

Dear Sayville Parents/Guardians:

While New York State schools are not places of high risk for the human transmission of Ebola Virus Disease, districts throughout the state are taking precautions and following protocols for prevention (as they do with other contagious diseases) in the highly unlikely event that a person infected with Ebola might be identified in a school setting.

Sayville School District remains proactive and is working within the NYSDOH and NYSED guidelines to review procedures with school health personnel. For example:

- School health personnel are being familiarized with Ebola, how it is transmitted, and what infection-control precautions are necessary.
- School health personnel are reviewing infection-control procedures, including identifying places where isolation of ill students can occur.
- School health personnel are verifying that their personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies (e.g. gloves, masks, etc.) are adequate for *standard* precaution needs in school settings and meet nationally recognized standards [e.g. OSHA, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)] as recommended by the CDC.]

In addition to increased vigilance, school administrators, teachers, staff as well as health personnel are learning specific symptoms for early recognition, which is critical in controlling the spread of Ebola virus, such as:

- If any student or staff member presents to the school nurse with fever, muscle pain, weakness, severe headache, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, or unexplained bleeding or bruising, the nurse or other school personnel should immediately ask about recent travel to Ebola-affected areas.
- If the student or staff member reports having been in an Ebola-affected area within the past 21 days and exhibits signs and symptoms described above, the school nurse should consider the possibility of Ebola and implement appropriate follow-up measures as outlined below:
  - If any student or staff member presents with the recognized symptoms, they will immediately be in an appropriate private room with access to a private bathroom, if possible. *(Students should be supervised in accordance with district policy.)*
  - School health personnel will promptly notify the parent/guardian regarding the student/staff's illness symptoms and confirm travel to Ebola-affected area within the last 21 days.

*Coverage about Ebola continues to dominate the media. However, staying informed will best protect our community from needless panic about risk factors.*

## What are symptoms of EBOLA?

Ebola Virus Disease symptoms include fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and in later stages, unexplained hemorrhage (bleeding or bruising). The course of the disease is steadily progressive and unremitting.

Symptoms appear on average between 8 to 10 days after exposure with a range of between 2, to not more than 21 days.

A person infected with Ebola virus is not contagious **until symptoms appear.**

The virus is spread through **direct contact** (through broken skin or unprotected mucous membranes in, for example, the eyes, nose, or mouth) with the blood or body fluids such as, but not limited to, feces, saliva, urine, vomit, and semen of a person who is sick with Ebola, or with objects like needles that have been contaminated with the virus.

***Ebola is NOT spread through the air or by water or, in the US, by food.***

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While this notice is not intended to provide comprehensive information relating to Ebola, it does outline for parents/guardians/community members an understanding of the Recommended Actions for Containment that follow CDC, NYSDOH, and NYSED guidelines:

- The school district **must contact** our local health department for further instruction and guidance, because the PPE (personal protective equipment) that is most commonly present in schools are insufficient to properly **treat/care for** an individual with Ebola, nor are school nurses expected to **treat/care for** a symptomatic individual.
- In a medical emergency, call 911. If any affected student or staff member needs immediate medical care, it is crucial that the school nurse or other school personnel tell 911 or the EMS operator about the sick person's recent travel to an Ebola-affected area.
- If any school surfaces are contaminated with body fluids from the affected student or staff member, schools should isolate the area and follow local health department or NYCDOHMH directives for cleanup and disposal.
- The school nurse **should not** implement the measures described above for students or staff who become sick more than 21 days after returning from an Ebola-affected area. Instead, the school nurse should follow the school medical director's usual protocols for illness.
- These recommendations are subject to change in response to changes in CDC guidance. Schools will be notified of any changes.

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For questions on school-health services contact the NYSED's Office of Student Support Services at 518-486-6090. For further information, check out the following links

- New York State Department of Health – Frequently Asked Questions About Ebola <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/faq.htm>
- World Health Organization - Frequently asked questions on Ebola virus disease <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/faq-ebola/en/>
- New York State Department of Health – Get the Facts About Ebola [http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/?utm\\_source=doh&utm\\_medium=hpbutton&utm\\_campaign=ebola](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/?utm_source=doh&utm_medium=hpbutton&utm_campaign=ebola)
- Nassau Schools Emergency Coalition website at [www.nassauschoolemergency.org](http://www.nassauschoolemergency.org) click the Communicable Diseases Tab
- For up-to-date information on NYSDOH recommendations relating to Ebola, visit: <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/>
- For more information on Ebola, visit the following websites:
  - The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) <http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/ebola/>
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>
  - The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH). This website includes information about Ebola for schools <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/ebola.shtml>
  - The Statewide School Health Services Center provides up-to-date information and guidance on health services to schools. Their website includes information on infection control, Exposure Control Plans, and Ebola. Please visit their site at [www.schoolhealthservicesny.com](http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com).
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