

## COVID 19 Response Scenarios: Supplemental Guidance

Upon review of best practices included in the LDOE guidance and in consultation with public health experts, the following guidelines should be used when a child, staff member or visitor becomes sick. The Louisiana Department of Education has also partnered with Children’s Hospital of New Orleans to serve as an additional resource to schools.

As stated in the [LDOE Guidance for Reopening](#), “given the levels of COVID-19 currently in our communities, schools should plan for and expect that some students will get COVID-19 during the school year. As part of their planning to reopen, schools should expect that there will be students who get COVID-19 and that those students will possibly expose other students/staff in the school setting.”

District administrators and contracted public health experts will consult with schools prior to finalizing a decision to close an individual school due to COVID-19 spread within a school community. It is critically important that schools be able to pivot from in-person to distance learning so that disruption can be minimized.

In this supplemental document NOLA Public Schools provides guidance on the following:

- What schools should establish before the start of school
- What to do when a child, staff member, or visitor becomes sick
- Criteria for returning to school or work after becoming sick
- School closure decisions and communications

### **Before the start of school all schools should:**

- Create an Operations Plan for the daily health screening of all students and staff to include temperature checks and health questions regarding symptoms and contact with known cases. An example health screening procedure can be seen [here](#). All students and staff should be monitored before the start of school. All school site visitors should be monitored upon entry to the school building.
- Establish an area that can be used to isolate sick students, staff, or visitors. This should be an area that is distinct from the area used for first aid or medication dispensing if possible, so those activities can continue unaffected.
- Develop a cleaning and disinfection process for if someone is sick at [school](#).
- Incorporate operational planning guidance from [NOLA Public Schools’ Reopening Roadmap](#), the [Louisiana Department of Health](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) into campus reopening plans.
- Establish plans to maximize social distancing (6 feet between people in classrooms and other campus settings) among students, staff, and teachers in accordance with [CDC guidance for reopening schools](#).
- Communicate with parents and staff about [what to do when you are sick](#).
- Actively encourage staff and students who are [vulnerable](#), sick, or who have had [close contact](#) with a person with COVID-19 to stay home.

- Provide parents a [checklist](#) to document that children have no symptoms every morning and no other family members are ill at home.
- Share [information](#) with staff, students, and families on the proper use, wearing, removal, and cleaning of cloth face coverings. Additional information about the use of cloth face coverings in schools can be found [here](#).
  - It is important to note that children should not wear face coverings when asleep or unconscious (such as during nap time in lower grade levels).
- Develop systems for notifying staff, families, and the public as needed if a person with COVID19 was on the school premises while infectious. Do this in coordination with local health officials while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with FERPA and all other state and federal laws.

**When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School:**

- Create a log for students, staff, and visitors who are identified through the screening process with potential COVID-19 symptoms and the schools next steps.
  - A student with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher should be placed in the school's designated space for isolating sick individuals. Temperature should be rechecked in 15 minutes for verification. Standard, confidential student health records should be kept for all student health encounters.
- Implement isolation measures and act swiftly to ensure the sick person leaves campus quickly and safely.
  - School health staff (school nurses) should wear appropriate PPE including mask, gloves, and eye protection while caring for the sick individual.
  - Consider transportation needs to ensure students with limited means to personal transportation can be returned safely home.
- Follow with cleaning and disinfecting process. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers a [framework](#) for cleaning and disinfectant practices. This framework is based on performing the following:
  - Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure.
  - Disinfection using [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) against SARS-CoV-2 can also help reduce the risk. Frequent disinfection of surfaces and objects touched by multiple people is important.
  - 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 can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours. Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of

children. Read [EPA's infographic](#) on how to use these disinfectant products safely and effectively.

- Once schools are notified of a **confirmed case** in their school community (student or staff member) either through public health contact tracing or family notification, the school is to report this incident in the following ways:
  - Communicate to NOLA Public Schools via our online form found [here](#) immediately. Information should not include name, date of birth or other identifiable data.
  - School nurses should call the Children's Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care COVID-19 hotline (504.837.7760) to determine any additional steps related to communication, quarantining practices, internal-to-school contact tracing, or enhanced cleaning or disinfection processes.
  - **For confirmed positive COVID-19 cases or exposures**, suspected cases schools are required to also notify the Louisiana Department of Health in one of two ways.
    1. Schools who have successfully registered for the LDH COVID 19 School Reporting Portal are to submit all information regarding a confirmed case or exposure via the online system.
    2. For schools who have not successfully registered for the COVID 19 School Reporting Portal schools are required to contact one of the following individuals with information regarding a confirmed case or exposure; Ashlyn Pinkins, Lead Region 1 Epidemiologist for the Louisiana Department of Health ([Ashlyn.pinkins@la.gov](mailto:Ashlyn.pinkins@la.gov) or 504.616.4320) or Dr. Grace Lee ([Grace.Lee2@la.gov](mailto:Grace.Lee2@la.gov) or 714-872-0466).
- All students and staff who have been in a classroom with a **confirmed** case or who otherwise have had [close contact](#) (defined as within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes) with a **confirmed case or a symptomatic person with a known exposure** will need to be quarantined at home for a minimum of 14 days. In such instances, the School Nurse should call the Children's Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care COVID-19 hotline (504.837.7760) to determine any additional steps related to communication, quarantining practices, internal-to-school contact tracing, or enhanced cleaning or disinfection processes.
  - Current guidance from the CDC about measures to take following exposure can be found [here](#) and isolation and self-quarantine recommendations from the Louisiana Department of Health can be found [here](#).
  - Schools may also use screening decision trees produced by New Orleans Children's Hospital [here](#). These decision trees give guidance on the next steps for individuals who are symptomatic or who have been determined as a close contact.
  - If a teacher or student within a "static group" is a confirmed case this would require the entire "static group" to self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days.

- If a teacher or student is a confirmed case or symptomatic person with a known exposure in a school that is not using “static groups,” all teachers, school staff and students in a classroom setting or other school activities with that individual may be required to self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days.

#### **School Communication Requirements:**

Once a confirmed case or a symptomatic person with known exposure is identified, schools are responsible for communicating to student families and staff if they were in close contact with that person, and to provide general information to their school community. Schools should follow the following directions for communication identified below when a confirmed case is identified:

- Schools should rely on the Louisiana Department of Health Region 1 Office if additional help is needed to identify close contacts.
- Schools are required to communicate to students and staff members that were identified as “close contacts” to the confirmed case or symptomatic person with known exposure, and schools must require the close contacts to self-quarantine for 14 days.
  - The Louisiana Department of Health has created a communication template for those identified as close contacts, this template will need to be altered for communications to staff members. The communication template can be found [here](#).
- Schools are required to provide a general message to their school community once a known case is identified with general information only (not personal identifiers).
- NOLA Public Schools will track information from all schools regarding the number of confirmed cases. This information will be made public to ensure transparency.

#### **When a Child or Staff Member Becomes Sick at Home:**

- Parents should continue to monitor children for [symptoms](#) every morning and ensure no other family members at home are ill before sending children to school.
- In the event that a child shows COVID-like symptoms, parents should call the Children’s Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care COVID-19 hotline (504.837.7760) to determine if any additional steps related to testing, or quarantining practices are needed. If needed, Children’s Hospital staff and the State of Louisiana Department of Health contact tracers will conduct contact tracing activities, including school-based contacts, for confirmed cases.
- If your child is a confirmed case, contact your child’s schools to notify them of the child’s health status.
- All students and staff who have been in a classroom with a **confirmed case**, either through contract tracing or family notification, or who otherwise have had close contact (defined as within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes) with a **confirmed case or a symptomatic person with a known exposure** will need to be quarantined at home for a minimum of 14 days after exposure. These situations should also be referred to Children’s Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care COVID-19 hotline (504.837.7760) to determine additional steps. Further guidance from the CDC about measures to take following exposure can be found [here](#).

- It is important to remember that anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after exposure based on the time it takes to develop illness. Click [here](#) for more information.

### **Returning to School after Illness:**

Students and staff who have been sick with fever or COVID-like symptoms can return to school once conditions as identified in the Return to School Self-Certification for COVID-19 form are met. The form can be found [here](#) and should be presented to the school be a student or staff member returns to school or work.

Questions about return to school practices should be referred to the Children’s Hospital New Orleans Hotline for School Wellness and Virtual Care COVID-19 hotline (504.837.7760). Notably, people with conditions that weaken their immune system might need to stay home longer than described above, and those individuals should consult with their healthcare provider for more information.

### **School Closure Decisions and Communications:**

School District administrators, appropriate public health officials (e.g. the State of Louisiana Regional Medical Director), and contracted public health experts will consult with schools prior to finalizing a decision to close an individual school. It is critically important that schools be able to pivot from in-person to distance learning so that disruption can be minimized while students and staff need to be away from a school building for extended periods of time. Below is an overview of the scenarios or situations that may result in a school closure:

- Two or more classroom cohorts (static groups) are required to quarantine within a 14- day period (classroom closure periods are overlapping).
- A cluster of cases (defined as two or more cases that share a common source) is identified and infection spread from that cluster cannot be contained with quarantine. For example:
  - Two or more cases within the football team where the players are scattered through different classroom environments throughout the day.
  - Two or more cases in the same class where the students are scattered through different classroom environments (non-static groups) throughout the remainder of the day.
- There is widespread exposure of students and staff such that it is not possible to identify and quarantine contacts (e.g., if a staff member who has prolonged close contact with large numbers of students is diagnosed with COVID-19).
- Public health officials determine that closure is necessary due to emerging data about new cases linked to the school community.
- High staff absenteeism due to illness and self-quarantine requirements have reduced staff to a critical low and the school can no longer provide adequate staff coverage for the school’s mission and purpose.