

Guidance for COVID-19 Exposure Management in Institutes of Higher Education

Recent Updates: (Changes highlighted in yellow)

1/7/2022:

- Updated quarantine, testing, and masking guidance for persons exposed to COVID-19 in IHE settings to align with new California Department of Public Health isolation and quarantine guidance for the general public.
- Added a testing requirement for close contacts who are exempt from quarantine in order to remain on an IHE campus after exposure.

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.

IHE are trusted community partners that can help DPH improve the timeliness and impact of the Public Health response through rapid initiation of an IHE COVID-19 Exposure Management Plan (EMP) when notified of COVID-19 cases and clusters on campus. Immediate implementation of an EMP when a single case of COVID-19 is identified at an IHE can accelerate the ability to contain the spread of infection and prevent outbreaks from occurring on campus.

The steps for managing exposures to 1, 2, and 3 or more COVID-19 cases on campus are described below and summarized in Appendix A. Because IHE 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 IHE resources are sufficient.

The term “campus” in this document refers to non-residential settings on the IHE property and residential congregate settings that house or employ large groups of IHE students and employees, both on- and off-campus.

Exposure Management Planning Prior to Identifying 1 COVID-19 Case at IHE Setting

- ☑ *Required:* A designated IHE 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 in the event of a COVID-19 cluster or outbreak at an IHE setting.
- ☑ *Required:* A plan for establishing spaces and housing for students to safely isolate and quarantine when needed. Guidance on isolation and quarantine plans for students is provided in Appendix B.
- ☑ *Required:* A plan for all students and employees who have (1) symptoms consistent with COVID-19, (2) are quarantined because of exposure to case(s) on campus, or (3) are at an IHE with an active public health investigation to have access to diagnostic testing or be tested for COVID-19.
- ☑ *Required:* A plan to report all known COVID-19 hospitalizations and/or deaths among students or staff to DPH by sending a notification to [ACDC-Education@ ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:ACDC-Education@ph.lacounty.gov).
- ☑ *Recommended:* During periods of increased community transmission, it is recommended that an IHE implement an asymptomatic screening testing program. These programs should prioritize employees and students that are not fully vaccinated for regular testing. Fully vaccinated individuals may be considered for asymptomatic screening testing programs if there is sufficient testing capacity.
- ☑ *Recommended:* Students and staff are encouraged to perform daily health screenings for infectious diseases, including COVID-19, and to stay home or seek medical care for any symptoms identified.

Exposure Management for 1 COVID-19 Case at IHE Setting

- ☒ *Required:* After identifying 1 confirmed COVID-19 case (student or employee), IHE Compliance Task Force 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. Per isolation instructions, cases should wear a mask indoors and outdoors for 10 days. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask. See [Who should not wear a mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#).
- ☒ *Required:* IHE 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:* IHE Compliance Task Force must notify DPH of (1) students and staff with confirmed COVID-19 who were on campus at any point within the 14 days prior to the illness onset date and (2) persons at the IHE 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. If the IHE is reporting cases among students or staff who were not on campus but live nearby in off-campus residences, reporting should be limited to students or staff who had interacted with other students or staff from the IHE within the 14 days prior to the illness onset date.
 - A case is considered to be infectious from 2 days before their 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 infectious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.
 - 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 a total of 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).
 - NOTE: Exposures will be reviewed by Public Health to assess which persons need to quarantine including the possibility of quarantining people beyond named close contacts if exposures cannot be ruled out.
 - 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:* Students and employees that are identified to have had an exposure to the case on campus are notified by the IHE Compliance Task Force through a letter or other communication strategies. A Campus Exposure Notification letter template is available at: [COVID-19 Template Notification Letters for Education Settings](#). The notification of exposure should include the following messages:
 - **Requirements for close contacts who are not exempt from quarantine**
 - **The following close contacts are required to quarantine:**
 - Persons who are not **fully vaccinated***, OR
 - Persons who are fully vaccinated and **booster-eligible** but have NOT yet received their

booster dose.

*Includes persons previously infected with SARS-CoV-2, including within the last 90 days.

- Close contacts who are required to quarantine must self-quarantine (stay in their home or another residence, separate from others) and monitor for symptoms as outlined in [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#). As long as symptoms of COVID-19 are not present they may end quarantine either:
 - After 10 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case (as defined above). Activities may resume starting on Day 11 provided they are asymptomatic.
 - After 5 full days have passed from their last known contact to the infectious case if they have a negative viral test result from a specimen collected on Day 5 from the date of last exposure to the case. Activities may resume starting on Day 6. The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test); a negative test result from an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test is acceptable for testing out of quarantine. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). Exposed persons who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test using an Antigen test.
 - Regardless of when quarantine ends, close contacts must continue to monitor their health and upgrade their masks for 10 days from the date of last exposure: adults should wear a surgical grade (also referred to as medical procedure) mask or higher level personal protective equipment (PPE) such as a KN95 or N95 respirator mask; children aged 24 months and older should wear a non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. Masks must be worn at all times when around others both indoors and outdoors, except with eating or drinking. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask. See [Who should not wear a mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#). Refer to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [COVID-19 Masks](#) page for latest guidance on masking. If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). Note: exposed persons who were previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 within the past 90 days should test with an Antigen test.
- **Requirements for close contacts who are exempt from quarantine**
 - The following close contacts are not required to quarantine provided they remain asymptomatic:
 - Persons who are boosted; OR
 - Persons who are [fully vaccinated](#) but not yet booster-eligible
 - In order to remain in the IHE campus, close contacts who are exempt from quarantine are required to test. At a minimum, the test specimen must be collected on Day 5 after the date of last exposure. However twice a week testing is strongly recommended, with the first test specimen collected immediately after being notified of the exposure and the second test specimen collected on Day 5 after the date of last exposure. The test must be an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test (e.g., NAAT or Antigen test); use of an FDA-authorized Over-the-Counter test is acceptable for this testing requirement.
- In addition, they must monitor for symptoms and upgrade their masks for 10 days from the date of last exposure: adults should wear a surgical grade (also referred to as medical procedure) mask or higher-level PPE such as a KN95 or N95 respirator mask; children aged 24 months and older should wear a non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. Masks must be worn at all times when around others both indoors and outdoors, except with eating or drinking. NOTE: there are some people who should not wear a mask. See [Who should not wear a](#)

[mask](#) and [Special considerations for persons with communication difficulties or certain disabilities](#). Refer to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health [COVID-19 Masks](#) page for latest guidance on masking. If symptoms develop, test using an FDA-authorized viral COVID-19 test and stay home. If the test is positive, follow Home Isolation Instructions for COVID-19 (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

- Employees with a campus exposure should follow guidance outlined in Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention [Emergency Temporary Standards](#) (ETS). However if an employee's quarantine period ends before they meet [Cal/OSHA's criteria for return-to-work](#), they may return to the Worksite(s) as soon as they have cleared quarantine per the [Health Officer Quarantine Order](#). A summary of requirements is provided in the Public Health guidance document on [Responding to COVID-19 in the Workplace](#).
- IHEs are required to have a plan to facilitate COVID-19 response testing for persons who have an exposure at the IHE. Staff and children who are tested must inform the IHE of the test results. 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.
- IHE will assist with identifying housing for students and faculty to safely isolate or quarantine when needed.
- DPH will contact exposed students and employees who meet the quarantine requirement through the Case and Contact Investigation Program to collect additional information and issue the Health Officer Order for Quarantine.
- *Recommended:* IHE Compliance Task Force will determine whether additional notification is needed to inform the wider campus community about the 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 within a 14-day Period at IHE Setting

- ☒ *Required:* After identifying 2 confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, IHE follows *required* steps for 1 confirmed case.
- ☒ *Recommended:* IHE Compliance Task Force assesses whether the 2 cases are epidemiologically linked, meaning that the two affected individuals were both present at some point in the same setting and same time 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 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 understand 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, 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, IHE continues with routine exposure management.
- If epidemiological links exist, IHE reinforces messages to students and employees on precautions to take to prevent spread on campuses, including implementation of site-specific interventions.

Exposure Management for ≥ 3 COVID-19 Cases within a 14-day Period at IHE Setting

☒ *Required:* If IHE identifies a cluster of 3 or more confirmed cases (students and/or employees) within a 14-day period, IHE 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/lacdphe.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 have been met and will contact the IHE within 1 business day to advise on next steps.
- Outbreak Criteria:
 - IHE Non-residential Setting: 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. *IHE groups include persons that share a common membership (e.g., Greek or other social organization, athletic teams, sports and recreation clubs, academic cohort, workplace on campus).
 - IHE Residential Setting*: At least 3 laboratory-confirmed cases with symptomatic or asymptomatic COVID-19 within a 14-day period within the same or multiple dwellings that share a common area.
*IHE Residential Settings include on- and off-campus residential housing facilities where groups of IHE students and/or employees congregate and/or reside (e.g., on-campus residences, on- or off- campus Greek housing).

Appendix A: Steps for managing exposures to 1, 2, and ≥ 3 confirmed COVID-19 cases in non-residential or residential congregate settings associated with IHE

1 Case	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> IHE instructs the case to follow Home Isolation Instructions.2) <i>Required:</i> IHE informs case that DPH will contact the case directly to collect additional information and issue Health Officer Order for Isolation.3) <i>Required:</i> IHE works with the case to identify IHE contacts with exposure. 4) <i>Required:</i> IHE notifies identified contacts of exposure and instructs them to quarantine, test for COVID-19 due to their exposure, and provided a copy of the Public Health Emergency Quarantine Order.5) <i>Required:</i> IHE informs contacts that DPH will contact them directly to collect additional information and issue the Public Health Emergency Quarantine Order.6) <i>Required:</i> IHE 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 IHE within 1 business day.7) <i>Recommended:</i> IHE sends general notification* to inform the relevant campus community of the exposure and precautions being taken to prevent spread.
2 Cases	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) <i>Required:</i> Follow steps for 1 confirmed case.2) <i>Recommended:</i> If the 2 cases occurred within 14 days of each other, IHE works with DPH to determine whether the cases have epidemiological (epi) links. If Epi links exist: IHE 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, IHE report this immediately to DPH.2) <i>Required:</i> DPH determines if outbreak criteria have been met. If outbreak criteria are met, a DPH outbreak investigation is activated, and a public health investigator will contact the IHE to coordinate the outbreak investigation.

Appendix B: COVID-19 Guidance for Isolation and Quarantine Plans for Students At Institutes of Higher Education

Guidance for isolation plans for students with COVID-19:

- If student is from local community: IHE should determine if the student is able to isolate in their family homes in accordance with Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation) (ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- If student lives off-campus: IHE should determine if the living conditions are adequate to support isolation without putting other students at risk in accordance with Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
- If student lives on campus in a single room: IHE should determine if the living conditions are adequate to support isolation without putting other students at risk in accordance with Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
 - Students in isolation should be restricted to their room in the isolation area. These students cannot attend class, visit other areas of the campus (e.g., fitness center, cafeteria, library, or laundry room), go to the grocery store or pharmacy, or attend any other events or gatherings.
 - Students in isolation should not share bathrooms or common spaces with students not in isolation.
- If the off- or on-campus living quarters are not appropriate for isolation: IHE should consider developing a dedicated isolation area, such as dedicating floors, halls, or other separate living spaces for the isolation of students infected with COVID-19 in accordance with Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).
 - Students in isolation should be housed separately from other students, preferably with their own dedicated points of entry/exit, physical barriers, and visible signage to separate those in isolation from students who do not have COVID-19.
 - Students in isolation should be restricted to their room in the isolation area if there are students in the same area who are not in isolation.
 - Students in isolation may be housed together and may share bathrooms and common spaces. These students cannot attend class, visit other areas of the campus (e.g., fitness center, cafeteria, library, or laundry room), go to the grocery store or pharmacy, or attend any other events or gatherings.
 - If adequate space cannot be dedicated on campus, local hotels and motels may be able to provide sufficient short-term housing. The same isolation scheme would apply for a student in a single room on a floor with other students not on isolation.
- Efforts should be made to ensure compliance with COVID-19 isolation as per Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation), either with direct monitoring or indirect monitoring (i.e. ID card monitoring, contact tracing apps on phones, etc.).
- Outside visitation is not permitted to students in isolation. If the student in isolation requires essential services, staff must wear personal protective equipment, limit their exposure to students, wash hands upon leaving the area, and monitor for signs and symptoms of illness.
- Students in isolation should be provided with any necessary supplies and services (e.g., food, cleaning supplies, laundry, thermometer, medications, information on who to contact if they become ill).
- If the student in isolation requires medical care, the healthcare provider, emergency medical services, and anyone else assisting with the transportation of student should be notified of the student's COVID-19 infection so they can take proper precautions.
- If the student in isolation must leave the living quarters, they should wear a surgical mask or respirator, physically distance themselves from others, and go directly to/from their destination.
- Students in isolation should be given online educational access to missed classes when possible.
- Routine health checks for students in isolation should be done virtually when possible.

Guidance for quarantine plans for students required to quarantine

- If student is from local community: IHE should determine if the student is able to quarantine in their family homes in accordance with Public Health's [Home Quarantine Guidance](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) (ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine).
- If student lives off-campus: IHE should determine if the living conditions are adequate to support quarantine without putting other students or household members at risk in accordance with Public Health's [Home Quarantine Guidance](#).
- If a student lives on campus in a single room: IHE should determine if the living conditions are adequate to support quarantine without putting other students at risk in accordance with Public Health's [Home Quarantine Guidance](#).
 - Students in quarantine should be restricted to their room in the quarantine area. These students cannot attend class, visit other areas of the campus (e.g., fitness center, cafeteria, library, or laundry room), go to the grocery store or pharmacy, or attend any other events or gatherings.
 - Students in quarantine should be kept away from other persons in quarantine (i.e., they should not share a room nor be in common rooms together). Ideally, they should use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, they should wear a surgical mask or respirator when in the common bathroom, avoid being in the bathroom at the same time as others if possible, and should disinfect the bathroom themselves after each use.
- If the off- or on-campus living quarters are not appropriate for quarantine: IHE should consider developing a dedicated quarantine area. All quarantined students should follow Public Health's [Home Quarantine Guidance](#).
 - Students in quarantine should be housed separately from other students preferably with their own dedicated points of entry/exit, physical barriers, and visible signage to separate quarantined students from others in the living quarters.
 - Students in quarantine should be restricted to their room in the quarantine area. These students cannot attend class, visit other areas of the campus (e.g., fitness center, cafeteria, library, or laundry room), go to the grocery store or pharmacy, or attend any other events or gatherings.
 - Students in quarantine should be kept away from other persons in quarantine (i.e., they should not share a room nor be in common rooms together). Ideally, they should use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, they should wear a surgical mask or respirator when leaving their room and when in the shared bathroom. They should avoid being in the shared bathroom at the same time as others if possible and should disinfect the bathroom themselves after each use.
 - If adequate space cannot be dedicated on campus, local hotels and motels may be able to provide sufficient short-term housing. The same quarantine scheme would apply for a student in a single room on a floor with other students not in quarantine.
- Efforts should be made to ensure compliance with COVID-19 quarantine as per Public Health's [Home Quarantine Guidance](#), either with direct monitoring or indirect monitoring (i.e. ID card monitoring, contact tracing apps on phones, etc.).
- Outside visitation is not permitted to students in quarantine. If the student in quarantine requires essential services, staff must wear personal protective equipment, limit their exposure to students, wash hands upon leaving the area and monitor for signs and symptoms of illness.
- Students in quarantine should be provided with any necessary supplies and services (e.g., food, cleaning supplies, laundry, thermometer, medications, information on who to contact if they become ill).
- If the student in quarantine requires medical care, the healthcare provider, emergency medical services, and anyone else assisting with the transportation of student should be notified of the student's exposure so they can take proper precautions.
- If the student in quarantine must leave the living quarters, they should wear a surgical mask or respirator,

physically distance themselves from others, and go directly to/from their destination.

- Students in quarantine should be given online educational access to missed classes when possible.
- Routine health checks for individuals in quarantine should be done virtually when possible.
- If a student in quarantine develops symptoms at any point within **10** days of their last exposure, they must isolate from others immediately and follow instructions in Public Health's [Home Isolation Guidance](#).