Tom Reed-Swale, Principal
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An Update from the BCS Health Office

The cold and flu season is upon us. Many of the symptoms associated with typical fall and winter allergies, colds and flu are also symptoms of COVID-19, making it difficult for health officials to discern which symptoms are typical to the season and childhood illnesses, and which are COVID-19 suspicious. While the most common symptoms of COVID-19 in children are fever and cough, other symptoms may be present including:

- Fever (Per District Policy:100.0°F or greater)
- Chills
- New Persistent Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Loss of Taste or Smell
- Nasal Congestion or Runny Nose
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Muscle or Body Ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Stomachache
- Tiredness
- Poor Appetite or Poor Feeding (especially in babies under 1 year old)

The Department of Public Health (DPH) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified the Five Priority COVID-19 symptoms, which are highlighted above in red.

When a child presents with any of the COVID-19 related symptoms at school, they will be placed in a private, supervised isolation room, as a safety precaution, and will be evaluated by the nursing staff. Depending on the case, one of our nurses will consult with the child's parent/guardian to determine if there is a likelihood of an alternate diagnosis before sending a child home for further care/management, with a recommendation for COVID-19 testing. The BCS nursing staff, Nurse Jen and Nurse Cheryl, consider each case individually and advise accordingly.

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While there are several COVID-19 tests available, the DPH advises that the most reliable and conclusive is a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

Once a child is sent home from school due to symptoms that might be related to COVID-19 there are three options for their return to school:

- The child is seen by their primary care physician, a **COVID-19 PCR Test** is administered, and the results are negative. Documentation of the test results must be submitted to the school nurse prior to the child getting on the school bus or entering the school building.
- The child is seen by their primary care physician who writes a letter confirming an alternate diagnosis to explain the symptoms.
- The child is quarantined for the allotted time per district policy.

All documentation should be emailed to Nurse Jen at Jbobok@bethany-ed.org or faxed to 1-833-479-4458.

As an added precaution, it is strongly recommended that parents check their child's temperature each morning before sending them to school. If your child presents with symptoms at home, the school would greatly appreciate being notified, and recommends a COVID-19 PCR test be performed. Students must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medications (i.e., Tylenol) and have resolution of symptoms before they can return to school.

Please refer to Addendum 5 Responding to COVID-19 Scenarios in Connecticut School Districts from the State Department of Education to learn more about how the Bethany Public School District will respond to students exhibiting symptoms, contact or diagnosis of COVID-19.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in keeping our school community safe.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bobok

Jennifer Bobok, Bethany Community School Nurse