La Plata, MD - The Charles County Department of Health has confirmed that an individual at La Plata High School has been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) disease. The school system is working with the health department to ensure there is no further risk in the school.

Tuberculosis is a bacterial illness that responds well to proper medical treatment. It is spread through the air, usually by coughing or sneezing. Generally, a person must have prolonged exposure to the person with TB in order to breathe in a sufficient number of TB germs to cause a TB infection. The disease cannot be transmitted by touching someone or by sharing eating utensils.

The health department is working with the school and school system to identify those who should receive TB testing. Students, teachers and staff members at La Plata who may have had prolonged exposure to the individual diagnosed with TB will receive an exposure letter and a TB testing consent form by email and regular mail early next week. The health department will provide free TB tests at La Plata to those people identified. La Plata parents/guardians, who do not receive an exposure letter or e-mail, do not need to have their children tested at this time.

Tuesday, Nov. 15, La Plata High emailed and mailed an information letter home to all parents. Questions can be directed to your family physician or the Charles County Department of Health’s Communicable Disease Control Program at 301-609-6900, ext. 6025, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Additional information about tuberculosis is available on the Department of Health website www.charlescountyhealth.org. A fact sheet is also available on the school system website at www.ccboe.com.