

BSGC Preparations for a COVID-19 Incident - Students

This protocol provides guidance and procedures to ensure a safe school for BSGC pupils. The guidelines clarify individual health responsibilities, procedures should a student develop COVID-19 symptoms, and procedures for containment, isolation, testing and return to school.

Background

'The overlap between COVID-19 symptoms with other common illnesses means that many people with symptoms of COVID-19 may actually be ill with something else. This is even more likely in young children, who typically have multiple viral illnesses each year. For example, it is common for young children to have up to eight respiratory illnesses or "colds" every year. [1]Although COVID-19 and illnesses like colds or the flu have similar symptoms, they are different disease processes.

Some studies have tried to identify which symptoms may best predict whether an individual has COVID-19, although these studies have primarily focused on those over 18-years-old. In children, fever has been the most frequently reported symptom. However, fever is common in many other illnesses, and temperatures can be taken improperly and incorrectly interpreted as fever. Additionally, there is no symptom or set of symptoms that only occurs in children diagnosed with COVID-19.

Additionally, students with chronic conditions like asthma or allergies may have symptoms like cough or nasal congestion without having any infection at all. As a result, symptom screenings have the potential to exclude some students from school repeatedly even though they do not have COVID-19 or any contagious illness. This in turn may worsen disparities in students who already miss school frequently because of chronic medical conditions.

Students who are sick with contagious illnesses should not attend school, but most illnesses do not require the same level or length of isolation that COVID-19 does. Excluding students from school for longer than what is called for in existing school illness expectations (e.g., fever free without medication for 24-hours) based on COVID-19 symptoms alone risks repeated, long-term unnecessary student absence.' [Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (USA) - 21.8.20]

BSGC has strategies and advice for students who display COVID-19 symptoms based on *Guía de actuación ante la aparición de casos de COVID-19 en centros educativos* – 24.8.20, *Modelo de Plan de Contengenci Frente a la COVID-19 en Los Centros Educativos* – 2.9.20).

1. Advice on Home Isolation Criteria
2. Return to School Expectations
3. In School Case Management
4. Sharing School Information and Communication of Risk

1. Advice on COVID-19 Home Isolation Criteria

All BSGC students should complete a short home health check before leaving for school each day – see Appendix 1 for suggested Home Health Check).

In the event of concerns or uncertainty the pupil should stay at home, isolated from others, be closely monitored and follow directions from the local health centre.

If a pupil's parents contact the local health centre for a COVID test, they should inform the school. The school will wait for the test result although will risk assess the case for possible further action but would normally wait for guidance from the health authority.

2. Return-to-School Expectations

Students who have received a negative test result can return to school once their original symptoms have otherwise improved in accordance with existing school illness expectations.

Students diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home, isolate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from the local health authority. Confirmed COVID-19 cases cannot return to school until authorised by the local health authority.

On confirmation of a positive case in the school community, the school will be contacted by the health authorities who will conduct a review and instructed on subsequent action. (See below.)

Students unable to attend school will be provided, as soon as they are well enough, with their class' classwork and, where possible, join their live, on-line classes.

3. In School Case Management

Students may develop COVID-19 symptoms while at school and immediate action is required to isolate these individual from other students and staff. BSGC staff must observe, at all times confidential treatment of the identity and data of a suspected or confirmed case.

The school will follow directions of the *Consejería de Educación (28.8.20, 2.9.20, 8.9.20)*:

- a. The affected pupil will be located in the isolation room: situated in the secondary patio in Tafira and to the left had side of main gate in. The isolation room is equipped with a bagged bin with a pedal-operated lid, disposable tissues, hydro-alcoholic gel dispenser, surgical masks for the affected person and a surgical mask and a face shield for the person caring for the student.
The person (one person only) caring for the student must firstly protect themselves with a surgical mask and a face shield.
A new surgical facemask must be placed immediately on the student displaying symptoms.
If the symptomatic person cannot put on a mask (children under 6 years of age, people with respiratory problems, who have difficulty removing the mask on their own or who have behavioural alterations that make their use) and it is necessary to have contact with them, the accompanying person should protect themselves with protective glasses or face shield, nitrile gloves and a long-sleeved gown.
- b. The head of the school's COVID19 Team will phone 900112061 and coordinate the school's actions as directed by the health authorities.
- c. The contacted health professional may decide that the pupil's family must be contacted, so that the student can be collection from school and taken home for isolation. Likewise, the health professional evaluating the case may decide to instruct the family to phone their doctor or health centre for personalised evaluation and appropriate instructions.
- d. 112 must be called in case of severe symptoms or respiratory distress.
- e. Once the student has left the isolation room, it must be cleaned, disinfected and ventilated, as well as the areas in which they have been, areas of common use and the objects and equipment that they have used during the last 48 hours prior to their isolation.
- f. The waste generated must be managed as outlined in the Waste Management protocols.
- g. The affected person is considered a suspected case and must remain isolated at home until the results of the diagnostic tests are available.

Until obtaining the result of the COVID test, no action on close contacts will be taken and teaching should continue as normal. If the test result is positive a study of contacts within school and outside will be conducted by the health authority - identifying, classifying and monitoring the contacts.

When identifying close contacts, the prevention and hygiene measures adopted by the school and their effective implementation are taken into account.

For identifying close contacts within the school, the following will be considered:

- a. If the confirmed case belongs to a stable social bubble, with close contacts considered all people belonging to the group.
- b. If the confirmed case does not belong to a stable social bubble, the identification of close contacts in the educational centre will be made applying the criteria of the Early Detection, Surveillance and Control Strategy.

4. Sharing School Information and Communication of Risk

If a case is confirmed, the public health services will contact BSGC and the families, following the previously established communication channels, to carry out the epidemiological investigation, report on the situation and the main control measures such as the isolation of the cases and the quarantine of the contacts with the affected person and jointly assess the measures adopted by the educational centre.

The school COVID-19 manager will collect the information of all the people who may have been in contact with the confirmed case, as well as the areas of the school (classrooms, bathrooms, corridors, dining room, transport, etc.) where they have been during the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. The COVID manager will provide the list of contacts of the confirmed case to Public Health or to the unit responsible for tracking contacts.

This information and regularly updated lists must be available at all times for the COVID manager to facilitate their rapid transfer to Public Health for the identification of close contacts.

BSGC will ensure that the following information can provide immediately:

- List of students in the group of the affected, with contact details.
- List of teachers who have been in contact with the affected student in recent days (updated with supply and cover staff), with contact details.
- List of students who have shared school transport with the affected student, with contact information.
- List of students who have shared school's dining room with the affected student, with contact information.
- List of students who have shared school's extracurricular activities with the affected student, with contact details.

These lists must remain updated at all times, in order to ease a quick transfer to the Health Authority.

Appendix 1

Home Health Check The daily check should consider the following:

SECTION 1: Symptoms

If your child has any of the following symptoms, that indicates a possible illness that may decrease the student's ability to learn and also put them at risk for spreading illness to others. Please check your child for these symptoms:

- Temperature 37.4°C or higher when taken by mouth
- Sore throat
- **New** uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Diarrhoea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

SECTION 2: Close Contact/Potential Exposure

- Had close contact (within 2m of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19.
- Travelled to or lived in an area where the local health department is reporting large numbers of COVID-19 cases.

A Related Note - Close Contact is:

- *any pupil or staff member in close face-to-face or touching contact including those undertaking small group work for more than 15 minutes,*
- *talking with or being coughed on for any length of time while the individual is symptomatic,*
- *anyone who has cleaned up any bodily fluids of the individual,*
- *close friendship groups,*
- *any pupil or staff member living in the same household as a confirmed case.*

If the answer is YES to any question in Section 1 but NO to any questions in Section 2, the students should follow existing school illness expectations (e.g. remain at home until symptom-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications).

If the answers are YES to any question in Section 1 (or multiple Yes responses in Section 1) and YES to any question in Section 2, the school member should contact the local health centre for possible COVID testing. These individuals should stay at home, isolated from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from the local health centre.