

January 7, 2021

To: All DCS Contracted Congregate Care Providers
From: Mike Faust, Director

Re: Enhanced requirements for Congregate Care settings **UPDATE**

DCS would like to provide some additional guidance and clarification of requirements during this public health crisis. The items listed below are not exhaustive but address several of the topics that providers have escalated to the Department for clarity. If you have question please contact Gillian Vanasse (Gillian.vanasse@azdcs.gov).

- **Conduct health screening for all individuals entering the facility**
 - Screening shall include:
 - Temperature checks
 - Questionnaire regarding any recent symptoms consistent with COVID-19
 - Questionnaire regarding contact with known COVID-19 positive individual in the last 14 days.
 - All individuals entering the facility shall receive a screenings including but not limited to:
 - Group Home staff
 - DCS staff
 - Youth returning from activity outside the home
 - **Facial Coverings** should be worn by all individuals entering the home who do not reside at the property including GH staff
 - Youth are not required to wear a facial covering while in the home
 - If the GH is a house parent model, the house parent is not required to wear a facial covering in the home with the children,
- *** Since facial coverings are a requirement in most jurisdictions, all Group Homes should review the expectation with youth regarding wearing a facial covering, practicing physical distancing and practicing good hand hygiene. *****
- **Ensure age appropriate conversations occur** to support children and youth understanding as to current conditions of COVID-19 in Arizona. Communicate limits on normalcy activities are due to the care and concern for the children and youth, as not to be seen as punitive actions.

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- **DCS supports activities outside of the GH** for youth that promote normalcy. Creating an exhaustive list of activities is not possible but some guidance includes:
 - Youth should be permitted to maintain employment outside of the home including active efforts to find new employment
 - Large group gatherings including trips to the grocery store, mall and other activities should be prohibited.
 - In-person visitation with parents are continuing but should be limited to parents only
 - This requirement has been clarified with DCS Field and Supervised Visitation Providers.
 - Transitional visits and home passes should be reviewed with the program manager and program administrator.
 - If the visits have been occurring over the past several weeks/months they should continue.
 - If newly established, it may be permissible to delay the start of the activities.
 - Mentoring activities may continue and Group Home staff should engage with the Mentor on the activities that will occur while the youth is outside of the home and the Mentor should follow proper safety guidelines (Facial covering, physical distancing, etc) while with the youth.
 - When determining if mentoring should be continuing, consider whether or not the mentor is the primary adult relationship
 - Unsupervised free time away from the home should be limited at this time
 - Recognition of some peer contact will occur, document contact, and support youth's understanding of the use of facial covering, and safety precautions

The below direction addresses many of the situations that arise when youth are exposed, symptomatic, pending test result or received test results. If a particular situation is not addressed below, then please escalate to Gillian.vanasse@azdcs.gov or CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov:

- If a child is exposed¹ to a known positive person or is symptomatic, the child needs to be tested for COVID-19
 - Please follow the instructions of the Primary Care Physician, quarantine the child and have them wear a mask.
 - Some Primary Care Physicians will request that testing is conducted only when symptoms are present. DCS is requiring, because of the congregate setting, that the child is tested.
 - Exposed means in contact with an individual who is confirmed to be positive and the child was within 6ft for 15 or more cumulative minutes in a 24-hour period.
 - If barriers exist for conducting tests please escalate to CMDPCOVID19@azdcs.gov
- While waiting for test results:
 - The child should wear a facial covering whenever they cannot physically distance
 - All children residing in the home should participate in virtual visits until the test results are received.
 - All children residing in the home are NOT to attend in-person school (virtual or teacher-led) until test results are received.
 - Access to the group home should be restricted to GH staff only. DCS staff will default to conducting monthly contacts virtually. However DCS staff may require access to child and/or home.

¹ [Exposure per CDC Guidelines](#): Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Updated CDC Guidelines on Return to Normal Activity:

After a Positive COVID-19 Test ([CDC Guidelines as of January 7, 2021](#))

- Stay at home or under isolation precautions until at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND at least **1 days (24 hours)** has passed since resolution of fever (including fever, chills, rigors, and body/muscle aches) without the use of fever reducing medications AND improvement in symptoms (including cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell). Precautions beyond 10 days are only needed if fever remains unresolved on Day 10. If the date of symptom onset is unknown, then use the date of COVID-19 test collection.

School-related questions for children in care should be directed to the child's Local Education Authority (LEA) Foster Care Liaison: <https://www.azed.gov/fostercare/lea-poc-list/>