

Message dated March 2nd, 2020 from Brian Gallagher, Head of Student Life, Bard College Berlin

On March 1st, 2020, the college was informed of one student who came in contact with someone who tested positive to COVID-19 virus. The college is in touch with the Pankow Health Authority (Gesundheitsamt). At the recommendation of the Gesundheitsamt, the student is now in quarantine and will be tested later today. We are also in close contact with the suitemates of the student. The Gesundheitsamt will then issue further directive to the college & we will comply. As a precaution, we have canceled classes today. Expect an email from the college later today with further recommendations and instructions.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19 and what should I do if I feel sick?**

From the CDCEU website, the virus can cause mild, flu-like symptoms such as

- fever
- cough
- difficulty breathing
- pain in the muscles
- tiredness.

The vast majority of people who get COVID-19 experience it as a mild flu - which feels like a cold + fever. More serious cases develop severe pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, sepsis and septic shock. People with existing chronic conditions seem to be more vulnerable to severe illness.

### **When should I be tested for COVID-19?**

If you have an acute respiratory infection (sudden onset of either a cough, and/or a sore throat, and/or shortness of breath),

AND

in the 14 days before the start of your symptoms, you were either:

in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 infection, or travelled to an area where there is ongoing community transmission of COVID-19,

or worked in or attended a healthcare facility where patients with COVID-19 infections were being treated, you should be tested.

### **How do I get tested in Berlin?**

Berlin has set up a phone number for you to call to speak with a trained professional who will either send you to a hospital or send a health official to your place of residence.

<https://www.berlin.de/sen/gesundheit/themen/gesundheitschutz-und-umwelt/infektionsschutz/#Coronavirus>

Is the website with the phone number. The website is in German. The college can assist in calling the number, although they should be able to answer in English if you call.

### **How to best take care of yourself and the community**

There are some specific best practices when it comes to taking care of your health as it pertains to the COVID-19 virus (as well as all flu like viruses). As a reminder we ask that all community members follow the general guidelines below on staying healthy and preventing illness. As every year, the flu is on campus and the protocols for preventing the spread of any virus are the same, especially frequent hand washing.

Avoid close contact with sick people as much as possible and limit social contact like handshaking and hugs when greeting people.

If sick, especially with a fever, stay home and call your health care provider to check-in.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

Wash the tops and bottoms of your hands often with soap and water for at least twenty seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub which is being made available in key locations around campus.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects with 10% bleach solutions.

The methods to help prevent coronavirus will help prevent influenza, too. Community members experiencing fevers should stay home.

More information on the Coronavirus and precautions to take can be found on-line at Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization.

Finally, there is clearly a huge panic worldwide about this influenza. Seek out firm/hard data to educate yourself. The CDC, CDCEU, World Health Organization...etc all have websites with good information about this.

### **What about BCB Services?**

First and foremost, the college wishes that you are safe & stay safe. This is why the college canceled classes on March 2nd, 2020.

If you need assistance, please reach out to Student Life staff. Brian is the primary point person currently.

The Cafeteria remains open on March 2nd, 2020.

The Library is closed on March 2nd, 2020. The reading room stays open.

For students with student jobs: You are encouraged to be in touch with your supervisors about your work on March 2nd, 2020. I would imagine most office jobs (Admissions, Development...) will have no work today.

Cafeteria staff, Philippe has asked if you come to work if you are healthy - you can be in touch with him directly with questions.

Zoltan will be in touch with the RAs directly.

For on-campus students, If you have a friend who is sick & you are getting food for them - thank you for doing that. Please be up front with the cafeteria staff about who you are getting food for & they will let you do this. Ideally you would bring a 'to go' container from your apartment or building- as the cafeteria has a limited number of containers.

### **Do I need a mask?**

At this point, the CDCEU, Robert Koch Institute, Berlin/Pankow Gesundheitsamt and the World Health Organization are recommending that you do not get a mask. They are all recommending that you practice good hand washing techniques.

**How do I find real information about this?** (some of these websites are in German)

We would like to encourage you to review the World Health Organization's 2019-nCoV Coronavirus information portal. This link includes public health advice, epidemiological information on the virus, updated infection reports worldwide, travel guidance, and other relevant information:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

The links below offer additional information on the Coronavirus in Germany:

Auswärtiges Amt:

[www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/laender/china-node/coronavirus](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/laender/china-node/coronavirus)

Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung:

<https://www.infektionsschutz.de/coronavirus-2019-ncov.html>

Robert-Koch-Institut - the German Federal Public Health Authority

[https://www.rki.de/SharedDocs/FAQ/NCOV2019/FAQ\\_Liste.html](https://www.rki.de/SharedDocs/FAQ/NCOV2019/FAQ_Liste.html)

**What about Travel?**

If you have upcoming travel planned, you should check with the World Health Organization to see if your destination is on the list of places they are concerned about. For Spring Break, the college may ask for info about your upcoming travel. At this time, the college is not asking for that nor is the college restricting travel.