Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH)
Guidelines for COVID-19 Prevention in TK-12 Schools

Note: This document is updated frequently.
Please check the date on the webpage for the most recent version.

Copies of this guidance should be distributed to all employees.

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

3/31/2023

- Aligns with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K–12 Schools to Support Safe In-Person Learning, 2022–2023 School Year (CDPH Guidance for K-12 Schools) that took effect on March 20, 2023.

3/14/2023

- This update aligns with the CDPH Guidance for Local Health Jurisdictions on Isolation and Quarantine of the General Public that took effect on March 13, 2023.
- Updates also reflect the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases (Isolation) and Close Contacts that went into effect on March 13, 2023, replacing the now rescinded Los Angeles County Public Health Emergency Orders regarding isolation and quarantine for the general public.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (DPH) is adopting a targeted public health response to contain COVID-19 exposures, supported by science and public health expertise, at schools serving students from transitional kindergarten through grade 12. In addition to the conditions imposed on schools by the State Public Health Officer and the California Department of Education, schools must also comply with any requirements contained in this guidance.

Please note: This document may be updated as new information and resources become available. Go to LAC | DPH | TK-12 Education Toolkit for the latest updates to this document.

This document starts with a discussion of current provisions for on-campus education in Los Angeles County (LAC), followed by information about safety strategies specific to the school environment.

This guidance provides safety measures in five areas:

(1) Required workplace policies and practices to protect employee and student health
(2) Measures that allow for improved ventilation and reduced crowding
(3) Measures to optimize infection control
(4) Communication with employees, students, and families of students and the public
(5) Measures to ensure equitable access to critical services

Required policies and actions are grouped together in the first section, while the additional four sections contain numerous strategies that your school may choose to implement as your facility develops a plan

to promote safety for all employees, students, and visitors. Although some preventive and protective measures are required in all schools, most measures are optional and voluntary. Nevertheless, it is appropriate for schools to implement multiple layers of COVID-19 mitigation strategies to reduce risk and limit cases and transmission on the school campus. There are additional measures described in Appendix T2: Exposure Management Plan for K-12 Schools that are also required and are applicable to all on-site personnel. Further resources for TK-12 Schools can be found in the TK-12 School COVID-19 Toolkit.

General Guidance for All Schools

TK to Grade 12 COVID-19 Prevention Checklist

Institution name: Highlands Elementary

Address: 27332 Catala Ave., Saugus, CA

NOTE: The terms "employees" and "staff" as used in this guidance refer to individuals who work in a school facility in any capacity associated with teaching, coaching, student support, provision of therapies or personal assistance to individual students, facility cleaning, or maintenance, administration, or any other activity required for the school to function. "Employees" or "staff" may include individuals who are: paid directly by the relevant school system, paid by entities acting as contractors to the school, paid by outside entities acting in collaboration with the school to serve students, paid by third parties to provide individual student services, or unpaid volunteers acting under school direction to carry out essential functions. The term "parents" as used in this guidance refers to any persons serving as caregivers or guardians to students.

REQUIRED WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT STAFF ("EMPLOYEES") AND STUDENTS (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

Note: Students, staff, and administrators at schools must cooperate with instructions from DPH outbreak investigators who may implement temporary strategies that exceed the requirements below if an outbreak occurs at the school, such as requirement to notify all close contacts within an exposed group and requirement for masking of close contacts.

A. General Requirements

- ❑ Each school needs to appoint a designated COVID-19 Compliance Officer who serves as liaison to DPH in the event of an outbreak on campus.
- ❑ The following steps are to be taken immediately upon notification of school officials that any

member of the school community (faculty, staff, student, or visitor) has a confirmed COVID-19 infection, confirmed by a COVID-19 viral test or clinical diagnosis.. (Note: For the benefit of all individuals present on the school campus, to allow for complete notification of exposed staff, and to effectively identify clusters and outbreaks that may occur at education sites, LACDPH strongly recommends that parents continue to immediately inform schools when a student tests positive for COVID-19 and has been present on the school campus during the student's infectious period).

- Immediate separation of the case from the school community to self-isolation at home if notification occurs while the case is on-site. The school must allow for temporary, on-site isolation of the case if arrangements are needed for the person's return to their home.
- Fact sheets or other informational materials that are to be given to the case (or appropriate family member/s if the case is a child) covering current instructions for self-isolation and links to sites with further information.
- Initiation of the COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan for TK-12 Schools **consistent with DPH guidance** that outlines procedures for:
  - Isolation of case(s)
  - Identification of employees exposed to cases at school
  - Actions for exposed staff to mitigate additional viral transmission
  - Assurance of access to testing for all exposed staff within the school.

- ❑ **Adherence with Case Reporting Guidance.** Schools are required to report clusters of 3 or more cases of COVID-19 in a classroom, office, or pre-defined or identifiable group (i.e., teammates, club members, cohort, etc.) who were linked and on campus at any point within the 14 days prior to illness onset date. The illness onset date is the date COVID-19 symptoms started or the COVID-19 test date, whichever is earlier. Report all cluster notifications to DPH immediately, and no later than 1 business day after the school is notified of the cases, online at: https://spot.cdph.ca.gov/s/?language=en_US. For any questions or assistance with reporting clusters, contact DPH at the TK-12 School COVID-19 Cluster Reporting Call Center or email acdc-education@ph.lacounty.gov. DPH will work with the school to determine whether the cluster meets outbreak criteria and requires a public health outbreak response.
- ❑ Schools need to have contingency plans for full or partial closure of in-person school operations if that should become necessary based on an outbreak in the school or community. The school has developed and circulated a communication plan in case full or partial closure is required due to a possible cluster of COVID-19 cases.
- ❑ Each local education agency, in accordance with SB 1479, which went into effect on January 1, 2023, is required to develop a COVID-19 testing plan or adopt the California Department of Public Health School Testing Framework and post its plan on its website. See Senate Bill 1479 Implementation Questions and Answers

- ❑ Signage should be posted at each public entrance of the school informing visitors that they should not enter the facility if they have symptoms of COVID-19.

B. Obligations for Employers and Employees at Schools

- ❑ To comply with the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention–Non-Emergency Regulations, an employer must develop a written COVID-19 Prevention Program or ensure its elements are included in an existing Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP).
- ❑ Employees with an exposure or suspected exposure to a person who has COVID-19 must follow post-exposure guidance as detailed in COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan for TK-12 Schools.
- ❑ Employers are required, per the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention–Non-Emergency Regulations, to exclude employees from the workplace who have COVID-19 symptoms. Cal/OSHA does not prescribe any particular method of employee screening but implementing some method as recommended will assist in compliance with this requirement.
- ❑ Employers are required to offer for voluntary use well-fitting medical masks and respirators, such as an N95, KN95 or KF94, at no cost to their employees who work indoors and have contact with other workers, students, and members of the public, or who are in vehicles with more than one person. Note that Cal/OSHA also requires employers to provide respirators upon request for voluntary use to any employee, regardless of vaccination status, who is working indoors or in vehicles with more than one person along with instructions on how to ensure the mask fits appropriately.
- ❑ Employers are required to offer testing at no cost to employees during paid time for:
    - All employees who had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 except for employees considered recently returned COVID-19 cases without symptoms ("returned cases," as defined in subsection 3205(b)(11)).
    - All employees exposed during an outbreak regardless of vaccination status.
- ❑ Employers must ensure that no person is prevented from wearing a mask as a condition of participation in an activity or entry into the school site unless wearing a mask would pose a safety hazard.
- ❑ Employees engaged in activities such as provision of physical therapy or personal assistance to individual students must be equipped with the appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, gowns, etc.)

C. Implementation of Masking Requirements

All schools are required to adhere to any applicable Health Officer Orders requiring masking in LA County and to have plans in place to communicate such requirements to the workforce, visitors, parents, and students.

- ❑ **Mask Exemption Policy**: At times when a Health Officer Order requires universal masking in an indoor public setting, including schools, alternative protective strategies may be adopted to

accommodate students who are on Individualized Education or 504 Plans and cannot tolerate masks or in situations where use of masks is challenging due to pedagogical reasons, student safety, or an existing disability. Individuals may be exempt from wearing a mask for the following reasons:

- 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. or Ph.D.) Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC), or Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

At times when the Health Officer Outbreak Order may require universal indoor masking or may require masking for certain individuals, students who are exempt from wearing a mask should wear a face shield with a drape at the bottom, as long as their condition allows it. Schools should enter into an interactive process with individuals who would be required to wear a mask but have a valid exemption and may choose to implement alternative protective strategies when accommodating such students in school. Some alternative strategies for consideration include regular (e.g., weekly) screening testing of unmasked students; strategies to improve ventilation in indoor spaces that accommodate unmasked students; seating unmasked students closer to open windows, exhaust fans, HVAC intake vents, and free-standing air purifiers; and offering students and staff who share indoor air spaces with unmasked students upgraded respirator masks (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94).

- Mask exemption for student close contacts: Recently, County Public Health rescinded its isolation and quarantine emergency orders for COVID-19 cases and their close contacts and replaced those orders with Guidelines for COVID-19 Cases (Isolation) and Close Contacts. For students who are an asymptomatic close contact of a COVID-19 case, it is strongly recommended that they wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others for 10 days after the close contact. **Asymptomatic close contacts should test immediately after exposure and a second time 3-5 days after the last date of exposure. Close contacts who test positive for COVID-19 need to stay home away from others and follow instructions for a confirmed COVID-19 case.** Students who are identified as close contacts with a valid mask exemption who remain in school after an exposure need to monitor for symptoms for 10 days after last exposure. If they develop symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, they stay away from others and test for

COVID-19. Refer to DPH's Learn about Symptoms and What to do if You are Sick.

- For employees who are unable to wear a mask, refer to Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention–Non-Emergency Regulations for return-to-work requirements after an exposure event.

D. Communication of Guidelines

- ❑ Copies of these guidelines have been distributed to all employees.
- ❑ A copy of these guidelines is posted at the school office and uploaded to a public facing page on the school or district website.

RECOMMENDED MEASURES TO ALLOW FOR IMPROVED VENTILATION (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ❑ Implementing measures to promote optimal ventilation in the school is strongly recommended. These may include (check all that apply):
  - The school HVAC system is in good, working order. Consider having the HVAC system evaluated by an appropriate engineer familiar with the Guidance for Reopening Schools as developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air- conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)_____
  - HVAC systems are set to maximize indoor/outdoor air exchange unless outdoor conditions (recent fire, very high outside temperature, high pollen count, etc.) make this inappropriate_____
  - Portable, high-efficiency air cleaners have been installed, if feasible_____
  - Doors and windows are kept open during the school day, if feasible, and if outdoor conditions make this appropriate. Existing fire codes requiring closure of fire-rated doors must be respected_____
  - Air filters have been upgraded to a higher efficiency (MERV-13 or higher rating is preferred) _____
  - Due to large room capacity and high-risk activities occurring on the court, improved ventilation in gymnasiums is a critical strategy to lower risk of viral transmission and outbreaks occurring as a result of high-risk competitive play. Strategic use of fans to improve air exchange at floor level may have significant impact at mitigating this risk. See Best Practices for Gymnasium Ventilation for further guidance_____
  - Consider improving ventilation on school buses by opening windows as air quality and rider safety concerns allow_____
  - Consider offering physical education classes outdoors as much as possible as outdoor weather conditions and air quality allow_____

- Other:

_____

More information on improving air quality in schools including a CDC interactive tool and CDPH guidance is available at the LACDPH TK-12 Schools COVID-19 Toolkit.

MEASURES TO OPTIMIZE INFECTION CONTROL (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO THE FACILITY)

- ❑ Schools should actively encourage employees, students, parents, and visitors to stay home when sick. Employers/facilities need to have a way to communicate that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 and/or a positive COVID-19 test must not enter the premises.
- ❑ It is strongly recommended for individuals who are risk for severe disease to wear a highly protective mask in the following settings:
  - Closed spaces with poor air flow,
  - Crowded places with many people nearby, and
  - Close contact settings especially where people are talking (or breathing heavily) close together.

  Schools and school districts are free to implement stricter masking policies than the current LA County guidance in order to provide a higher level of safety to all.
- ❑ Schools are encouraged to maintain signage at the entry to the school, at the entry to the school office, and throughout the school building noting that face masks are effective at preventing transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, and the proper use of face masks for those who choose to wear them._____
  - Parents of younger children who prefer their child continues to wear a mask are encouraged to provide a second face mask for school each day in case the one a child is wearing gets soiled; this would allow for a change of the face mask during the day._____
- ❑ Masking is recommended for all persons in the school nurse's office or health office, unless the school nurse or other staff is working alone in the space. Maintaining a supply of masks for students who may develop symptoms during the school day is recommended for consistent safety of the campus.
- ❑ It is recommended to have measures in place to promote appropriate cleaning of space, surfaces, and objects throughout the school. These may include (check all that apply):
  - Buses are thoroughly cleaned daily and disinfected after transporting any individual who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Drivers are equipped with disinfectant wipes and disposable gloves to support disinfection of surfaces, as needed, during a run_____
  - Cleaning products that are effective against COVID-19 (these are listed on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved list "N") are used according to product instructions. When EPA-approved disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (for

example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together–this causes toxic fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe_____

- Custodial and other staff responsible for cleaning and disinfecting school surfaces and objects are trained on manufacturer's directions, Cal/OSHA requirements for safe use and as required by the Healthy Schools Act, as applicable_____
- Custodial staff and other staff responsible for cleaning and disinfecting are equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves, eye protection, respiratory protection and other appropriate protective equipment, as required by the product_____
- All cleaning products are kept out of children's reach and stored in a space with restricted access_____
- Ventilation is maximized during cleaning and disinfecting to the extent feasible. If using air conditioning, use the setting that brings in fresh air. Replace and check air filters and filtration systems to ensure optimal air quality_____
- Restrooms, lobbies, break rooms and lounges, and other common areas are cleaned at the frequency listed below. Routine cleaning is recommended at a frequency no less than once per day during periods of operation but may be done more frequently.
    - Restrooms: _____
    - Lobbies/entry areas: _____
    - Teacher/staff break rooms: _____
    - Classrooms: _____
    - Cafeteria dining area: _____
    - Cafeteria food preparation area: _____
    - Front office: _____
    - Other offices: _____
    - Other areas: _____

❑ Implementing measures to promote frequent hand washing by staff, students, and visitors is recommended. These may include (check all that apply):

- Students and staff are given frequent opportunities to wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap, rubbing thoroughly after application, and use no touch hand driers or paper towels (or single-use cloth towels) to dry hands thoroughly_____

- Younger students are regularly scheduled for frequent handwashing breaks, including before and after eating, after toileting, after outdoor play, and before and after any group activity_____
- Ethyl alcohol-based (contains at least 60% ethanol) hand sanitizer is made available to students and staff at strategic locations throughout the school where there is no sink or portable handwashing station (in or near classrooms, rooms in which support services are provided, music and art rooms). Ethyl alcohol-based hand sanitizer is preferred and should be used in school environments. Hand sanitizers with isopropyl alcohol as the main active ingredient are not used in the school, as it is more irritating and can be absorbed through the skin_____
- Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning. Hand sanitizer is not out in the open and should be used with adult supervision for children under age 9. Faculty and staff have been made aware of the risk of ingestion and that they should call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 if there is reason to believe that a student has consumed hand sanitizer_____
- Hand sanitizer, soap and water, tissues, and trash cans are available at or near the entrance of the facility, at reception, and anywhere else inside the workplace or immediately outside where people have direct interactions _____

❑ It is recommended that hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19 be made available to all employees in or near the following locations (check all that apply):

- Building entrance/s, exit/s_____
- Central office_____
- Stairway entrances_____
- Elevator entry (if applicable)_____
- Classrooms_____
- Faculty breakroom_____
- Faculty offices: _____

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL SPORTS AND PERFORMING ARTS

❑ **General Considerations:** Physical exertion and other activities with increased or more forceful breathing, such as contact sports, singing, playing wind instruments, dancing, or enunciating during theatrical rehearsal and performances, will increase the risk of viral transmission, especially indoors and when community transmission is elevated. Schools, performing art classes and clubs, and youth sports clubs and leagues are free to consider taking a more cautious approach and implement stricter masking or testing policies around these higher risk activities.

❑ **School sports**

- Any organized youth sports including school sports teams and clubs should review COVID-19 Guidelines for Organized Youth Sports and must comply with any requirements therein to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. A few specific recommendations follow but are not a substitute for the aforementioned guidelines.
- Even outdoor sports may include higher risk interactions that happen indoors, including travel on team buses, weight training, sharing locker rooms, or watching game films, among others. Sports programs should consider if additional safety measures are appropriate, such as masking in these settings, requiring vaccination, routine periodic testing, limiting number of participants using weight rooms and locker rooms at the same time, and moving activities outdoors whenever possible.
- If youth sports activities are taking place indoors, make sure your building's Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system is in good, working order. Ventilation in gymnasiums can be improved with strategic placement of floor fans. See Best Practices for Gymnasium Ventilation for diagrams.

❑ **Music classes**

- Schools may consider if current COVID-19 community metrics (such as high community transmission) call for implementation of additional safety measures when wind instruments are being played or singing is occurring in a group setting, especially indoors. Some suggestions include:
  - Individuals playing wind instruments may wear a modified face covering that allows for direct contact with the instrument mouthpiece whenever they are playing the instrument. During periods that the students are not actively practicing or performing, they may choose to switch to full face coverings.
  - Instrument bell covers are recommended to be used during playing of wind instruments.
  - Consider allowing for some physical distancing (3 feet minimum recommended) any individual playing a wind instrument and all other participants.
  - Consider performing routine screening testing at least weekly of **all** individuals participating in the indoor group practice or performance especially if masking, bell covers, and distancing are not being implemented.

    Move these activities outdoors whenever possible which will greatly reduce risks related to poor ventilation and crowding indoors. Additional preventive measures described above such as modified masks, bell covers, and distancing can also be implemented outdoors based on level of caution desired.
- For music activities that includes singing in a group setting, consider routine testing of all members of the group at least weekly is another consideration if singers are vocalizing without masks and without recommended physical distancing while indoors.

- Use disposable absorbent pads or other receptacles, where possible, to catch the contents of spit valves or water keys, discard or clean properly after use.

❑ **Theater classes**

- Consider routine testing at least weekly for all participants if masks are not used and physical distance is not maintained while practicing or rehearsing indoors.
- Consider holding virtual or outdoor rehearsals and performances instead of indoor whenever practicable.

❑ **Dance classes**

- During movements that generate a greater volume of respiratory droplets due to heavy exertion, consider increasing the distance between individuals and/or moving those activities to outdoor space.
- Consider routine screening testing at least weekly for all participants if masks are not used and physical distance is not maintained during indoor activity.

❑ **Music Recording**

- Consider increasing distance between singers and all others in the sound booth or recording booth, especially if the vocalists are not wearing masks, due to the large amounts of respiratory droplets released into a relatively small, confined indoor space.
- If wind instruments are being played inside a sound booth with others present, refer to section above on music classes for suggestions on how to improve safety and mitigate risk.
- Other group instrumental music besides wind instruments may be recorded using a sound booth; however, consider maintaining a minimum of 3 feet of physical distance between all musicians, where practicable, especially if masks are not being used.
- Routine testing at least weekly is strongly recommended for all members of a group that shares a recording booth if masks are not worn by all and physical distancing is not maintained.
- Before the booth is used by another musician or group of musicians, the booth should be well ventilated (consider use of an air purifying device) to promote full air exchange and shared equipment (e.g., microphones) should be sanitized.

❑ **Performances**

- For all performances in TK-12 school-sponsored productions, consider implementing additional safety measures, especially if masks will not be worn during indoor performances. Consider routine testing at least weekly for all performers and stage crew with close contact to performers, beginning no more than 72 hours before the first gathering of the production ensemble and continuing until the end of the performance schedule.

MEASURES THAT COMMUNICATE TO THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY AND THE PUBLIC

- ❑ Information should be sent to parents and students prior to the start of school concerning school policies related to (check all that apply):
  - Isolation and quarantine policies as they apply to students who have symptoms or may have been exposed to COVID-19_____
  - Options for COVID-19 testing if the student or a family member has symptoms or has been exposed to COVID-19_____
  - Who to contact at the school if student has symptoms or may have been exposed: _____
  - How to conduct a symptom check before student leaves home_____
  - The effectiveness of face masks at decreasing risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, and the right of all individuals to wear a mask without threat of interference or discrimination_____
  - Importance of student compliance with any physical distancing and infection control policies in place_____
  - Changes in academic and extracurricular programming in order to avert risk _____
  - School policies concerning parent visits to school and advisability of contacting the school remotely_____
  - Importance of providing the school with up-to-date emergency contact information including multiple parent contact options_____
  - Other: _____

MEASURES THAT ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

- ❑ A plan for updating Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 504 Plans of students with special needs has been developed to ensure that education can continue without undue risk to the student.
  - This plan includes a method for proactive school contact with parents at the beginning of the school year to assure that issues related to the child's education and safety are being addressed.
  - Modifications to individual IEPs and 504 plans may involve remote learning, modifications to the classroom to accommodate student needs, school attendance in a separate area with few students, or a hybrid approach combining in-class and remote learning.
  - Steps taken to modify IEPs and 504 plans to assure student safety comply with relevant provisions of state and federal law.

- ❑ Administrative services or operations that can be offered remotely (e.g., class registration, form submission, etc.) have been moved on-line**.**

Any additional measures not included above should be listed on separate pages, which the business should attach to this document.

You may contact the following person with any questions or comments about these guidelines:

Business Contact Name:	Dr. Jennifer Stevenson or Barbara Tapia
Phone Number:	(661)294-5300
Date Last Revised:	5/15/2023