

AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

March 9, 2020

Dear Families,

Pinal County Department of Public Health has informed us that a member of our school community has been identified as having a presumptive positive test for COVID-19. This means that the test was positive at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory but has not been confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This individual did not have severe illness and has fully recovered from the virus. Because the individual never attended school while ill, State and County Public Health officials believe the risk is low of ALA students and faculty contracting COVID-19 from this person.

We care deeply about the health and wellness of our students and staff. We want to assure you that we are working closely with and receiving direction from County and State Public Health officials to provide you with accurate information and respond rapidly and appropriately. Additionally, we are coordinating with Governor Ducey's office, local legislators, and county health professionals.

Evidence to date indicates that children 18 and under experience a mild form of this illness (similar to a cold) and in fact, over 80 percent of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in China experience a mild form of this virus. Those who have more serious illness tend to be older adults and those with chronic health conditions.

We are aware that there has been respiratory illness circulating in our school and discussed this with Public Health. Public Health believes that there is a low likelihood that this illness was COVID-19.

What can you do?

State and County Public Health officials have advised us that individuals who are sick with fever, shortness of breath and cough should contact their health care provider. As advised by Public Health officials, unless your child has severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, it is unlikely you need to go to an emergency room. Health care providers are in the best position to

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determine if an individual should be tested for COVID-19 in collaboration with Public Health. Make sure you contact your provider or the Urgent Care ahead of time to avoid exposing anyone in the waiting room. Show this letter to your provider so they know about the possible exposure in school.

Public Health also stressed that there is currently no treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. This is very important because a positive test will not change how an individual is treated. Similar to how we manage flu, sick children and staff should stay home, drink fluids and take over the counter medications until they recover.

What has ALA done in response?

ALA has completed enhanced cleaning of high-touch surfaces, such as door knobs, faucets, toilet handles with appropriate disinfectants, as recommended by Public Health. Hand sanitizing stations have been added to main hallways. In each classroom, students have access to hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes. Teachers will be incorporating routine hand hygiene practices throughout the day and reiterating to all students proper handwashing techniques. Intermittent cleaning of frequently-used surfaces such as doorknobs, tabletops, etc. will be completed. We have completed these same precautionary measures at the ALA-Ironwood K-6 Elementary campus as well out of an abundance of caution.

General things that everyone should do to prevent the spread of all respiratory illnesses include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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What you need to know about COVID-19:

- COVID-19 causes a wide range of symptoms including fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.
- Most people (about 80%) develop only mild symptoms, particularly children.
- Like influenza, those most likely to develop severe disease are people older than 60 years and those with other medical conditions like heart or lung disease.
- The virus is spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- People who are most at risk of becoming infected are those who have prolonged, close contact with a person who is infected with COVID-19 and is symptomatic.
- There is currently no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19.
- Find up to date information at [azhealth.gov/COVID-19](https://www.azhealth.gov/COVID-19) and at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Please know that the health and safety of our students and staff is our most important priority. Be assured that we will continue to coordinate with the public health experts in order to make the best decisions for our families and staff. We have provided all of the information we currently have and will update families as additional guidance becomes available from state and county officials. A helpful “Frequently Asked Questions” document accompanies this letter.

If you have questions that are not addressed in this letter or in the following FAQs, please call us at: 480-420-2145. If you have questions about specific health symptoms, contact your primary care physician or health provider.

Thank you and kindest regards,
American Leadership Academy
480-420-2145

FAQ's

Information specific to school exposure

OVERVIEW

- Pinal County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Public Health are working with American Leadership Academy after learning that one member of the school community has been identified as having a presumptive positive test for COVID-19.
- This person was a household contact of another presumptive positive case.
- Presumptive positive means that the test was positive at the Arizona State Public Health Laboratory but has not been confirmed by the CDC.

Was this person at school when they were sick?

- Because the individual never attended school while ill, Public Health believes the risk of others getting COVID-19 from this person to be low.
- This individual did not have severe illness and has fully recovered from the virus.

My child had respiratory illness before Spring Break. Should I go see my healthcare provider?

- Public Health believes that there is a low likelihood that the respiratory illness that that was circulating in school before Spring Break was COVID-19. If your child is still ill with respiratory symptoms, please contact your health care provider. Unless you have severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, you do not need to go to an emergency room. The Emergency Room will not be able to do anything for individuals who do not have symptoms.

What is the treatment?

- There is currently no treatment or vaccine for COVID-19. This is very important because a positive test will not change an individual's clinical care. Similar to how we manage flu, sick children and staff should stay home, drink fluids and take over the counter medications until they recover.

Why isn't the whole school being tested?

- Currently, Public Health is testing sick individuals. Similar to flu or other infectious diseases, if an individual is not sick, they do not require testing. The test is not reliable for people who do not show symptoms.

Can my family get tested?

- Similar to flu or other infectious diseases, if an individual is not sick, they do not require testing. Currently, testing is being done by request of a healthcare provider for sick individuals.

Can I find out if they were in my child's classroom?

- No, but an investigation is ongoing. Due to privacy laws, Public Health and ALA are unable to share this level of detail. You will be contacted if health officials determine your student was at risk of exposure.

Are we doing contact tracing?

- Yes, Pinal County is identifying, contacting and monitoring close contacts of the case. Public Health will be following up with the individuals that have been identified as close contacts of the case. If you have not been contacted by Public Health, then you have not been identified as being in contact.

Why can't you share the name of the impacted individual?

- Due to privacy laws, Public Health and ALA are unable to share the name of the individual.

Is my school safe? What is the school doing to protect our child?

- Public Health believes there is a low likelihood that COVID-19 is circulating at ALA. ALA has been working closely with local and state Public Health and will continue to provide parents and staff with the most updated information. ALA had been taking proactive measures prior to this event by enhancing its cleaning protocols and have implemented additional decontamination measures over Spring Break. We are working with students and staff to ensure that they practice proper hand hygiene and stay home when they are ill. We are also ensuring that soap, hand sanitizer and tissues are available throughout the school.

Will ALA be closed after Spring Break is over?

- No. County Public Health officials have determined that closure of the school is not warranted at this time. ALA will follow public health official guidance. Public Health does not believe that COVID-19 is circulating in our school, and at this time, they have no evidence to support such an extreme measure.

Should I keep my child out of school to avoid risk of exposure to COVID-19

- No. Public Health does not recommend keeping your child out of school if they are not feeling ill. COVID-19 is circulating in our community already, and currently the risk of being exposed at school is no greater than the risk of being in the community. Public Health officials expect more schools to identify cases and will be encouraging schools to manage COVID-19 similar to the way they manage a bad flu season.

In addition, it is important to consider that this outbreak may go on for several months. Therefore, unless the situation changes significantly, Public Health recommends carrying on with your life as much as possible while taking proper precautions like frequent hand washing and staying home when you are sick.

If my child has been sick, when can they return to school?

- Students may return to school following 72 hours after all symptoms of an acute illness have resolved. This may include fever, cough, nausea, vomiting, etc. This does not refer to symptoms from allergies. If the student's health care provider advises a longer timeline for the return to school, please follow the health care provider's guidelines.

I am currently out of town, is it safe to travel back to AZ? Do I need to tell the airport?

- It is safe to fly home to Arizona. This presumptive positive case in the school does not mean you or any member of your family was exposed or is at greater risk of getting the virus. Therefore, it is not necessary to share this information with the airport. If you or any of the people you are traveling with are sick and must fly, it is important that they wear a mask.
- Generally, because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on airplanes. Although the risk of infection on an airplane is low, travelers should try to avoid contact with sick passengers and wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol.

Can I travel out of AZ?

- Travel is safe for individuals who are not sick. If you are sick, it is a good idea not to travel to avoid spreading your illness to others. If you must travel and are sick, it is important to wear a mask to limit the risk of spreading your germs to others.

RISK

What is my risk and my family's risk for getting COVID-19 from this case?

- Children 18 and under experience a mild form of this illness (similar to a cold) and in fact, over 80 percent of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in China experienced a mild form of this virus. Those who have a more serious illness tend to be older adults and those with chronic health conditions.
- Healthy people or individuals without any respiratory symptoms can interact as usual with other members of the family or members of the public.

Individuals over 60 and with chronic health conditions living in the house

- For people over age 60 and those with chronic medical conditions living in your home, the best way to keep them safe is to keep them away from anyone who is sick. This means keeping any sick people in a separate room and making sure sick people wear a mask when they are around others in the house.
- If it's not possible to separate sick people from well people, then sick people should wear a mask.

Pregnant Women living in the house

- Although there is no evidence that pregnant women are at higher risk of getting COVID-19, it is recommended that pregnant women stay away from anyone who is ill. If that is not possible, they should wear a facemask around ill people.

MASKS

What if the sick person cannot wear a mask, such as a small child?

- If a sick person cannot wear a mask, then the caregiver should wear a mask when within 6 feet of the sick person.

What if I don't have access to a mask?

- If a mask is unavailable, use something else to cover your nose and mouth that still allows you to breathe.

SPREAD

How does the virus spread?

- COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes, similar to how flu spreads.

Can someone who has COVID-19 spread the illness to others?

- COVID-19 spreads similar to flu; therefore, if you are in close contact to someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 for an extended period of time, you are at an increased risk of getting sick. According to CDC, close contact is being closer than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes with a sick individual.

How can I clean my house if someone is sick in my home?

- Cleaning with routine household cleaners is effective – cleaning should be focused on “high-touch” surfaces like door knobs, counters, light switches, faucets and toilet handles where germs can collect. Clean those areas at least once a day if someone in the home is ill.

Can people without symptoms still spread COVID-19?

- Although there have been reports of people spreading COVID -19 before they become symptomatic, this is not typically how the disease is spread. Similar to flu, the people with the most symptoms are the most infectious.

GENERAL INFORMATION

What is COVID-19 or the 2019 Novel Coronavirus?

- COVID-19 or 2019 Novel Coronavirus, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China.

What is a coronavirus?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. There are several known coronaviruses that infect people and usually only cause mild respiratory disease, such as the common cold.

What are the symptoms and complications that COVID-19 can cause?

- Symptoms reported for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing.

How do I protect my pets from COVID-19?

- There is no reason to think that any animals including pets in the United States might be a source of infection with this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it’s always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals.