

COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan Guidance in TK-12 Schools

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

7/27/2021:

- Clarified that schools with asymptomatic screening testing programs should prioritize unvaccinated persons for regular testing. Asymptomatic screening testing of fully vaccinated persons is recommended if there is sufficient testing capacity.

7/26/2021:

- Updated recommendations for asymptomatic fully vaccinated individuals who are close contacts to a confirmed COVID-19 case to test due to their exposure.
- Added a recommendation for schools that elect to implement an asymptomatic screening testing program to test all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.
- Updated quarantine guidance with an option to end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen is collected after Day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative.

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 1, 2, and 3 or more 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 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 for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.
- ✓ **Required:** A plan for all students and employees who (1) have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, (2) are quarantined because of exposures 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.
- ✓ **Recommended:** If a school elects to implement an asymptomatic screening testing program, staff and students that are not fully vaccinated should be prioritized for regular testing as an important part of identifying infections early to prevent transmission on campus. Based on the current level of community transmission, if there is ample testing capacity it is recommended that fully vaccinated individuals be included in a school’s asymptomatic screening testing program.

- ✓ *Recommended:* The School that choose to implement a symptom screening program 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 1 COVID-19 Case at School

- ✓ *Required:* After identifying 1 confirmed COVID-19 case (student or employee), 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.
- ✓ *Required:* School Compliance Officer provides a copy of the Public Health Emergency [Isolation Order](#) and informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Case Isolation.
- ✓ *Required:* The Compliance Officer works to identify all individuals in the School who have had 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 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 other symptoms 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 infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.
 - Close Contact: A person is considered to have been exposed to a case during the infectious period if at least one of the following criteria are met:
 - Being within 6 feet of the infected person for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
 - Having had unprotected contact with the infected person's body fluids and/or secretions of a person with confirmed COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing utensils or saliva, or providing care without using appropriate protective equipment).
 - Exposures will be reviewed by Public Health to assess which persons need to quarantine including the possibility of quarantining all individuals in the same cohort or classroom as an infected person if exposures cannot be ruled out for the entire group. NOTE: Exposures associated with youth sports programs will be reviewed by Public Health to confirm which persons need to quarantine, including the possibility of quarantining all individuals on the same team with an infected person (or individuals on an opposing team who were playing against a team with an infected person), if exposures cannot be ruled out. Please refer to the [Exposure Management Plan for Youth Recreational Sports Programs](#) for specific guidance.
- ✓ *Required:* School Compliance Officer must notify DPH of (1) employees and children with confirmed COVID-19 who were on campus at any point within the 14 days prior to the illness onset date and (2) persons on campus who were exposed to the infected person during the infectious period. The illness onset date is the first date of COVID-19 symptoms or the COVID-19 test date, whichever is earlier.
- Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH of COVID-19 exposures and can be done on a computer or mobile device with access to the secure web application: <http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport>. If online reporting is not possible, reporting can be done manually by downloading and completing the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Education Sector](#) and sending it to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov. All case notifications should be submitted within 1 business day of being notified of the case.

✓ **Required:** All persons identified to have had an exposure to a COVID-19 positive case at school are notified by the School Compliance Officer of the exposure through a letter or other communication strategies. A School Exposure Notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:

- Students and employees with an exposure to the case should 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 the 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.
- Exposed students and employees must self-quarantine (stay in their home or another residence, separate from others) and monitor for symptoms for 10 days from their last contact with the case while infectious (as defined above). **If they remain asymptomatic, quarantine can end after Day 10 from the last date of exposure without testing** but they must continue to monitor their health and adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14. **Quarantine may end after Day 7 for contacts who remain asymptomatic, if a diagnostic specimen is collected after Day 5 from the date of last exposure and tests negative, but they must continue to monitor their health and adhere to COVID-19 prevention precautions through Day 14.** Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 is available at: ph.lacounty.gov/covid/quarantine.
- NOTE: Asymptomatic persons who are **fully vaccinated** AND who are a close contact to a **confirmed case are recommended to test for COVID-19 as a result of their exposure but are not required to quarantine.** However, they should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. **Persons who have recovered from laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days AND who are a close contact to a confirmed case are not required to quarantine or test for COVID-19.**
- DPH will contact exposed students and employees who meet the quarantine requirement through the DPH Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.

✓ **Recommended:** 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. 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:** After identifying 2 confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, the school follows the *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.

✓ **Recommended:** School Compliance Officer determines whether the 2 cases are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the two affected individuals were both present at some point in the same setting during the same time period while either or both were infectious. *

**A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days 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 other symptoms 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 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.

- 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. NOTE: Epidemiologically linked cases include persons with identifiable connections to each other such as sharing a physical space (e.g. in a classroom, office site on campus, or gathering), indicating a higher likelihood of linked spread of disease in that setting rather than sporadic transmission from the broader community.
- If epidemiological links do not exist, the school continues with routine exposure management.
- If epidemiological links exist, the 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 identifies a cluster of 3 or more confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, the school should proceed with the following steps:
- Report the cluster immediately to DPH. Secure online reporting is the preferred method for notifying DPH and can be done on a computer or mobile device with access to the secure web application: <http://www.redcap.link/lacdph.educationsector.covidreport>. If online reporting is not possible, reporting can be done manually by downloading and completing the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Education Sector](#) and sending it to ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
 - DPH will review the submitted information to determine whether the outbreak criteria described below have been met and will notify the school within 1 business day on next steps.
 - Outbreak Criteria: At least 3 confirmed cases with symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 within a 14-day period in a 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. *School groups include persons that share a common membership at school (e.g., classroom, school event, school extracurricular activity, academic class, sport teams, clubs, transportation). 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. Additional guidance regarding overnight camps is located in the [Reopening Protocol for Overnight Organized/Children’s Camps: Appendix K-1](#).
 - If outbreak criteria are not met, DPH will advise the school to continue with routine exposure management.
 - If outbreak criteria are met, 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 outbreak response.

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

1 Case	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Required:</i> School instructs the case to follow COVID-19 Home Isolation Instructions. 2) <i>Required:</i> School informs the case that DPH will contact the case directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Isolation. 3) <i>Required:</i> School works with the case to identify school contacts. 4) <i>Required:</i> School notifies* school contacts of exposure and instructs them to quarantine at home and test for COVID-19. NOTE: Asymptomatic persons who are fully vaccinated AND have an exposure are recommended to test but are not required to quarantine. Asymptomatic persons who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 90 days AND have an exposure are not required to quarantine or test for COVID-19. 5) <i>Required:</i> School informs school contacts that DPH will contact them directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Quarantine. 6) <i>Required:</i> School submits a report to DPH within 1 business day with information on the confirmed case and persons who were exposed to the case at the site. 7) <i>Recommended:</i> School sends general notification* to inform the school community of the school exposure and precautions taken to prevent spread. <p>*Templates for contact notification and general notification are available at: COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings.</p>
2 Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Required:</i> Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case. 2) <i>Recommended:</i> If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, school works with DPH to determine whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links. If epi links exist, school implements additional infection control measures.
3+ Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) <i>Required:</i> If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, school immediately notifies DPH. 2) <i>Required:</i> DPH determines if the outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, and a public health investigator will contact the school to coordinate the outbreak investigation.