What is COVID-19 (2019 novel coronavirus)?
The Anchorage Health Department (AHD) is monitoring an outbreak of respiratory illness caused by the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The virus, first detected in China in December 2019, spreads from person-to-person and has the potential to cause severe illness and death. Four well-known strains of coronaviruses regularly circulate in human populations globally and are a frequent cause of upper respiratory infections. COVID-19 is new, so it's called novel coronavirus.

What is occurring in Alaska?
AHD is working with local, state, and federal healthcare partners in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. There are no confirmed cases in Anchorage or Alaska. The Anchorage Health Department is coordinating with schools, hospitals, local healthcare partners and the emergency medical system to ensure a uniform and swift response if a case is suspected or identified in Anchorage.

How does the COVID-19 virus spread?
Much is unknown about how COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through: respiratory droplets via coughing and sneezing, close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Fever >100.4°F  Cough  Shortness of Breath

Symptoms include fever (>100.4°F), cough and shortness of breath and may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.
What if a student has symptoms of COVID-19?
If a student presents with fever (>100.4°F) or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g. cough, and/or difficulty breathing), and has traveled to China or was in close contact with someone with COVID-19, an evaluation and assessment should be conducted (see table page 3). If screening criteria indicates a possible COVID-19 infection, immediately report the case to the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services' Section of Epidemiology (SOE) at 269-8000 and then to AHD’s Disease Prevention and Control Office at 343-4767 or 343-4781.

What are the definitions of isolation and quarantine?
**Isolation** is the separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious from those who are not infected to prevent spread of the communicable disease. Isolation for public health purposes may be voluntary or compelled by federal, state, or local public health order.

**Quarantine** is the separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been exposed to a communicable disease but not yet symptomatic, from others who have not been so exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease.

What are the recommendations for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?
Nursing staff should follow regular PPE recommendations for daily student interaction. If a student, staff/faculty member, or volunteer meets the COVID-19 screening isolation criteria (see screening table below), perform the following:
- Place the student in a surgical mask (if not already wearing one) and escort to a private room or area away from others (isolate).
- Increase PPE posture of nursing staff to include:
  - Nitrile gloves
  - Medical gown
  - Eye protection (goggles, glasses, or face shield)
  - Respiratory (at least an approved N-95 mask)
What is the current recommendation for screening of COVID-19?

A. Identify if in the past 14 days since first onset of symptoms a history of either
   - Travel to an affected region
   - OR
   - Close Contact With a person known to have 2019-nCov

B. AND the person has
   - Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)

   if both exposure and illness are present

1. Isolate
   - Place surgical mask on patient
   - Isolate the patient in a private room or a separate area
   - Increase personal protective equipment (PPE) for nursing staff to include:
     - Nitrile gloves
     - Medical gown
     - Respirator (at least N-95)
     - Eye protection (goggles, glasses or face shield)

2. Assess clinical status
   - EXAM
     - Is fever present?
       - Subjective?  Measured?  _____°C/F
     - Is respiratory illness present?
       - Cough?  Shortness of breath?

3. Inform
   - Contact health department to report at-risk patients and their clinical status
   - Assess need to collect specimens to test for 2019-nCoV
   - Decide disposition

- If discharged to go home

Instruct patient as needed depending on severity of illness & health department consultation
- Home care guidance
- Home isolation guidance

Advise patient: If the patient develops new or worsening fever or respiratory illness
- Fever or symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)

How are rooms disinfected after a possible COVID-19 patient departs?

Routine cleaning and disinfection procedures (e.g., using cleaners and water to pre-clean surfaces prior to applying an EPA-registered, hospital-grade disinfectant e.g. Clorox wipes, Sani-Cloth, Lysol) to frequently touched surfaces or objects for appropriate contact times as indicated on the product’s label) are appropriate for COVID-19 in healthcare settings, including those patient-care areas.

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How can schools take action to prevent the spread?

Schools can take action to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 by implementing the same practices used to prevent the common cold or influenza:

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

What else can be done at my school about COVID-19?

- Stay informed through credible sources, listen to public health messages, and use effective public health practices to prevent spread of respiratory viruses.
- Maintain regular cleaning and disinfection routines at your school by using EPA safer disinfectants registered for influenza and hard surfaces.
- Avoid stigmatizing people based on race, ethnicity and recent travel.
- Contact AHD at 343-4767 or 343-4781 if you have questions about exclusion of students or staff who have traveled, or if someone self-reports travel or illness.

References:

Anchorage Health Department, Emergency Preparedness Program
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) 2019 Novel Coronavirus
CDC Flowchart to Identify and Assess 2019 Novel Coronavirus
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Human Coronaviruses
Alaska DHSS, Information for Alaska Healthcare Providers regarding 2019 Novel Coronavirus
Washington State Department of Health, School Nurse and Administrator Resources

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