

Appendix T2: Protocol for COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan in K-12 Schools

Recent Updates:

10/9/20: Section added on decision pathways for persons who screen positive for symptoms upon entry or while at the educational site but have not yet tested for COVID-19 infection. Added shorter hyperlinks for isolation and quarantine instructions. Provided additional information on the role of the school's COVID-19 Compliance Officer. Clarified that individuals included on the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* are persons who are affiliated with the educational site (changes highlighted in yellow).

8/23/20: Home Isolation period changed from 72 hours to 24 hours with no fever. The period that someone is considered to be infectious, changed from 48 hours to 2 days before symptoms begin. Provided additional clarification on epidemiologically linked cases and updated the COVID-19 Outbreak Criteria.

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). 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 K-12 Schools are described below and summarized in Appendix A. Because K-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.

Exposure Management Planning Prior to Identifying 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 for sharing site-level information to facilitate public health action.

Required: The School must follow 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 and their contacts at school.

Required: A plan for all students and employees who have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection or are quarantined because of exposure to case(s) at school to have access to testing or be tested for COVID-19 infection.

Exposure Management for 1 COVID-19 Case at School

Required: After identifying 1 laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case (student or employee), the School Compliance Task Force instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

Required: School Compliance Task Force 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: School Compliance Officer generates a list of students and/or employees that are affiliated with the school who have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection and a list of student and/or employees that are affiliated with the school with exposure to the infected person while infectious. The School Compliance Officer submits this information to DPH using the COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector within 1 business day of notification of a case. If needed, additional time may be requested. For technical assistance on how to complete the line list contact: [ACDC- Education@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov).

- 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 to be infectious from 2 days 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 had an exposure to the case at school are notified by the School Compliance Task Force 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 should quarantine for 14 days since last exposure to the case while infectious (as defined above), even if they receive a negative test result during their quarantine period. A person who tests negative may subsequently develop disease, with or without symptoms, if tested during the incubation period (i.e., time period between exposure and disease onset). Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 is available at:

ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.

- DPH will contact exposed students and employees directly 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 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 laboratory confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14- day period, the school follows the *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.

Recommended: School Compliance Task Force 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. 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, 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 laboratory confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, the school should proceed with the following steps:

- Report the cluster to the DPH Acute Communicable Disease Control (ACDC) Education Sector Team within 1 business day via email at: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov or by calling (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821.
 - Complete the *Line List for Cases and Contacts*, available at: [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and submit it 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 the *Line List for Cases and Contacts* 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 laboratory-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.
 - If outbreak criteria are not met, the ACDC team will advise the school to continue with routine exposure management.
 - If outbreak criteria are met, the ACDC team will notify the school that a DPH outbreak response field team has been activated and the field team will communicate directly with the school to coordinate the outbreak response.
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- Recommended:* Prior to reporting a cluster to the DPH ACDC Education Sector Team, School Compliance Task Force will determine 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](#).

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

- 1 Case**
- Required:* School instructs the case to follow COVID-19 Home Isolation Instructions (a).
- 1) *Required:* School informs the case that the DPH will contact the case directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Isolation (a).
 - 2) *Required:* School works with the case to identify school contacts.
 - 3) *Required:* School notifies* school contacts of exposure and instructs them to quarantine at home and test for COVID-19.
 - 4) *Required:* School informs school contacts that DPH will contact them directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Quarantine (b).
 - 5) *Required:* School submits contact information for case and site contacts using the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) and sends to DPH by emailing: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
 - 6) *Recommended:* School sends general notification* to inform the wider school community of the school exposure and precautions taken to prevent spread.
- *Templates for contact notification and general notification are available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#).
- 2 Cases**
- 1) *Required:* Follow required steps for 1 confirmed case.
 - 2) *Recommended:* If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, school determines whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links. A [COVID-19 Exposure Investigation Worksheet for the Education Sector](#) tool is available to help assess for epi links. If Epi links exist, School implements additional infection control measures.
- 3+ Cases**
- 1) *Required:* If a cluster of 3 or more cases occurred within 14 days of each other, school notifies DPH at: ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov.
 - 2) *Recommended:* Prior to notifying DPH of the cluster, the school determines whether at least 3 cases have epi links. If epi links do not exist, the school continues with routine exposure management.
 - 3) *Required:* DPH requests that the [COVID-19 Case and Contact Line List for the Educational Sector](#) be completed by the school to determine if outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, the DPH outbreak response field team is activated and a public health investigator will contact the School to coordinate the outbreak investigation.
 - 4) *Required:* School provides updates to the DPH outbreak response field team until the outbreak is resolved.
- a. Health Officer Order, cases directed to self-isolate until 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 OR, if case has no symptoms, until 10 days have passed after their positive test was taken: ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.
 - b. Health Officer Order, contacts directed to quarantine for 14 days since date of last exposure to case while infectious: ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.