COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan Guidance in TK-12 Schools: Appendix T2

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

8/8/2022

- Reporting of individual cases of COVID-19 in the school setting is no longer required. Moving forward, any clusters of 3 or more linked cases within a 14-day period must be reported immediately and no later than 1 business day.
- Strongly recommends identification of close contacts in classrooms and similar sized indoor spaces align with CDPH's close contact definition (individuals who shared indoor airspace with the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period).
- Clarifies requirements for student close contacts who are asymptomatic and have mask exemptions for remaining on site after a COVID-19 exposure.

A targeted public health response to contain COVID-19 exposures at a community-level can help maximize the impact of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) COVID-19 response.

Primary and Secondary Schools serving students from Transitional Kindergarten through Grade 12 (TK-12 Schools) are trusted community partners that can help DPH improve the timeliness and impact of the Public Health response through rapid initiation of a COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan (EMP). Immediate implementation of an EMP when a single case of COVID-19 is identified at a school can accelerate the ability to contain the spread of infection and prevent outbreaks from occurring.

The steps for managing exposures to COVID-19 cases at TK-12 Schools are described below and summarized in Appendix A. Because TK-12 Schools will vary in the level of resources available for COVID-19 exposure management, *required* steps are the minimum elements that must be included in the EMP. *Recommended* steps include optional elements for exposure management where school resources are sufficient. The requirements and recommendations presented are specific to TK-12 instructional and non-instructional facilities serving TK-12 Schools. For the purposes of this plan, the word "School" applies to both TK-12 instructional and non-instructional facilities. Additional resources for TK-12 Schools can be located in the TK-12 School COVID-19 Toolkit.

Exposure Management Planning Prior to Identifying 1 COVID-19 Case at School

- ❑ *Required*: A designated School COVID-19 Compliance Officer that is responsible for establishing and enforcing all COVID-19 prevention and exposure management protocols and ensuring that staff and students receive education about COVID-19. A designated COVID-19 Compliance Officer who serves as a liaison to DPH for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.
- ❑ *Required*: A plan for all students, employees, and visitors who (1) have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, (2) were exposed at school, or (3) are at a school with an active public health investigation to have access to testing or be tested for COVID-19.
- ❑ *Required*: A plan to report all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among students or staff to DPH by sending a notification to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- ❑ *Recommended*: Seating charts in classrooms and participant rosters for students and staff participating in school extracurricular programs to facilitate identification of close contacts of persons

with COVID-19 at the school.

- ❑ *Recommended*: If a school elects to implement a routine school testing program, programs should use an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test, including a Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT, such as PCR) or an Antigen test, that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site. An FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test (or at-home test) is also acceptable for use in COVID-19 school testing programs. Note: Unverified Over-the-Counter test results cannot be used to fulfill required testing for school employees under the California State Health Officer Order.
- ❑ *Recommended*: Schools are advised to apply DPH guidance on Decision Pathways for persons who have not been tested yet for COVID-19 but screen positive for symptoms prior to school entry or while at school.

Exposure Management for COVID-19 Cases at School

- ❑ *Required*: After identifying 1 confirmed COVID-19 case on campus, the School Compliance Officer instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). NOTE: a confirmed COVID-19 case is an individual who has a positive COVID-19 test. Refer to sample isolation instruction notification (posted on ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12) for a model that can be adapted.
    - Students and staff with COVID-19 can end isolation after Day 5* ONLY if all of the following criteria are met: 1. A COVID-19 viral test** collected on Day 5 or later is negative, and 2. No fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, and 3. Other symptoms are improving --or-- Isolation can end after Day 10 if no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

      *For symptomatic students and staff, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms; Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms develop. For asymptomatic students and staff, Day 0 is the day the first positive test was collected; Day 1 is the first full day after the positive test was collected.

      **The test must be an FDA-authorized viral test (e.g., PCR or Antigen test, including at-home tests). An antigen test is preferred for testing out of isolation.
    - If a student meets the criteria to leave isolation after Day 5, it is **strongly recommended** that they wear a highly protective mask around others, except when eating or drinking for 10 days after onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, after the first positive test. Staff with COVID-19 are **required** to wear a highly protective mask in the workplace around others, except when eating or drinking, for 10 days after the positive test.
    - NOTE: For staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), employers are required to fulfill the following: inform all employees about how they can obtain testing, offer testing at no cost and during paid time, and provide testing in a manner that ensures employee confidentiality. To comply with the testing requirements of the ETS, an over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test may be both self-administered and self-read if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided. Additionally, staff may request masks and respirators from their employer at no cost to staff. See Wear a Mask and Know your Rights for more information.
- ❑ *Required*: The Compliance Officer works to identify all persons in the school with an exposure to the confirmed positive case during their infectious period (Close Contacts).
    - A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first appeared until their isolation ends, as described in the Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is

considered infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until their isolation ends.

- Close Contact: Persons may be considered to have been exposed to a case (close contact) during the infectious period if they shared the same indoor airspace at school with the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. **This definition of close contact is strongly recommended for identification of student close contacts in classrooms and similar sized indoor spaces.** This definition is required for identification of staff close contacts per Cal/OSHA (COVID-19 Prevention ETS). In large indoor airspaces, students and staff considered exposed may be limited to 1) those in a pre-defined or identifiable group (e.g., teammates, club members, cohort, etc.) or 2) those within 6 feet of the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period within that large indoor airspace.
  - Alternatively, schools may limit designation of student close contacts to students who were within 6 feet of the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period and may apply this definition in all settings, including classrooms.

  NOTE: Persons with an outdoor exposure at school are not considered close contacts.

- ❑ *Required*: The School Compliance Officer must notify Public Health of all clusters of 3 or more cases of COVID-19 in a classroom, office, or other pre-defined or identifiable group (i.e., cohort, team/club, etc.) who were on campus at any point within the 14 days prior to illness onset date (school-associated cases). Cases include employees, children/students, and visitors with confirmed COVID-19.

- ❑ *Required*: All school-associated COVID-19 clusters should be reported online through the secure web application, the Shared Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT): https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US. For reporting multiple cases, schools can submit their reports using the "Bulk Upload Template" located within the SPOT Portal. All clusters with information for the cases should be reported to Public Health immediately, and no later than 1 business day of being notified of the third, or last, case in the cluster.

  - Schools that need assistance on COVID-19 case reporting or other exposure management processes can call the TK-12 School COVID-19 Case Reporting Call Center, Monday through Friday from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. School administrators that do not have the Call Center number should contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov for the number.

- ❑ *Required*: All close contacts to a COVID-19 positive case at school are notified by the School Compliance Officer of the exposure and provided with actions to take.

  - Notification can be done using an individual notification or group notification method where individuals are notified of their exposure and actions to take. Refer to the sample exposure notification letter (posted on ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12) for the appropriate templates that can be adapted for this notification.

  - If applying the within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period definition for identifying close contacts in a classroom or similar size settings, all other individuals who shared in the same indoor airspace with the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period must be notified of a potential exposure and provided with recommended actions to take.

  Actions for close contacts

  - Asymptomatic close contacts are not required to quarantine; they may remain on campus if they follow all requirements for close contacts. Specifically: (1) monitor for symptoms; (2) wear a highly protective mask around others indoors, except when eating or drinking, for 10 days after the last date of exposure; (3) test with an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., PCR or Antigen test, including at-home tests) within 3-5 days since the last date of exposure.*

*NOTE: Asymptomatic student and staff close contacts who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the last 90 days are exempt from testing but must mask around others indoors for 10 days after the last date of exposure.

- If applying the within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period definition to identify close contacts in classrooms or similar size settings, all other individuals who shared in the same indoor airspace with the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period are also advised to: (1) monitor for symptoms; (2) wear a highly protective mask around others indoors, except when eating or drinking, for 10 days after the last date of exposure; and (3) test with an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., PCR or Antigen test, including at-home tests) within 3-5 days since the last date of exposure.
- If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- For students who have a mask exemption* and have been exposed, students should wear a face shield with drape at the bottom if their condition allows. For students who cannot tolerate a mask or a face shield with drape at the bottom, they may remain on campus if 1) they remain asymptomatic, 2) monitor for symptoms for the 10 days after last exposure, and 3) test for COVID-19 twice during the 10 days after last exposure, once during days 3-5 and once during days 6-9. Students who cannot mask after exposure and cannot meet these requirements must remain at home until after Day 10 after last exposure.

  *Individuals may be exempt from wearing a mask for the following reasons (refer to Appendix T-1: COVID-19 Protocol for TK-12 Schools for additional information):
  - Persons younger than two years old.
  - Persons who are hearing impaired, or communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication.
  - Persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability or whose medical provider has determined that it is unsafe for them to wear a mask, may file for an exemption with their school. A certification from a state licensed health care provider attesting that the student has a condition or disability that precludes them from wearing a mask safely will be accepted as proof of exemption. The following licensed health care professionals may provide such attestations: Medical providers including physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner (NP), or physician assistant (PA) practicing under the authority of a licensed physician; and licensed mental and behavioral health practitioners including Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), clinical psychologist (Psy.D.), Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), or Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).
- Staff who are close contacts exposed at work must follow the guidance outlined in Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards. Please refer to Table 2 in Cal/OSHA's COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standards Frequently Asked Questions for guidance after an exposure, including for staff who are unable to mask.
- Staff may request masks and respirators from their employer at no cost to staff. See Wear a Mask and Know your Rights for more information.
- For staff, per Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS), employers are required to fulfill the following testing requirements: inform all employees on how they can obtain testing, offer testing at no cost and during paid time, and provide testing in a manner that ensures employee confidentiality; to comply with the testing requirements

of the ETS, an over-the-counter (OTC) COVID-19 test may be both self-administered and self-read if verification of the results, such as a time and date stamped photograph of the result or an OTC test that uses digital reporting with time and date stamped results, is provided. Additionally, staff may request masks and respirators from their employer at no cost to staff. See Wear a Mask and Know your Rights for more information.

- ❑ *Required:* Schools are required to have a plan to facilitate COVID-19 response testing for persons who have an exposure at school. Staff and students who are tested must inform the school of the test results. Testing resources include: School Testing Programs, Employee Health Services or Occupational Health Services, Student Health Center, Personal Healthcare Providers, LA City and County Testing Sites: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing, and Community-Based Testing Sites (local health centers and pharmacies). Individuals who need assistance finding a medical provider can call the LA County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7.

- ❑ *Required*: The School Compliance Officer will work with Public Health to determine whether the cases within the reported cluster are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the affected individuals were present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while either or both were infectious.* Determination of epidemiological links between cases may require further investigation to assess exposure history and identify all possible locations and persons that may have been exposed to the case while infectious at the site.

  *A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days before symptoms first appeared until isolation ends. A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered to be infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until isolation ends.

  - Epidemiologically linked cases include persons with identifiable connections to each other such as sharing a physical space (e.g., in a classroom, school event, sports team, other extracurricular activities, school transportation, office site), indicating a higher likelihood of linked spread of disease in that setting rather than sporadic transmission from the broader community. If epidemiological links exist, DPH will advise the school on important steps to take and communications to students and employees on precautions to take to prevent further spread at the school, including implementation of site- specific interventions for infection control. Schools should contact DPH for assistance in determining whether cases are epidemiologically linked by emailing ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov or by calling the TK-12 School COVID-19 Case Reporting Call Center.

  - Public Health will determine if the outbreak criteria have been met: at least 3 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within a 14-day period of each other in a specified group* with members who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and are not a close contact of each other outside of the campus.

    - If outbreak criteria are not met, DPH will advise the school to continue with routine exposure management.
    - If outbreak criteria are met and DPH recommends an outbreak response, DPH will notify the school that an outbreak investigation has been activated and a public health investigator will communicate directly with the school to coordinate the response.

  *Specified group include persons that share a common membership at school (e.g., classroom, school event, sport teams, other school extracurricular activities, school transportation, office site). Epidemiological links require the infected persons to have been present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while infectious.

- NOTE: For overnight camps, a "household cohort" means cabinmates (campers and staff) who are staying together in a cabin, bunkhouse, or similar space. Confirmed cases that are part of the same household cohort are not counted separately toward meeting outbreak criteria. Additional guidance regarding overnight camps is located in the Reopening Protocol for Overnight Organized/Children's Camps: Appendix K-1.

❑ *Recommended*: The School Compliance Officer will determine whether additional notification is needed to inform the wider school community about the school exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19. Refer to sample general notification letter (posted on ph.lacounty.gov/EducationToolkitTK12) for a model that can be adapted.

APPENDIX A: Steps for Managing Exposures to COVID-19 Cases at School

1 Case	1) *Required*: School notifies case to follow isolation instructions. 2) *Required*: School identifies school close contacts. Schools can call the TK-12 School COVID-19 Case Reporting Call Center for assistance with identification of close contacts and exposure management. 3) *Required*: School notifies school close contacts of exposure.
2 Cases	1) *Required*: School notifies cases to follow isolation instructions. 2) *Required*: School identifies and notifies school close contacts of exposures. 3) *Recommended:* If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, school consults with DPH to determine whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links. If epi links exist, school implements additional infection control measures. Schools can call the TK-12 School COVID-19 Case Reporting Call Center or email ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov for assistance in determining whether cases have epidemiological links.
3+ Cases	1) *Required*: School notifies cases to follow isolation instructions. 2) *Required*: School identifies and notifies school contacts of exposures. **3) *Required:* If a cluster of 3 or more cases in a classroom, office, or in a pre-defined group (i.e., cohort, team, or club, etc.) who were on campus at any point within the 14 days prior to illness onset date, the school immediately notifies DPH by calling the TK-12 School COVID-19 Case Reporting Call Center and reporting online at: https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US.** 4) *Required*: DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, a public health investigator will contact the school to coordinate the outbreak investigation. 5) *Recommended*: School sends general notification to inform the school community of the cluster(s) and precautions taken to prevent spread.