing when instructing students. In PS student groups will remain in their rooms and only leave them under guidance form the teacher.

3.3.3 Student Ratio will be continually reviewed based on CDC guidelines and recommendations for schools.

3.3.4 Social Distancing
Students and staff will maintain a 6-foot distance when possible. Student desks will be made to face toward the front of the classroom and desks, where feasible, will be arranged to maintain a 6-foot distance. If not feasible rigid seating plans and separation by barrier will be considered. Students are NOT to share any materials, food or drink and recess will be staggered to limit interaction and group sizes.

3.3.5 Hand Hygiene
Handwashing stations will be set up outside to accommodate the number of students at the school and to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines. Students and staff will be required, at minimum, to wash their hand upon entry into the school, before eating, after using the restroom, after outdoor activities, and when leaving the school.

Approved Sanitation stations are set up across the JS school. Although they are available for use, IST encourages hand washing over the use of hand sanitizer. In PS health regulations allow soap based sanitizers and as such hand washing in the PS will be the priority sanitization.

All students are required to wash hands and sanitize as required above or when requested by staff, failure to comply will result in the student being given a warning, if then it is not completed they will be segregated and the parents informed.

3.3.6 Cleaning and Disinfection
Commonly touched surfaces such as railings, door handles, computer keyboards, bathroom faucets and surfaces, telephones, light switches etc. will be cleaned regularly throughout the school day. Each classroom will wipe down all desks and shared materials after each use. All outdoor equipment including bikes and climbing frames will be sanitized daily.

Depending on the type of surface, EPA registered disinfectants, or a 10-1 water/bleach solution will be used in accordance to the manufacturer’s instructions (including application and appropriate contact times). For a list of EPA-approved disinfectants for use against the virus that causes COVID, refer to the EPA website.
3.3.7 Masks
All staff will wear clean masks.

For Nursery/PS
As per CDC guidelines children under 2 will not wear masks; those age over 2 will be by choice only. No Nursery or PS child will be forced to wear a mask. Students wearing masks must have two with them at the school in case one gets dirty or wet.

For JS/MS
All students will wear masks unless medical / special needs render them unable to do so. Students must two masks with them at the school in case one gets dirty or wet.

There will be times in the day and when outside that students will have the option to have a break from wearing their masks. Masks should be aired regularly to help keep them dry. When not in use, they will be placed on a designated clean surface with enough space to ensure that masks do not touch.

IST highly encourages students to use a different or clean mask every day. Bandana are not considered effective masks and will not be allowed as a substitute.

3.3.8 Ventilation
Classrooms will be ventilated regularly during the day. This include opening windows to allow for fresh air to circulate. At the end of each day all windows and doors will be opened to allow full air flow through the school.

3.3.9 Closure of Equipment
Drinking fountains will be closed for use however students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles which can be refilled by using the no touch water bottle filler.

3.3.11 Vaccinations
IST highly recommends that staff and students be vaccinated for influenza, as both COVID and flu will be circulating within the community at the same time. Students and staff receiving flu vaccines for 2020-2021 are asked to provide evidence to the school. This will help the school determine appropriate measures if and when there is a suspected COVID case.

3.4 Sick students at school
Students will be observed throughout the day for any signs of illness. If a student does present with respiratory symptoms and/or a fever during school hours, they will be immediately isolated in a designated room away from others students and will be asked to wear their mask until parents pick them up. The staff helping the sick student will also be required to wear a mask and other appropriate PPE as available.

The student will be required to follow the sick policy outlined above and highly encouraged to be tested for COVID. The Pima County Health Department may be notified at that time to ensure all appropriate procedures have been followed and to alert them of a suspect case.
4. COVID at School

IST requires that they be immediately notified by staff or parents if there is suspected or confirmed case of COVID at the school. IST will contact the Pima County Health Department for additional follow-up\(^8\). The school will designate an admin staff to coordinate efforts with the health department to help mitigate further spread and help identify close contacts of the suspected/confirmed COVID case within the school.

4.1 COVID Contacts

The designated IST admin staff will compile a list of close contacts. A close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic cases with positive test results, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the case was isolated\(^9\).

With coordination with the health department, the school will help notify close contacts of their exposure. Contacts will be asked to monitor for symptoms and asked to stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days, starting from the last day of the exposure.

4.2 Communicating with Staff, Parents, and Students

In coordination with the Pima County Health Department, IST will notify staff, parents, and students of the possible COVID exposure and any future mitigation plans, including possible school dismissal depending on the extent of the exposure. Communication will include messages to counter potential stigma and discrimination. It is also critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

4.3 Cleaning and Disinfecting

Areas of exposure once identified will be closed off for up to 72 hours. A 24-hour waiting period will be implemented before cleaning and disinfection to help minimize the potential for additional exposure. If possible, outside doors and windows will be opened to increase air circulation in the area.

Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

Depending on the type of surface, EPA registered disinfectants, or a 10-1 water/bleach solution will be used in accordance to the manufacturer’s instructions (including application and appropriate contact times). For a list of EPA-approved disinfectants for use against the virus that causes COVID, refer to the EPA website.

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\(^8\) Refer to Appendix 1 for contact information for the Pima County Health Department.
\(^9\) CDC, Contact Tracing Plan.
5. School Dismissal

The duration of school dismissal will be made on a case-to-case basis, depending on the extent of the exposures and if additional cases within the school are identified. The CDC recommends an initial/minimum dismissal of students and most staff for 2-5 days. This will be taken into consideration when coordinating efforts with the local health department who will help IST determine the best course of action to reduce spread of COVID at the school. Dismissals will be communicated to all staff, students and parents in a timely manner.

If school is cancelled due to COVID, all other school-related gatherings and extracurricular activities will also be cancelled.

Admin will identify essential personnel who will be needed to carry out essential services and determine if those services can be accomplished at home (by computer, through emails, conference calls, using Skype, etc.) or by staggering work schedules and locations and using social distancing measures.
Essential personnel who report to work during a school closure should take precautions and wear personal protective equipment (if available) to protect themselves from COVID.

5.1 Ensuring Continuity of Education
Parents will be provided an alternative online option to returning students to the classroom.

a. Student remains at home working online with the live streaming of some classes and google classroom work to print and return.

b. Student remains at home with streaming some classes and the collection and return of hard copy documents

Learning at Home:

To help students stay educationally engaged while classes are cancelled and in anticipation of a school closure, teachers can prepare students for home learning opportunities by:

1) helping them develop a daily journal and schedule for work;

2) introducing them to Learning online resources;

3) instructing students to take all academic materials home with them.

Some language / core classes will be streamed the live streaming system allows all students to engage in the class and, by using google classroom online, worksheets and assessments can be downloaded / printed and used alongside the live stream. Homework and project work for other subjects will be on google classroom and (for those parents who choose the option c ) available for collection as hard copies from outside the school each Monday from 10am – 1pm. Please drive up and request the grade pack. You need to be aware that without watching the streamed class the hard copy for those streamed lessons will only consist of worksheets or assessment material so the class must be viewed in its entirety.

Appendix
Appendix 1. Contact Information

PIMA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID INFORMATION

Website: COVID Disease 2019 - PCHD

Appendix 2. Hygiene and Sanitation Education

- To help prevent the spread of any infectious disease, IST has the opportunity to educate students, staff, and the community on social etiquette, good health and hygiene habits, and
disease prevention. Hand washing, coughing, and sneezing education will be provided to staff and students regularly. Messages include:

- **Wear appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) - Masks**

- **Cover Your Cough:** Teach students coughing and sneezing etiquette. Have ample supply of tissues available in each classroom and school area.
  
  o Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze OR Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
  
  o Clean your hands after you cough or sneeze.

- **Wash Your Hands Often:** Hand washing with soap and water is the best option. Hand sanitizers can be effective when there is no access to water. These are provided through the school. Staff are encouraged to provide time and opportunities each day for students to practice washing their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds minimum: upon arrival at school, after coughing and/or sneezing in hands, at the beginning of the lunch before eating, after bathroom use, and after recess.
  
  o Wet hands, apply soap and scrub for at least 20 seconds. • Thoroughly rinse under running water.
  
  o Dry hands completely with paper towel. Use paper towel to turn off faucet handles and open restroom doors.

- **Stay Home if You’re Sick:** A primary strategy against the spread of illness is for sick people to stay home from school. This includes students, staff and volunteers, in times of suspected or identified infectious disease
Appendix 3. Notifications

Communication – Admin staff will immediately notify all parents of a likely outbreak and issue the following email:

Dear parent,

It is important that all stakeholders within the school are fully aware that a possible infection of ............... has been found in the school. We are working very hard to neutralize any effect of the problem with sanitation, distancing and hand washing protocols being fully implemented.

We would ask that; if possible; you keep your child home as we make formal decisions on the next steps. In the event that you cannot do this we will be providing childcare with emergency staff in place. Monitor all children for any of the following symptoms .............................................. if found please contact your medical provider.

Any person in school is to wear a mask and if any students becomes ill they must remain at home. We will contact you in the next 48 hours with information on the next steps.

Thank you

• Admin staff will immediately seek advice from Pima County Health department and abide by its recommendations unless superseded by state. Admin staff will organize sanitization of the school, rosters and schedules for appropriate cover, notification to all parties on a regular basis of updates and decisions taken.

• Admin will maintain emergency cover as required.

• At risk staff will be identified and programs to limit their contact will be made but school must also be maintained.

• Business manager is to marshal funds and inform the admin team of the likely future outcomes of any closures and effects on budgets and salaries.

• Teachers immediately prepare online delivery or take home packs for the initial week of any closure.
Closure of school / Emergency childcare instigated

- This may be in place for school community OR may be opened by the state as required by any notice or order in place.
- Classes will be manned by teachers on a ratio of 1 – 9 student’s maximum for emergency childcare. Segregated classes, lunchtimes and activities will be in place.
- Regular sanitizing, handwashing, temperature checking of students and staff along with general social distancing will be practiced.
- Teachers continue to deliver blended learning through any closures.
- Admin will produce learning plans to maintain a delivery as close as possible to the curriculum.

Example mail to parents for closure

Dear Parents,

The ________________ health officials have recommended that IST is too close immediately. This order is because of the state situation concerning COVID spread.

IST will immediately close until further notice and children should stay home. The school may be closed for several days or weeks to reduce contact among children and stop the spread of the virus. We know this is a hard time for our community and our hearts go out to those who are ill.

We will remain in contact with you to update the status of the school.

We know that it may be hard to get a doctor’s appointment, go to a clinic or get treated in a hospital emergency room. Here are some tips for helping those who are sick with the virus:

- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible.
- Rest is important.
- Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person.

Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently. Keep the people who are sick with the virus away from the people who are not sick.

For more information, call your healthcare provider or the local health department and check the CDC website.
We will contact you as soon as we have information about classes or school reopening.

We encourage all parents to encourage their children to read whatever textbooks are available at home, to read other material at home, to practice computations and writing, and access instructional programs on the internet, network, public, and/or access channels.
REOPENING OF SCHOOL

- Personnel: ALL staff must be canvassed as to whether they are willing to return to work. Allocated sick leave should be used and then staff are subject to state and federal law concerning salaries.
- The school should be sanitized prior to any student return.
- ALL staff are to wear face masks through the day when in contact with others.
- Children should be supported to wear masks but not to a point of any distress.
- Parents should only enter the school if the child will not be released at the entrance.
- ALL persons entering the school must be temperature checked before entry and ANY member of the family seen to have a temperature of 100* or higher (fever) means the entire family cannot enter the school until the fever has past by 48 hours.
- Hand washing procedures / temperature checks will be in place and maintained throughout the return phase AND after a full return for a minimum 10 days.
- Mental health issues: Depending on the severity of the outbreak, we should collaborate with our local mental health partners to assist students and staff with loss and grief issues.
- Making up school days: The school will make a final decision of any catch-up requirements.
- After schools clubs will be subjected to the same restrictions on social distancing and hygiene. Classes which involve close physical contact will be stopped.

Example mail to parents on reopening

Dear Parents,

The __________________________ health officials have stated it is now safe to reopen schools. Our school will open on ____________________. At this time, student’s may safely return to class. We will inform you of any precautions still in place.

Even though school is opening, there are still some people who are sick from the virus. Health officials say that pandemic virus outbreaks sometimes happen in waves. This means more people could become sick soon again. If more people get sick, schools may need to close again. We will continue to provide you with the most vital and up-to-date information as soon as possible.
Because the virus can still be spread person-to-person, please keep children who are sick at home. Don’t send them to school. Here are some tips for helping those sick with the virus:

- Keep the sick person as comfortable as possible.
- Rest is important.
- Maintain fluids and seek medical advice.
- Do not use aspirin with children or teenagers; it can cause Reye’s syndrome, a life-threatening illness.

Keep tissues and a trash bag within reach of the sick person. Be sure everyone in your home washes their hands frequently. Keep the people who are sick with the virus away from the people who are not sick.

We are looking forward to seeing your children again. Please remain alert for any news media updates and other pertinent information.

In the near future, we will provide you more information about how school days and schoolwork missed during the school closure will be made up.

Waiver and references
This document is based on the guidelines and information to be found at the following websites.

https://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?portalId=169&pageId=575009
https://www.azed.gov/communications/2020/03/10/guidance-to-schools-on-covid-19/