***[Replace this text with your organization’s identifier.]***

# INITIAL SCHOOL NOTIFICATION TELEPHONE TALKING POINTS

This tool can be used to guide the initial telephone conversation between local health department staff and school staff after the index case has been interviewed and a school contact investigation (CI) is determined necessary. Ideally this outreach is coming from a senior county public health staff member, such as the contact investigation lead or program manager.

**Talking Points**

* **Making the call** (If the contact—in this case, the principal—is not available, ask for the principal's designee—such as the vice principal or school nurse. If you must leave a message, do not tell the person taking the message that it is regarding a TB matter!)

“Hello, my name is **[Name]**. I am trying to reach the principal of your school, **[Name]**. Is **[Principal’s Name]** available?”

*Person answering states that the principal is not available. The caller then learns that the vice principal, his/her designee, and the school nurse are also not available.*

*“I am calling about a health matter. May I leave my name and phone number so that* ***[Principal’s Name]*** *can call me back? When do you expect that* ***[they/he/she]*** *might be back in the office? If I do not hear from* ***[Principal’s Name]*** *by (< 24 hours after expected return time), I will plan to call back. Does that sound OK? Thank you.”*

* **Introductions** (Verify the person's identity before speaking about the issues at hand.)

“Am I speaking with **[Principal’s Name**, the principal of **School Name]**? Hello, **[Principal’s Name** My name is **[Name]**. I am **[insert job title]** with the **[County]** Department of Public Health.

* **Reason for call** (possible TB exposure and the necessity for follow-up)

“I am calling to inform you that a person associated with your school has been diagnosed with active tuberculosis. Because we believe the person may have been infectious while at your school, I need to arrange a time to speak with you and your staff about setting up a contact investigation. Contact investigations of this type are standard public health practice, and we would like to disrupt the school's routine as little as possible.”

* **Overview of situation** (Say just enough so that the situation is clearly defined, and then promise to do more comprehensive TB education at a scheduled time for the larger school group.)

“The person was at your school from **[date-date]**. Anyone who shared air space with the person may have been exposed and needs to be tested for tuberculosis infection. Some individuals may receive a chest x-ray and preventive treatment as well. We need to meet with you and your staff to plan how this information will be communicated with the students, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers before the screening begins.”

* **Setting up meeting time** for CI planning (be sure to discuss everyone who should attend and how to get in contact with them)

“Who among your staff should be included in the meeting?” (Suggest the school nurse, health education teacher, physical education teacher, and anyone who deals with the students’ and staff members' health or welfare.) “What are their names and telephone numbers? My name again is **[Name]**. My phone number is **[number]**. When will you and your staff be available to meet?”

* **Confidentiality** for the index case and for the CI in general (If at all possible, avoid identifying the index case over the phone.)

“Patient confidentiality requires that the name of the person diagnosed with tuberculosis not be mentioned or confirmed by anyone. In order to identify the daily routine of the person diagnosed, we may need to reveal their identity to a minimum number of your staff during or after our planning meeting. We will need your help to make sure that they know not to write the name down on any document or e-mail.”

* **Closure** (offer to answer questions)

“I realize that we covered a lot of information during this call. Do you have any questions? Thank you for your time. If you have questions between now and our meeting, please don't hesitate to call.”