

OPTIONAL TEMPORARY SURGE MEASURES FOR TK-12 SCHOOLS

The measures outlined below are provided as options for TK-12 schools to simplify case identification and exposure management during a community COVID-19 case surge if schools do not have the capacity to conduct routine exposure management as outlined in the [TK-12 Exposure Management Plan Guidance](#). These are temporary measures that are permitted when indicated by the Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD).

2-16-2022: At this time, due to the Omicron variant surge, these surge measures may be adopted by schools that communicate with PPHD their intention to do so. Notify nursing@cityofpasadena.net, or call 626-744-6089. The time period that these surge measures may be active will be determined by PPHD (based on community transmission rates) and communicated with schools.

Recent Updates: (Changes are highlighted in yellow)

2/16/2022

- Updates to notification methods for isolation and quarantine instruction
- Clarification regarding instructions for implementation of group tracing and modified quarantine for select student groups
- Changed the requirement for masking outdoors to a recommendation for masking in crowded outdoor settings when distancing cannot be easily and reliably maintained

Foundational Mitigation Measures:

Up-to-date vaccination and masking are even more important during a surge and as schools adopt new protocols that might include modified quarantine with testing, shorter isolation and/or quarantine periods, and use of less sensitive antigen tests. Limited availability of PCR testing and delayed testing results are other factors that heighten the importance of vaccination and masking.

Vaccination

- **The greatest priority for schools should be to ensure staff and students are “[up to date](#)”* on COVID-19 vaccination** because of the high efficacy of up-to-date vaccination in reducing risk of COVID-19 infection, severe illness, and disruption to school operations.
- School policy that requires or encourages up-to-date vaccination will significantly improve safety and continuity of operations. At this time everyone ages 12 years or older is eligible for a booster dose 5 months after the second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. The three-dose mRNA vaccine series provides about twice as much protection against infection with Omicron than a primary two-dose series without a booster.
- Exposed staff and students who are up to date on vaccination (and asymptomatic) **do not** have to quarantine at home. They may remain in school with a strong recommendation to test on or around Day 5 (Day 4 or Day 6 is acceptable) after exposure. This is the best option for both COVID-19 infection prevention and maximizing in-person school instruction.

*[Up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines: boosted, or fully vaccinated but not yet eligible for a booster dose.

Masking

- Masking continues to be required in all TK-12 spaces indoors. PPHD recommends that masks also be worn outdoors while the City of Pasadena is experiencing a high or substantial level of transmission of COVID-19 (according to the CDC's COVID-19 [community transmission levels](#)), when in crowded outdoor settings when distancing cannot be easily and reliably maintained, except when actively eating or drinking.
- [Upgraded masks](#) are required for staff and are highly recommended for students.

Surge Mitigation Measures:

Identification and Isolation of COVID-19 Cases

- It is required for schools to report students and staff with COVID-19 infection to PPHD, and ensure immediate home isolation. If resources are limited, this should be prioritized over identifying close contacts, and a group contact tracing approach may be adopted, instead (see below).
- Schools should inform parents of infected children that they need to keep their children in isolation at home to prevent further spread on campus. Notification can be individualized or through an email blast or robocall to parents of positive cases. Please refer to the isolation notification template ([Sample Exposure Notification Letters - Education Settings](#)) for a template you can use.
 - If schools would like PPHD to conduct additional outreach to parents of the infected student(s), a phone number for the family should be included in your case report to PPHD. Refer to the section on reporting below for instructions on simplified case reporting during the surge period.
- If schools have multiple cases in a cohort/group (e.g., classroom, sports group, etc.) that may be linked, administrators should immediately contact PPHD to report the cluster (nursing@cityofpasadena.net or call 626-744-6089).

COVID-19 Exposure Management

- Schools may not have the capacity to do individual contact tracing given the volume of cases during the surge period. Schools that are unable to determine who was exposed to an infected individual or individuals at school may simplify exposure management by notifying the entire relevant group (e.g., classroom, sports group, art group) of potential exposure and providing them with instructions.
- Schools may opt to do group tracing for exposures that occurred in a shared indoor airspace at school (e.g., classroom, locker rooms, shared transportation). In this option, entire relevant groups are notified of potential exposure to a positive case during the period of infectiousness and are provided with instructions on actions that should be taken. This notification can be done by an email blast or robocall. Refer to [Sample Exposure Notification Letters - Education Settings](#) for a model you can use.
- Exposed students may remain in school if they are asymptomatic AND up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine (fully vaccinated and boosted, or fully vaccinated and not yet booster eligible because their second shot was less than 5 months ago). Students should test upon notification of exposure (if possible) and should test again on or around Day 5 (Day 4 or Day 6 is acceptable) following exposure. Exposed students must wear a well-fitted (preferably upgraded) mask at all times indoors and outdoors, except when actively eating or drinking while physically distanced. Eating and drinking should only occur while distanced from others. Exposed students need to remain masked at all times during sports and/or extracurricular activities.

- Schools now have the option to allow two additional groups of exposed students to remain in school (however, with a possible higher level of COVID-19 transmission risk) *** IF they are asymptomatic:
 1. Students who are fully vaccinated (but not boosted yet, even though eligible). Students in this group should test upon notification of exposure (if possible) and must test again on or around Day 5 following exposure and wear a well-fitted (preferably upgraded) mask at all times. At a minimum, they must test at least once during the 10 days after their last exposure date. Eating and drinking should only occur while distanced from others. Exposed students need to remain masked at all times during sports and/or extracurricular activities.
 2. Students who are eligible for *Optional Modified Quarantine for TK-12 Students* because they only had mask-to-mask exposure with the positive case at school. These students may remain at school as long as they remain asymptomatic, test according to the [TK-12 Exposure Management Plan Guidance](#), and wear a well-fitted (preferably upgraded) mask at all times.
 - Students who are not fully vaccinated are required to test at least once weekly. All other exposed student groups are recommended to test once within the 10 days of their last exposure. The exception is students who had a positive COVID-19 test in the past 90 days; these students are exempt from testing. See section on testing considerations for more details.

***Because these two groups of students are at significantly greater risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 than students who are up to date with vaccination, schools are encouraged to minimize the number of potential students in these groups through booster vaccination policies and resources. These new options allow some transition time for students to get their booster doses following FDA/CDC shortening of the required period between the 2nd primary dose and the booster dose to 5 months, while maximizing in-person instruction, even in the context of a surge. However, the goal should be to maximize the rate of students up to date on vaccination, as this is the best short-term and long-term strategy to keep students in school.

- Schools are required to have sufficient testing capacity while Pasadena and Los Angeles County remain in widespread transmission to test exposed students remaining on campus at least once (either antigen or PCR tests are acceptable), preferably on or around Day 5, during the 10 days after their last exposure date. Though not required, it is strongly recommended that they also test as soon as possible after exposure. Staff and students previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 are exempt from post-exposure testing and quarantine for 90 days following symptom onset (or positive test if asymptomatic) as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Schools may simplify reporting of information about close contacts to PPHD during the surge period. See below.

Reporting COVID-19 Cases and Close Contacts

- Cases: Report laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases to PPHD through nursing@cityofpasadena.net using the [line list template](#), or schools can contact PPHD for an alternative reporting format and necessary fields.
- Close contacts: Schools should prioritize reporting of cases during this surge period, and report close contacts in the [line list template](#), if able, or can contact PPHD for an alternative reporting format and necessary fields.

Testing

- Schools with limited testing capacity should prioritize “response” testing (testing of staff and students with symptoms or exposures) over regular, weekly testing.
- Routine, periodic screening testing should continue to the extent possible, as it is effective for identifying and isolating cases to prevent outbreaks on campus, especially when community case rates are high.
- In particular, prioritize testing to allow asymptomatic, exposed students and staff to remain in school, with upgraded masking for 10 days, as follows:
 - a. Staff and students who had a positive COVID-19 test within the last 90 days and are asymptomatic are not required to quarantine or test after exposure.
 - b. Asymptomatic staff who are fully vaccinated and boosted are not required to quarantine at home after exposure. Testing should occur at minimum, once around Day 5. If possible, testing should be done twice, once as soon as possible after exposure and again on or around Day 5.
 - c. Asymptomatic students who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine at home after exposure. They may remain in school and should test negative on a viral test (e.g., PCR or antigen) at least once during the 10 days after their last exposure date. If possible, testing should be done twice, once as soon as possible after exposure and again on or around Day 5. However, PPHD strongly recommends that schools minimize the number of students on campus who are exposed, but not boosted though eligible (are not up to date). Increasing the proportion of students who are up to date with COVID-19 vaccination on campus can help minimize COVID-19 risk from keeping these unboosted students on campus (because the number is small). Alternatively, if the school has resources to identify students who are booster eligible but not boosted, it is an option to require these students to quarantine at home to reduce risk of on-campus transmission (as described in the [TK-12 protocol](#)). There are ample [booster vaccination opportunities](#) in Pasadena, including at PPHD, and a student is considered “boosted” and up to date right after getting a booster dose.
 - d. Staff who are fully vaccinated, and eligible but not yet boosted, are required to quarantine at home after exposure. However, they may remain in school if they are asymptomatic and get a viral test (e.g., PCR or antigen) 3 to 5 days after last exposure and test negative but must quarantine at home when outside of work/school.
 - e. Students who are not fully vaccinated are required to quarantine at home after exposure. If students are asymptomatic and had a mask-on-mask exposure at school, the school has the option to allow them to remain in school under modified quarantine provided the school ensures that they meet requirements for [Optional Modified Quarantine for TK-12 Students](#) as detailed in the [TK-12 Exposure Management Plan Guidance](#). The minimum testing requirement is twice -- as soon as possible after exposure AND on or around Day 5. During the surge period, schools may test these students once weekly in the 10 days after exposure, but this option is discouraged. This group is at highest risk of having infection after exposure. Students who are not fully vaccinated and did NOT have mask-on-mask exposure at school must quarantine at home during the quarantine period and must follow the [Pasadena Health Officer Quarantine Order](#).
 - f. Students who have symptoms after exposure are required to isolate at home, be tested, and seek further clinical evaluation as needed.

- g. Staff who are unvaccinated are required to quarantine and may not remain in school during the quarantine period. They must follow the [Quarantine Order](#).
- h. All staff and students who remain in school must wear a [well-fitting, medical-grade mask](#) at all times for 10 days, except while eating or drinking; children should wear a well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire (cloth masks meeting ASTM standards for high filtration efficiency (ASTM F3502-level 2) are permitted. Refer to the CDC's [Your Guide to Masks](#) page for latest guidance on masking).
- Note: For indoor moderate or high risk youth sports, weekly testing is still required (twice weekly recommended) for unvaccinated athletes of all ages, staff and volunteers. For outdoor moderate or high risk youth sports, weekly testing is required for all unvaccinated athletes ages 12 years and older, staff and volunteers.
- In the event of wide scale or repeated exposures within a school, weekly testing of all students who are not fully vaccinated may be considered until such a time that exposure events become less frequent. This would still require notification to all students with a known exposure (individual contact tracing) or potential exposure (group contact tracing). However, the students being tested weekly would not need additional response testing.
- To improve testing access during the surge period, schools may accept results of students' at-home or over-the-counter FDA-authorized tests for all testing needs. This is true for staff as well, except for required weekly testing for unvaccinated staff, which needs to be performed in a healthcare setting (including observation by an authorized telehealth proctor) or certified testing site, or observed by the employer, following current Cal/OSHA Emergency Temporary Standards ([Cal/OSHA ETS](#)).

Communication:

- Please contact PPHD with any questions or technical assistance, including for communication with parents. [Template documents](#) are available online.