

Protocol for COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan in K-12 Schools

NOTE: This protocol document may be updated as additional information and resources become available. Check the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health website: <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> for updates to this document.

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 Kindergarten through Grade 12 (K-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) when notified of COVID-19 cases and clusters at school. The School EMP can be implemented before COVID-19 case reports are received by DPH, thereby accelerating the ability to contain spread of COVID-19 and prevent school outbreaks from happening.

The steps for exposure management of 1, 2, and 3 or more COVID-19 cases at K-12 Schools are described below and summarized in Appendix A. Because K-12 Schools will vary in the level of resources for COVID-19 exposure management, *required* steps are the minimum required elements that should be included in the School EMP. *Recommended* steps include elements for localized management of exposures where school resources are available.

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

- Required:* A designated School COVID-19 Compliance Task Force that is responsible for establishing and enforcing all COVID-19 safety 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 in the event of a COVID-19 cluster or outbreak at the setting.
- Required:* A plan for all students and employees who are suspected to have COVID-19 or are quarantined because of exposure to case(s) at school to have access to testing or be tested for COVID-19.

Exposure Management for 1 COVID-19 Case at School

- Required:* If school is notified of 1 confirmed case (student or employee), School Compliance Task Force requests that the case follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona_2019/covidisolation/).
- Required:* School Compliance Task Force informs the case that DPH will follow-up directly with the case through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Case Isolation.

Required: School Compliance Task Force works with the case to generate a list of students and employees with exposure to the case during the infectious period. School Compliance Officer provides DPH with the names and contact information of the case and identified contacts within 1 business day of notification of a confirmed case.

- A case is considered to be infectious from 48 hours before their symptoms first appeared until the time they are no longer required to be isolated (i.e., no fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of medicine that reduce fevers AND respiratory systems have improved AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered to be infectious from 48 hours before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.
- A person is considered to have been exposed if they are one of the following:
 - An individual who was within 6 feet of the infected person for more than 15 minutes, even if a non-medical face covering was worn;
 - An individual who had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment).

Required: Students and employees that are identified to have an exposure to the case are notified by the School Compliance Task Force through a letter or other communication strategies (e.g., telephone, text, Robo-Calls). A School Exposure Notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#). The notification should include the following elements:

- Instruct students and employees with an exposure to the case to test for COVID-19, whether or not they have symptoms, and inform the school of test results. This will determine the extent of disease spread at school and serve as a basis for further control measures. Testing resources include: Employee Health Services or Occupational Health Services, Student Health Center, Personal Healthcare Providers, Community Testing Sites: covid19.lacounty.gov/testing. Individuals who need assistance finding a medical provider can call the LA County Information line 2-1-1, which is available 24/7.
- Instruct exposed students and employees to quarantine for 14 days since last exposure to the case while infectious, even if they receive a negative test result during their quarantine period. A person who tests negative during the incubation period (i.e. time period between exposure to disease onset) may subsequently develop disease, with or without symptoms. Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 is available at: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona/2019/covidquarantine/.
- Notification that DPH will follow-up directly with exposed students and employees through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.

Recommended: School Compliance Task Force will determine whether additional notification is needed to inform wider school community about the school exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19. A general notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#).

Exposure Management for 2 COVID-19 Cases at School within a 14-day Period

Required: If the school is notified of 2 confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, school follows *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.

Recommended: School Compliance Task Force assesses whether the 2 confirmed cases have epidemiological links (i.e., present at the same place and time during the infectious period*).

**A case is considered to be infectious from 48 hours before symptoms first appeared until they are no longer required to be isolated (i.e., no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of medicine that reduces fever AND respiratory systems have improved AND at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered to be infectious from 48 hours before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.*

- Determination of epidemiological links between cases may require further investigation to understand exposure history and identify all possible locations and persons that may have been exposed to the case while infectious. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#). For technical assistance on how to assess for epidemiological links, please contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- If epidemiological links do not exist, school continues with routine COVID-19 exposure monitoring.
- If epidemiological links exist, school reinforces messages to students and employees on precautions to take to prevent spread at the school, including implementation of site-specific interventions.

Exposure Management for ≥ 3 COVID-19 Cases at School within a 14-day Period

Required: If the school is notified of a cluster of 3 or more confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, the school proceeds with the following steps:

- Report cluster to DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Education Sector Team within 1 business day of notification of the cluster at: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov or call (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.
- Complete *Line List for Cases and Contacts*, available at: [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and submit to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. For technical assistance on how to complete the line list contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
- The ACDC Education Sector Team will review *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to determine whether the outbreak criteria have been met. The ACDC team will contact the school within 1 business day of receipt to advise on next steps.
- If it is determined that outbreak criteria are not **met**, continue with routine COVID-19 exposure monitoring.
- If it is determined that outbreak criteria are met, DPH Outbreak Management Branch (OMB) is activated.
- An OMB public health investigator is assigned to coordinate with the school on outbreak management for the duration of the outbreak investigation.

- School Compliance Task Force will submit requested information, including updates to the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* to the OMB Investigator until the outbreak is resolved (at least 14 days since the last confirmed case).

□ *Recommended:* Prior to reporting cluster to DPH ACDC Education Sector Team, School Compliance Task Force will assess whether at least 3 cases in the cluster have epidemiological links. A tool is available to assist in the assessment of epidemiological links at: [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#). For technical assistance on how to assess for epidemiological links, please contact ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.

- If epidemiological links do not exist between at least 3 cases in the cluster, the school continues with routine COVID-19 exposure monitoring.
- If epidemiological links exist between at least 3 cases in the cluster, report cluster to DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Education Sector Team at ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov or call (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.

COVID-19 Outbreak Criteria for K-12 Schools

School cluster

At least 3 laboratory-confirmed cases from different households with symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 over a 14-day period in group(s)* that are epidemiologically linked.

**Groups include persons that share common membership, e.g., classroom, school event, school extracurricular activity, academic class, sport teams, clubs, transportation.*

For more information, please contact the ACDC Education Sector Team at ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.