

## Reopening Protocols for K-12 Schools: Appendix T1

### Recent Updates (Changes highlighted in yellow)

#### 10/22/21

- Playing wind instruments indoors permitted with additional safety measures in place.
- Clarification provided on the requirements for consideration of a mask exemption.
- Updated links to best practices for smaller venues and Mega Events.

#### 10/14/21

- Additional information included regarding outdoor masking

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (DPH) is adopting a staged approach, supported by science and public health expertise, to enable schools serving students from transitional kindergarten through grade 12 to reopen safely. In addition to the conditions imposed on schools by the State Public Health Officer and the California Department of Education, schools must also be in compliance with these employee and student safety and infection control protocols.

Please note: This document may be updated as new information and resources become available. Go to [ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus](http://ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus) for 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.

The TK-12 reopening checklist provides safety measures in five areas:

- (1) Workplace policies and practices to protect employee and student health
- (2) Measures to create distancing where feasible
- (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.

These five key areas contain numerous strategies that your school may choose to implement as your facility develops a plan to provide a safe environment for all employees, students, and visitors. Although some preventive and protective measures are currently required in all schools and are clearly indicated as such in the following protocol, most measures are optional and voluntary. Nevertheless, it is still appropriate for schools to implement multiple layers of COVID-19 mitigation strategies while fully re-opening to limit cases and transmission on the school campus. All measures in the associated [School Exposure Management Plan](#) **must** be implemented and are applicable to all on-site personnel. Additional resources for TK-12 Schools can be found in the [TK-12 School COVID-19 Toolkit](#).

### General Reopening Guidance for All Schools

**At this time, all schools are permitted to reopen for all students in any grades TK – 12.**

**Note for child care programs located in schools.** [Local Education Agencies \(LEAs\)](#) and schools that offer day care services for children on school campuses should refer to DPH [Guidance for ECE Providers](#).













possible without interfering with essential operations. These may include the following measures (check all that apply):

- Classroom furniture is set up to maximize distance between students and between students and teachers. As a best practice, avoid using “pod” seating arrangements in classrooms. Where distancing is not feasible consider other safety measures including focus on high mask adherence.
  - Consider enhancing other mitigation layers, such as stable groups or improved ventilation.
  - Maintain an increased distance as much as possible during times when students or staff are not masked (e.g., due to eating or drinking, napping).
  - Nap or rest areas in classrooms have students placed an increased distance apart and alternating feet to head.
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Consider offering physical education classes outdoors as much as possible and select activities that allow for physical distancing. Physical education classes held indoors requires all present to wear masks except when drinking water.
- Consider implementing school policies that promote physical distancing in locker rooms. Policies may include:
- Offering access to locker rooms only when staff supervision is possible. Staggering locker room access. Consider limiting the total time students and student athletes spend in locker rooms, for example, suggest student athletes shower at home after practice and games.
  - Creating alternative options for storage of student clothing, books, and other items.
- Consider implementing measures to increase physical distancing during school meals when students will be unmasked. These may include (check all that apply):
- Meals are eaten in classrooms or outdoors, without mingling of stable groups from different classrooms. \_\_\_\_\_
  - If students line up to pick up food, tape or other markings are used to promote distance between students. \_\_\_\_\_
  - Staff are deployed during meals to maintain distancing and prevent mixing of students from different stable groups. \_\_\_\_\_
  - If meals take place in a cafeteria, mealtimes are staggered to reduce the number of groups in the cafeteria at any one time. \_\_\_\_\_
  - If meals take place in a cafeteria, space between all tables/chairs has been increased to maintain distance between students while eating. Barriers between tables and/or chairs may be used as an alternative when distancing is not possible. \_\_\_\_\_
- Consider implementing measures to promote physical distancing in school areas used for student support services.
- Student support staff, including school employees (nurses, guidance counselors, therapists, etc.) and employees of adjunct support programs (clinicians, health educators, etc.) are encouraged to maintain when feasible physical distance while engaging in student support activities.
  - Furniture and equipment in school areas used for student support services are arranged to promote distancing between any two students and/or between students and staff.
  - Sharing of equipment and supplies is avoided where possible.
  - Staff offering student support services are provided with appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) per Cal/OSHA requirements.



**C. MEASURES THAT ENSURE INFECTION CONTROL (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO THE FACILITY)**

- Symptom screening is recommended to be conducted before students, visitors and staff enter the school. Screening should include a check-in concerning symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 and any other symptoms the individual may be experiencing. These checks can be done remotely (using a digital app or in person upon arrival). A temperature check with a no-touch thermometer at entry can be included as part of the screening, if feasible, especially for visitors who may not be part of a systematic at-home screening process.
- Students, staff, and visitors who screen positive at entry or who report symptoms at any point during the school day should be reported to the COVID-19 Compliance Team (see Section A). The COVID-19 Compliance Team will determine whether the individual should be excused from the facility according to DPH guidance on [Symptom and Exposure Screening Pathways](#) at Educational Institutions. Students who screen positive are given a surgical mask and accompanied to a pre-selected isolation space where they can remain while a determination is made on exclusion and arrangements are made for their return home, where indicated.
  - Per the DPH Symptom and Exposure Screening Pathways, students, staff, and visitors who have had close contact with an individual who has screened positive for symptoms consistent with possible COVID-19 are notified of the potential exposure. These individuals are not required to quarantine unless the exposure has been confirmed through a positive COVID-19 diagnostic viral test or a clinical diagnosis from a medical provider. Students who have a confirmed exposure are accompanied to preselected quarantine space where they can remain until arrangements are made for their return home. This space is apart from the one set aside for symptomatic students. It may be a separate room or an area within the same room that is set apart by a barrier. Once they return home, they are instructed to self-quarantine as required by Health Officer Quarantine Order.
  - The preceding quarantine instructions do not apply to an individual who has a confirmed exposure but demonstrates proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 and is asymptomatic. Those individuals are not required to quarantine but are strongly recommended to be tested for COVID-19 as a result of their exposure *regardless of their vaccination status*.
- Screening of adults and of middle and high school age students should include a question about close contact with anyone at home, school or elsewhere in the past 10 days who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Any adult who is screened for exposure and reports close contact with an infected person is instructed to leave the school, return home to initiate self-quarantine, and get testing for COVID-19.
  - Any middle or high school student who is screened for exposure and reports close contact with an infected person is provided with a surgical mask and accompanied to a predetermined space in the school while arrangements are made for them to be picked up by parents in order to initiate quarantine at home. Parents are advised to seek testing for the child.
  - The preceding quarantine instructions do not apply to an individual who reports a close contact but demonstrates proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 and is asymptomatic. Those individuals are not required to quarantine but are strongly recommended to be tested for COVID-19 as a result of their exposure *regardless of their vaccination status*.
- Consider implementing measures to limit risk of infection due to visits by individuals other than staff and students. These may include (check all that apply):
- Visitors should be registered in a visitor log that includes a visitor's name, phone number and email address in case this information is needed in the future for contact tracing purposes. If a visitor must be accompanied by another person (e.g., for translation assistance, or because the visitor is a minor, or has minor students) their information should also be captured in the visitor log.     x
  - Movement of visitors within the school is best limited to designated areas such as the reception or lobby area, offices, conference or meeting rooms, and public rest rooms to the extent feasible, in order to reduce unnecessary interaction with any stable learning groups.     x



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.

\_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_

- 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. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- 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. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- All cleaning products are kept out of children’s reach and stored in a space with restricted access. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- 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. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of school premises, when indicated, is done when students are not at school with adequate time to let spaces air out before the start of the school day. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- Steps are taken to ensure that all water systems and sinks are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires’ disease and other diseases associated with water. \_\_\_\_\_
- 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: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Lobbies/entry areas: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Teacher/staff break rooms: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Classrooms: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Cafeteria dining area: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Cafeteria food preparation area: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Front office: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other offices: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other areas: \_\_\_\_\_

Measures are in place to ensure use of appropriate face masks by all staff, students, and visitors at all times when indoors. These must include (check all that apply):

- Staff, parents, and students are informed of the requirement for face masks prior to the start of the school year and on a regular basis throughout the school year. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- All students 2 and older are required to wear face masks at all times while indoors on school property except while eating, drinking, or carrying out other activities that preclude use of face masks. \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_
- There is no County requirement to wear masks outdoors on school campuses, however, it is *strongly recommended* that masks be worn at crowded outdoor events, which may include class or recess activities where distancing cannot be maintained. Furthermore, it is *strongly recommended* that children wear a mask on playgrounds and in other outdoor spaces where they gather if distancing is not possible or practical.
- Students, staff, and visitors on the school campus must adhere to school policies that require masks be worn in outdoor locations, and schools have the authority to implement such policies at the discretion of school or district leadership.

- Alternative protective strategies may be adopted to accommodate students who are on Individualized Education or 504 Plans and who have medical reasons why they cannot use or tolerate a face mask. They should substitute a face shield with drape at the bottom if tolerated. Assessing for exemption due to a medical condition, mental health condition, disability that prevents wearing a mask, or hearing impairment is a medical determination and therefore must be made by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician. Self-attestation and parental attestation for mask exemptions due to the aforementioned conditions do not constitute medical determinations.
- Information is provided to staff, parents and students concerning proper use of face masks including the need to wash face masks after each day's use.   X
- Signage at the entry to the school, at the entry to the school office and throughout the school building reinforces this requirement and depicts proper use of cloth face masks.   X
- As feasible, two face masks are provided to each student at the start of the school year. If that is not feasible, parents and students are given information concerning methods for making their own face masks.   X
- Parents of younger children 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.
- Staff who are deployed at school entry or in hallways or other common areas remind students of rules concerning use of face masks.
- Employees engaged in activities (such as provision of physical therapy or personal assistance to individual students) are equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, gowns, etc.), as appropriate.   X
- Staff taking care of a sick student are provided with a medical grade mask to wear themselves, and a medical grade mask for the student to wear (if it can be tolerated) until the student leaves the building.   X

**NOTE:** Staff and students who are alone in closed offices are not required to wear face masks. Students may also remove face masks indoors when eating or napping or when wearing a face mask is otherwise impracticable (e.g., while swimming or showering). The school may consider whether it is appropriate for a teacher in the early grades to use a plastic face shield with a tucked-in drape below the chin as a substitute for a face mask to enable the youngest students to see their teacher's face and avoid potential barriers to phonological instruction.

- 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 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.
  - Staff are instructed to model frequent handwashing, especially in lower grades where bathroom time is an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper hand washing.
  - Portable handwashing stations have been placed near classrooms to minimize movement and congregations in bathrooms to the extent practicable.
  - 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.   x  

- 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.   x
- 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.   x

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PERFORMING ARTS

#### Music classes

- Any activity that requires participants to remove their face masks may only be done as a group if the activity is held outdoors. However, individuals may practice such activities alone indoors in a studio or practice room with the door closed.
- Playing of wind instruments is permitted indoors in a group setting as long as the following safety measures are adhered to:
  - Those playing wind instruments must properly 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 should switch to full face coverings.
  - Instrument bell covers must be used during playing of wind instruments indoors.
  - Perform at least weekly screening testing with either PCR testing or antigen testing of **all** unvaccinated individuals participating in the group practice or performance. Those musicians playing wind instruments indoors must test at least weekly regardless of vaccination status.
- Consider using bell covers for the openings of wind instruments, modified masks that allow direct contact with instrument mouthpieces, and specially designed bags with hand openings for woodwind instruments to minimize the generation of droplets and aerosols, even when playing occurs outdoors.
- For activities that generate more forceful expired respiratory droplets such as singing, increased distance between individuals and engaging in these activities outside is strongly recommended. Individual singers may practice alone indoors without a mask or with a single instructor present while indoors in a studio or practice room if both of them are masked. Increased distance between the singer and instructor is recommended.
- Limit the exchange (or sharing) of any instruments, parts, music sheets, or any other items.
- 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

- Students and instructors in theater classes must wear face masks at all times when indoors. It is recommended that there be increased physical distance if the participants are enunciating (for example, those in a theater workshop).
- Limit, where possible, sharing of props, costumes, and wigs. If they must be shared, choose props, costumes and other materials that can be more easily disinfected. All props must be disinfected before first use on the set, and between uses by different actors. All shared clothing must be cleaned after each use. All wigs or other shared prosthetics must be disinfected after each use.
- Clean dressing rooms, green rooms, and production areas using a disinfectant from EPA's List N: Disinfectants for COVID-19.
- Consider holding virtual or outdoor rehearsals and performances instead of indoor. Masks must be worn at all times for indoor activities.



**Dance classes**

- Students and instructors must wear face masks at all times while indoors. Masks may be removed briefly to drink water; during water breaks, students should be reminded to maintain an increased distance from others while masks are removed. Students should be reminded to limit their exertion to a level that is comfortable while wearing a face mask and to immediately take a break from exercise if they begin to experience any difficulty breathing. Masks may be briefly removed while a participant rests and catches their breath as long as they move an appropriate distance from all others in the space. Masks should be changed if they become wet, if they stick to a person's face, or if they obstruct breathing.
- For activities that generate a greater volume of respiratory droplets such as heavy exertion, increasing the distance between individuals and limiting such activities to outdoor space is strongly recommended.
- Maximize use of outdoor space for practice and performance as much as possible. Masks must be worn at all times for indoor activities.

**Music Recording**

- Singing in sound booths/recording booths is permitted at this time as long as face masks are worn at all times as required. Increased distance between singers and from all others in the booth is strongly recommended due to the large amount of respiratory droplets released into a relatively small, confined indoor space.
- Playing of wind instruments inside a sound booth with others present in the booth is not permitted at this time due to inability to adhere to indoor masking requirements.
- Singers or musicians playing wind instruments are permitted to perform in the sound booth without masks only if they are sealed in the booth for solo recording and no other individuals are in the booth at the time.
- Other group instrumental music may be recorded using a sound booth; however, a minimum of 3 feet of physical distance should be maintained between all musicians at all times and masks are required as for all other indoor spaces.
- 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**

- Any performances should follow [the Best Practices Guidance for smaller venues](#) to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, [unless your performance or event is a Mega Event](#) (defined as more than 1,000 attendees in an indoor venue or 10,000 attendees outdoors), and then you should follow the [Guidance for Mega Events](#). Note that all performances in schools or other supervised youth settings requires use of masks in indoor spaces by all persons present regardless of vaccination status.

**D. 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   x
- Options for COVID-19 testing if the student or a family member has symptoms or has been exposed to COVID-19   Shared in Letter
- Who to contact at the school if student has symptoms or may have been exposed:  
  Shared in Letter
- How to conduct a symptom check before student leaves home   Shared in Letter



## SUMMARY OF REQUIRED PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN THIS DOCUMENT

- The school must have a COVID-19 Containment, Response and Control Plan that describes the school's comprehensive approach to preventing and containing the spread of COVID-19 on campus.
- A plan or protocol to initiate a [School Exposure Management Plan](#) consistent with DPH guidance.
- A plan to immediately report a cluster of cases (3 or more cases within 14 days) to the Department of Public Health.
- A plan or protocol for incorporating COVID-19 testing into regular school operations, which at a minimum should describe the strategy for ensuring access to testing for students or employees who are symptomatic or have known or suspected exposure to an individual infected with SARS-CoV-2.
  - The plan must provide that all testing results will be reported to the Department of Public Health.
- All employees have been told not to come to work if sick or if they have been exposed to a person who has COVID-19.
- Anyone entering school buildings or transports (school buses as well as school buildings) who has contact with others (students, parents, or other employees) is required to wear a face mask while indoors regardless of vaccination status.
- Everyone on school campus must comply with outdoor masking requirements at schools or districts that have elected to adopt such policies.
- Assessing for mask exemption due to a medical condition, mental health condition, disability or hearing impairment that prevents wearing a mask, is a medical determination and therefore must be made by a physician, nurse practitioner, or other licensed medical professional practicing under the license of a physician.
- All employees, on-site contractors, vendors, and delivery personnel have been provided instructions regarding required use of face masks when around others indoors.
- Copies of this Protocol have been distributed to all employees.
- Face masks required at all times on buses.
- Information should be sent to parents and students prior to the start of school concerning school policies related to COVID-19 prevention.
- A copy of this protocol is posted at all public entrances to the school and uploaded to a public facing page on the school or district website.
- Signage has been posted throughout the school reminding staff and students of policies concerning use of face masks and importance of hand washing.
- Signage is posted at each public entrance of the school informing visitors that they should not enter the facility if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- 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.
- Per order of the State Public Health Officer, all school staff are required to show proof of full COVID-19 vaccination or be tested at least once per week.