



POLICY: Communicable Disease

It is the purpose of this policy to prevent and control the transmission of communicable diseases and to promote health and wellness within the Thornton Academy community. The term communicable disease shall mean an infectious or contagious disease spread from person to person, animal to person, or as defined by the law.

The health risk to immuno-depressed students and staff shall be determined and documented by their personal physician. The health risk to others in the school environment from the presence of a student or staff member with a communicable disease shall be determined on a case-by-case basis by the person's personal physician, a physician chosen by the school or public health officials.

Policy:

- A. Thornton Academy has a responsibility to reduce the risk and manage the spread of communicable diseases within the organization by
 - a. Abiding by state requirements for school exclusion, infectious disease notification, and following immunization requirements,
 - b. Ensuring procedures are in place to safely manage the handling of blood and other bodily fluids or substances, and
 - c. Communicating to parents or guardians their obligation to report their student's suspected symptoms and positive test results of a communicable disease.
- B. Primary responsibility for the prevention and control of communicable diseases lies with individuals, families, and public health officials.

Preventative Measures:

- A. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after being in a public place, or after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- B. Thornton Academy provides multiple handwashing stations throughout the campus;
 - a. Additionally, there are alcohol-based (60%) hand sanitizer dispensers throughout campus to be used when hand washing is not available. Users should cover all surfaces of their hands and rub them together for 20 seconds. Avoid touching one's eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

- C. Limit physical contact during outbreaks, influenza season, and as recommended by public health officials
- D. Stay home when sick or ill
 - a. Students, staff and school visitors should stay home when they are sick or ill and/or if a staff member or student is suspected of having symptoms of a communicable disease (see: General Illness Policy)
 - b. Return to school/work only when symptom-free and fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of a fever reducing medication. (See Addendum for COVID-19 specific protocols)
 - c. Student and/or staff should check with the school nurse upon return to school
- E. Keep the environment clean
 - a. Thornton Academy will regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as student and staff work areas, countertops and door knobs, etc.
 - b. Approved cleaning products will be available to staff to use for interim cleaning
 - c. The school nurse offices and bathroom will be cleaned and disinfected as needed and at the end of each school day.
- F. Take precaution when traveling
 - a. Follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations
 - b. Students should complete and return the Planned Absence form located in the Dean's Office.
- G. Notify the school nurse of suspected illness The school nurse maintains the confidentiality of students and staff, health information according to state law;
 - a. According to Maine state law, school nurses are required to notify the Maine Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) of suspected communicable diseases identified by the Department of Health and Human Services. For additional information on reportable diseases please visit: [Maine CDC: Notifiable Diseases and Conditions](#)

Procedure for Students and Staff with a Significant Infectious Disease:

1. The parent of a student who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he or she has a significant infectious disease, should notify the school nurse.
2. The parent of a student who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he or she has a significant infectious disease and is requesting support for academic responsibilities, should notify their child's school counselor. The child's class dean will also be notified.
3. An employee who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he or she has a significant infectious disease, should notify a school nurse.

4. An employee who is diagnosed with, exposed to, or has cause to believe he/she has a significant infectious disease, and is requesting support for work related responsibilities, should notify the Payroll and Benefits Manager.
5. Thornton Academy school nurses will report all necessary information, as required by law, to the Maine CDC.
6. If necessary, Thornton Academy will develop a plan and procedure for addressing the reported significant infectious disease in conjunction with and after consulting with the Maine CDC.

Campus Facility Use and Restriction

1. Any restrictions applied to the use of campus facilities or personal contact will be determined on a case-by-case basis after consulting with the State Health Departments and/or the Thornton Academy physicians.
2. Thornton Academy has the authority to restrict an employee or student with a significant infectious disease from campus facilities for the purpose of ensuring the well-being of all of its employees and students.
3. If Thornton Academy, in consultation with the State Health Department and Maine CDC, determines that the significant infectious disease requires limited contact with others, some of the restrictions available are to prohibit attendance at class or work, or functions until a diagnosis has been made and clearance directed by a healthcare provider or the State Health Department.

Addendum: COVID19

Additional Preventative Measures

- A. All faculty, staff, students, and campus visitors will be required to wear a face mask/covering when inside Thornton Academy buildings. It is recommended that faculty, staff, students, and campus visitors practice social distancing from others, whenever possible.
- B. Stay home when sick or ill
 - a. Students, staff and visitors to campus should stay home when they are sick or ill and/or if a staff member or student is suspected of having symptoms of COVID19 (fever of 100.4°F or more, uncontrolled cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (not exercise induced asthma), new loss of taste or smell, chills, sore throat, or rigors (a sudden feeling of cold with shivering accompanied by a rise in temperature) or 2 or more of the following: new head ache, muscle aches, runny nose/congestion, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea)
 - b. Return to school/work only when one has been provided guidance from his/her healthcare provider to do so, and have met the following criteria:
 1. >10 days since symptoms first appeared, (severe and critical illness = 20 days); day 1 is the day after symptoms first appeared, AND
 2. > 1 day with NO fever and NO fever reducing medication, AND

3. Improvement of respiratory symptoms, OR
4. Presentation of evidence of a negative PCR COVID-19 test.
 - c. The student and/or staff member should anticipate follow up from the school nurse regarding the Maine CDC protocols prior to a return to school/work.

*Employees should reference the, "TA Employee Return to Campus Handbook" for additional guidance and expectations.

- C. Notify the school of a suspected illness using the appropriate Attendance Reporting Form
 - a. The school nurse maintains the confidentiality of students and staff, and health information according to state law;
 - b. According to Maine state law, school nurses are required to notify the Maine Center for Disease Prevention and Control of suspected communicable diseases identified by the Department of Health and Human Services. For additional information on reportable diseases please visit: [Maine Notifiable Disease and Condition List](#)

D. All students, staff members and visitors are required to engage in a daily self-screen prior to coming to campus or a school sponsored event. The following questions should be answered during this self-screen:

Am I experiencing:

- fever of 100.4°F or more
- uncontrolled cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (not exercise induced asthma)
- new loss of taste or smell
- chills
- sore throat
- rigors (a sudden feeling of cold with shivering accompanied by a rise in temperature)
- 2 or more of the following:
 - new head ache
 - muscle aches
 - runny nose/congestion
 - nausea/vomiting/diarrhea)

If a student, staff member or visitor answered yes to any of these questions, he/she should refer to Sections B & C (above).

E. When responding to a positive case of COVID19, Thornton Academy will:

- a. Adhere to the [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as applicable to a school setting.
- b. Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick home or to a healthcare facility.
- c. Notify health officials, staff, and families as directed by the Maine CDC, while maintaining confidentiality and applicable privacy laws.
- d. Close off areas used by a sick person and appropriately clean and disinfect the space.

G. Residential Life

- a. All students will be tested upon arrival to campus at the start of the school year/entrance to school.
- b. Students awaiting testing results will be quarantined until results are obtained (unless the student is fully vaccinated).
- c. If a student's test status is unknown, the student will:
 - i. Be quarantined for 10 days (unless otherwise recommended) in either a designated wing of a dorm OR another appropriate location.
 - ii. Staff/Nurse will monitor the student for symptoms and meals will be brought to the dorm.
 - iii. Students will be required to wear masks while inside during the 10 day quarantine, use designated bathrooms and kitchen areas and will not be allowed to congregate in common areas.
 - iv. Be allowed outdoor time with supervision.
- d. Symptomatic students
 - i. If a student exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID19, the student will be isolated in a room and put under quarantine until further testing and/or guidance from the school doctor.
 - ii. If a student tests positive for COVID19, he/she will be quarantined per CDC guidelines.
 - iii. Possible exposure/close contact transmission will be evaluated with the guidance of the school's physicians and the Maine CDC.
- e. Staff Protection
 - i. Dorms will be stocked with first aid kits and masks.
 - ii. Staff will be educated on proper protection while performing sick student assessments.