

TEA



**Guidebook for
Public Health
Operations**

July 28, 2020



Outline



Guidebook overview



Planning



Prevent



Respond

Public Health Operations Guidebook Aims

- Outline the steps that school systems must take to **develop their plans**
- Provide a set of guidelines and a tool for **planning with local public health entities**
- Share **operational guidance for screening and response** to positive cases that schools can build on
- Provide **communications resources** that school systems and campuses can customize to align to their local plans

- This guidebook is not intended to offer information on instructional practices provided, whether on campus or remotely. See the Strong Start resources for instructional guidance.



Considerations for Response Planning

- This guidebook focuses on steps that schools can, and in some cases must, take to **plan for prevention, mitigation, and response** to positive COVID-19 cases on campus.
- Schools **should not plan on a one-size-fits-all response** in the event of a positive case— e.g., campus closure for a certain number of days. Instead, the response should be:
 - Coordinated with local public health entities
 - Based in the scientific understanding of how the virus spreads; and
 - Communicated transparently and matter-of-factly with relevant parties.

The decision about how to respond in a particular case will depend on the number of individuals with whom the infected individual had close contact and the next steps that the school must take in coordination with public health entities.

Key Concepts Overview

- Symptoms
- Close contact
- Screening
- Case investigation
- Contact tracing
- Staying home
- Self-isolation

Understanding these terms and concepts will give school system leaders the framework needed to determine what steps to take in the event of a positive COVID-19 test.



COVID-19 Symptoms

In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question:

Any of the following symptoms indicate a possible COVID-19 infection:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher when taken by mouth;
- Sore throat;
- New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (or, for students with a chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline);
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain; or
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever.

Key Concept Definitions

Close contact

- Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- Being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes; if either occurred at any time in the last 14 days at the same time the infected individual was infectious. Individuals are presumed infectious at least two days prior to symptom onset, or in the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, two days prior to the confirming lab test.

Guidance for Schools: Close contacts should follow the stay at home protocol as outlined by the CDC. COVID-19 testing for close contacts is not necessary, as negative test results can occur at any time while the virus is incubating. The role of schools in identifying close contacts is to provide relevant information to local health departments, not to determine close contacts in the absence of public health guidance.



Key Concept Definitions

Screening

Screening is an activity that campuses conduct to identify and temporarily exclude from campus those who may have been exposed to COVID, in an effort to keep the virus out of campuses.

Guidance for Schools: Screening is accomplished by asking questions via electronic methods, by phone, and/or in person to determine that individuals:

- Are not lab-confirmed with COVID-19
- Do not themselves have COVID-19 symptoms
- Have not come into close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19

Schools have the ability to prevent anyone who either does not complete or does not pass screening from entering their campus. More information on screening protocols and potential screening tools is included in this guidebook.



Key Concept Definitions

Case investigation

- Discussions with a COVID-19-positive individual to determine who may have spread and/or been infected and how that spread may have occurred

Contact tracing

- The identification of individuals who have been exposed as close contacts to COVID-19 and are as a result possibly infected themselves, but pre-symptomatic.

Guidance for Schools: Case investigation and contact tracing will be conducted by the local health entity. If an infected individual was on campus during the infectious period, school personnel will need to provide information to inform the case investigation and contact tracing process.



Key Concept Definitions

Staying home

Staying home allows individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 to monitor their symptoms during the period in which they may be infectious. These individuals should **separate themselves from others outside their home, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health entity.**

Guidance for Schools: Because doctors believe a positive person can infect others with COVID-19 for two days prior to experiencing symptoms, and symptoms may take 14 days to appear, if an individual is made aware that they are a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19, they should immediately begin to stay home and continue to do so during the virus incubation period. It is important for schools to keep track of the individuals who have been directed by local public health entities or asked by the school to stay at home so they can temporarily remain home.

In most cases, local health entities will notify close contacts that they should:

- Stay home until 14 days after last close contact with confirmed positive COVID-19 individual
- Check temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19



Resources

[CDC: Stay home if you might have been exposed to COVID-19](#)



Key Concept Definitions (Slide 1 of 2)

Self-isolation

Self-isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 (including those who are sick with the virus and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).



Resources

[CDC: Isolate if you are sick](#)



Key Concept Definitions (Slide 2 of 2)

Self-isolation

Guidance for Schools: *Self-isolation* allows individuals who may have been infected with COVID-19 to recover while trying not to infect others. Based on medical professionals' understanding of how long an individual is infectious after fever and other symptoms disappear, self-isolation can end when a *symptomatic or lab-confirmed individual*:

Meets all three of the following conditions for return to school:

- 24 hours with no fever;
- Symptoms improved; and
- 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

Or:

- Obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.

Or:

- A doctor's note indicating an alternate diagnosis



Key Concept Definitions: Stay at Home vs. Self-Isolation

Staying home

- Purpose of this period is to prevent pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals from spreading the virus
- Asks individuals to stay at home, but no further precaution required
- Applies to close contacts of confirmed-positive individuals
- Individuals don't have symptoms, but they have been identified as having a higher likelihood that they may have the virus
- Duration lasts for 14 days from close contact
- There is no need to get a test, because the individual could be incubating the virus until the 14-day incubation period ends regardless of result

vs

Self-isolation

- Purpose of this period is to prevent symptomatic/ lab-confirmed individuals from spreading the virus
- Asks individuals to stay at home and stay isolated while at home, encourages others in home to wear masks, disinfect frequently
- Applies to individuals who are symptomatic and/or lab-confirmed
- If the individual has symptoms, but doesn't think it's COVID, the individual can end self-isolation with a medical professional's diagnosis that the symptoms are something other than COVID –or– by obtaining an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- Otherwise, it ends when the virus can no longer spread from the individual, with all three of these being true:
 - 24 hours with no fever;
 - Symptoms improved; and
 - 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

Outline



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Planning



Prevent

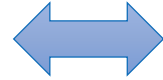


Respond



Requirement for Parental and Public Notices

Develop a plan



Meet with local health entities to refine plan



Practice Changes

- ✓ **What?** Plan addresses how school system will mitigate COVID-19 spread in their schools based on the requirements and recommendations outlined in TEA public health guidance
- ✓ **When?** One or more weeks prior to on-campus activities and instruction
- ✓ **How?** Posted on school system homepage and/or easily found area on system website

Prevention

- Screening protocol for students
- Screening protocol for staff
- Screening protocol for visitors

Mitigation

- School entry/exit procedures
- School lunch procedures
- Masks/Face Shields
- Hygiene
- Janitorial procedures

Human Resources

- COVID leave practices
- Teleworking policies



Resources

- [TEA Public Health Guidance](#)
- [Local Health Entities](#)
- [USDE COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel](#)



Roles and Responsibilities in Planning and Response

| School System Leadership (Superintendent, Central Office) | School Leadership (Principal, Nurse) | Local Health Department | Local Health Authority | Regional Medical Director |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage overall district response• Develop communications to school and district stakeholders | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manage campus response• Distribute communications to school stakeholders• Collaborate with public health entities on case investigation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead case investigation• Identify close contacts through contact tracing• Notify close contacts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine risk of communicable disease and recommend actions that protect from communicable disease | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serves as the local health authority for all the counties in their region, when there is not a local health authority in place, and performs all duties necessary to protect the public health. |

Each of the listed individuals should participate in the planning effort and understand the role they would play in any potential response. Planning efforts should also engage **parents** and **teachers**.

School System Planning with Local Health Entities

- School systems, local health departments and local health authorities should make contact prior to the start of school and conduct a tabletop exercise (detailed at the end of this document) to determine how they will work together.
- ESCs will provide their districts with opportunities to engage with local public health on this exercise. School systems can also reach out to their health authority and local public health directly.
- In preparation for this exercise, school systems should provide the local health authority and/or health department with access to their 2020-21 COVID-19 Mitigation Plan
- As part of the exercise, these parties will determine how to best work together in the instance of a positive case.



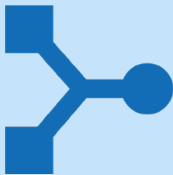
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Screening Requirements

- Screening is an activity that campuses conduct to identify and temporarily exclude from campus those who may have been exposed to COVID, in an effort to keep the virus out of campuses.
- **Each school system must establish a routine for screening teachers, staff, and visitors** for COVID-19 symptoms and using the information from those screens to determine which individuals may enter a school campus.
- **Parents must ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test. School systems may also establish a screening process for students.**
- School systems should clearly communicate screening requirements and protocols to families. The parent letter template provided below can be adapted for this purpose.
- School systems may also consider making a video for their families to demonstrate screening procedures.



Communication

- [Beginning of Year Notification Letter: Parents/Guardians](#)
- [Beginning of Year Notification Letter: Staff/Educators](#)
- [Visitor Screener](#)
- [Notification of failed screening](#)

Teacher and Staff Screening

Teacher and Staff
Screening

Visitor Screening

Student Screening

Parent/Guardian
Screening

Teachers and staff must self-screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms and for close contact with any individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.

- Symptoms and close contact are defined in TEA Public Health Guidance, and in this guidebook.
- Teachers should take their temperature each day as part of this self-screen.
- Teachers and staff should notify designated campus COVID-19-point person if they are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, experience symptoms, or have been in close contact an individual who is lab-confirmed.
- A point person on campus should use the screening data collection system to track those who did not pass the screening and determine the day when they will be eligible to return to campus, determined by when they meet criteria to return to campus as outlined in this guidebook under “stay at home” and “self-isolation” procedures
- Teacher and staff screening data must not be permanently retained. Put a process in place to ensure that results for “completed and passed” screening data are routinely destroyed and results for “did not pass” screening are retained only until a teacher or staff member is eligible to return to campus returns to campus.
- Teachers and staff should receive notice of screening requirements. The [Beginning of Year Notification Letter: Staff/Educators](#) can be customized for this purpose.



Visitor Screening

Teacher and Staff
Screening

Visitor Screening

Student Screening

Parent/Guardian Screening

Campuses must screen all individuals who come onto campus. This includes parents, guardians, or caregivers who share a student’s household only if those individuals are not screened as part of a student screening process.

- Designate a secure area for visitors to complete screening before allowing them to proceed onto campus such as a vestibule or hallway area near a campus entrance.
- Campuses should designate one public entry, if possible, to facilitate ease of screening.
- Campuses should have signage and procedures in place to encourage visitors to maintain social distance while awaiting screening.
- Campuses should assign a staff member to collect screening information from visitors.
- The [Visitor Screener](#) should solicit the visitor’s name and response to whether the individual experienced 1) any COVID-19 symptoms or 2) close-contact with a lab confirmed individual.
- Visitors who do not pass or are not willing to complete the screener may be temporarily prohibited from being on the campus.
- Results for “did not pass” screenings must be retained until the visitor meets criteria to return to campus, if they choose to do so. “Did not pass” screening data must then be destroyed.



Student Screening

Teacher and Staff
Screening

Visitor Screening

Student Screening

Parent/Guardian
Screening

Parents **must** ensure they do not send a child to school on campus if the child has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test. School systems **may** also establish a screening process for students. If student screening is conducted, screening:

- Can be conducted using an app or online form, an automatic dialer survey, or phone calls.
- Should identify students screened as having either “completed and passed” or “did not complete” screening or “did not pass”
- Should capture symptoms and exposure for students as well as for any adult in the household who will regularly pick up and/or drop off the student
- Must be conducted by asking questions of students’ parent or guardian, not of student.
- Should be communicated clearly to students and families. Inform families of the day, timeframe, recurrence, screening questions, and what to expect during screening process, prior to starting the process. The [Beginning of Year Notification Letter: Parents/Guardians](#) can be adapted for this purpose.
- In some cases (e.g., when making phone calls to screen), it may be useful to plan for regular recurring screening windows (e.g., each Sunday from noon to 6pm).



Student Screening

Teacher and Staff
Screening

Visitor Screening

Student Screening

Parent/Guardian
Screening

Campuses that have a student screening process in place may prohibit from being on campus any student for whom a screening has not been completed or who did not pass the screening. Some considerations for use of screening data:

- Determine how staff will verify that each student has successfully completed the screening process. If not using an app to screen, homeroom teachers may need to be provided with a list of students who did not complete the process
- An appropriate location should be identified to send students who may come to campus without completing or passing screening—for example, the Nurse’s Office. Students may then be screened on site or sent home, if needed.
- A point person on campus should use the screening data collection system to track those who did not pass the screening and determine the day when they will be eligible to return to campus, determined by when they meet criteria to return to campus as outlined in this guidebook under “stay at home” and “self-isolation” procedures
- Student screening data must not be permanently retained. School systems should put a process in place to ensure that results for “completed and passed” screening data are routinely destroyed and results for “did not pass” screening are retained only until a student returns to campus.

Parent/Guardian Screening

Teacher and Staff
Screening

Visitor Screening

Student Screening

Parent/Guardian
Screening

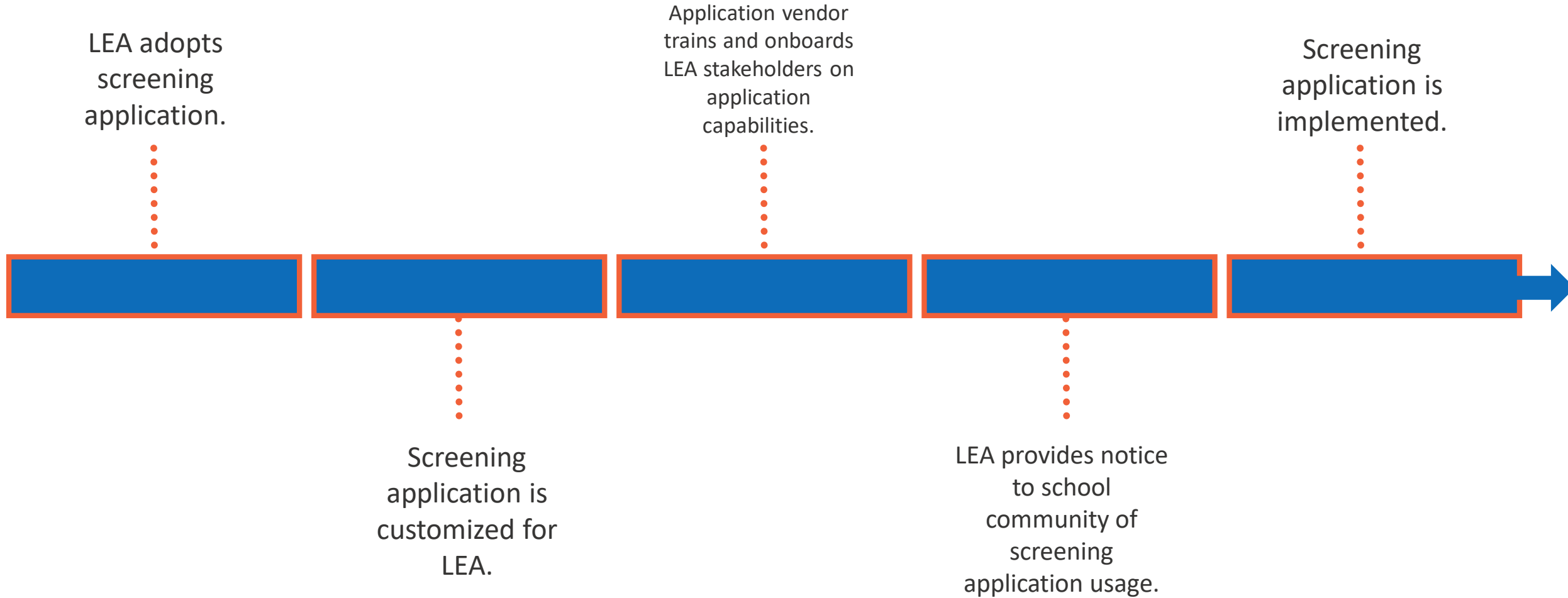
- For student drop-off and pick-up, parents and guardians may be screened at the same time, using the same method as student screening, so long as they share the same household. School systems would then allow the results to apply to the student and all individuals in the household, including caregivers in the household who are responsible for pick up and drop off.
- If a school system does not conduct student screening, parents, guardians and caregivers must be screened as visitors or the system must develop another protocol to screen them on a regular basis.
- For example, a school system could determine that for parents who either (a) never come inside the campus or (b) come inside only briefly to drop-off/pick-up while wearing masks, screening is not necessary. Other similar adaptations are possible at the school's discretion.



COVID-19 Symptom Screening Mobile and Web Applications

- Mobile and web-based software applications can be used to screen staff, students, and visitors for COVID-19 symptoms. LEAs may choose to implement these applications to simplify their screening process.
- These applications allow employees/students/visitors to use the mobile phone application to enter symptoms and/or respond to questions related to screening.
- Information provided is then sent to the LEA and used to create credentials that allow individuals to enter shared spaces.
- Apps provide a variety of methods to provide credentials such as QR codes, certificates, list reports, etc.
- TEA has provided a list of pre-vetted applications later in this presentation.

COVID-19 Symptom Screening Mobile and Web Application Implementation Process





COVID-19 Symptom Screening Mobile and Web Implementation Process

LEA provides access and training to school community for application use.

User enters or answers screening criteria.

Tracking and Reporting Capability

User accesses application via mobile or website.

Credential or certification to allow entry to campus.

List of COVID-19 Symptom Screening Applications

- TEA conducted an [Informal Selection Process](#) to identify optional COVID-19 Symptom Screener mobile and web-based software applications for LEAs to use to screen staff, students, parents/guardians, and visitors for COVID-19 symptoms.
- Vendors that were selected during this process are listed to the right.
- LEAs maintain the responsibility to contact the vendors directly
- **LEAs are under no obligation to use vendors from this list and may use other vendors, or no vendor.**



Resources

- [Qualtrics](#)
- [Luminare, Inc.](#)
- [Dr. Owl Health Technologies](#)
- [Virtual Care for Families](#)
- [Allsynx](#)
- [healthATTEND](#)

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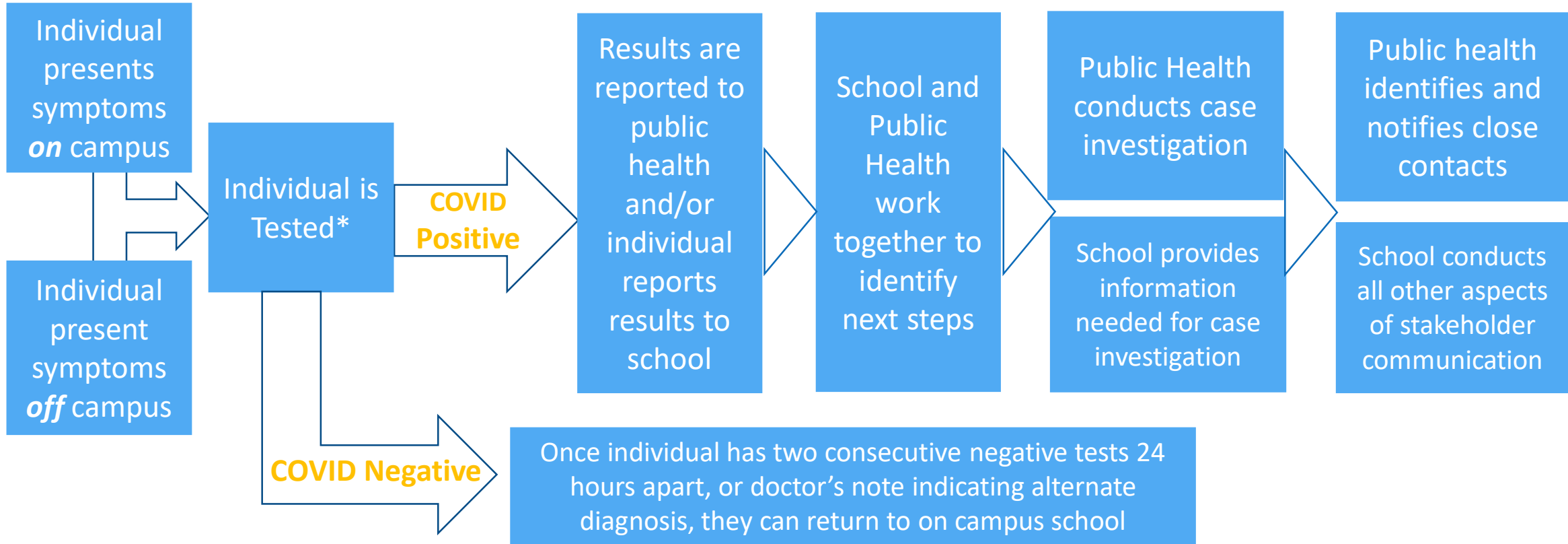
Prevent



Respond



Identifying Impact of COVID-19 Positive Individual On Campus



*Testing is paid for by most insurances, though a co-pay or deductible may apply. Public health entities and community groups also offer free testing in many communities.



Notification Protocols for Lab-Confirmed Case

Campuses will notify all teachers, staff, and student families if any person who participates in campus activities is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19.



Requirements

- Immediately contact your [Local Health Entity](#).
 - If your local health entity has a delayed response, contact your [Regional Medical Director](#).
- Notify student families, teachers, and staff in writing of the presence of a lab-confirmed case.



Recommendations

- Be ready to share when and where the lab-confirmed person was last on campus.
- Determine internal response procedures: who at the school system should be notified and at what points?
- Consider in your plan what conditions would lead you to close the campus to respond to the positive case. The scenarios included here can help you plan.
- Prepare the [Notification of Confirmed COVID-19 Case on Campus](#) template ahead of time and update prior to release.



Communication

[Notification of Confirmed COVID-19 Case on Campus](#)



Cleaning Protocols for Lab-Confirmed Case

Additional cleaning protocols should be taken on any campus that has a positive COVID-19 case.



Requirements

- If 7 days or less since the individual with positive case was on campus, immediately close off areas that were heavily used by this person.
 - Keep these areas closed off until the non-porous (hard) surfaces are disinfected.



Recommendations

- Prepare an area on campus appropriate for students and teachers to continue learning if their primary location must be closed off for disinfecting during an ongoing school day. This will reduce the need for school closures.
- Use the [Beginning of Year Notification Letters](#) templates to inform teachers, staff, and student families of the cleaning protocols taken to keep campus facilities safe for use.



Resources

- [CDC Guidance for Disinfecting Schools](#)
- [EPA Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19](#)



Isolation Protocols for Lab-Confirmed Case

A teacher, staff member, student, or visitor with COVID-19 symptoms cannot participate in on-campus activities.



Requirements

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 or symptomatic, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met:
 - At least one day (24 hours) has passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - The individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and
 - At least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- If the individual who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 wants to return to campus before completing the above stay at home period, he or she may either:
 - Obtain a medical professional's note clearing them for return based on an alternate diagnosis; or
 - Obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- In collaboration with local public health, inform teachers, staff, and student families of potential close contact with a COVID-19 case, who follow the Stay At Home protocol.



Protocol for Symptomatic Individual In School

School personnel must take specific steps when a possible COVID-19 case presents on a campus.



Requirements

- Immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- Notify the parent or guardian of the symptom(s) exhibited, any actions taken by the school (i.e., taking student temperature), and the reentry procedure for allowing the student to return to campus.
- Clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school as soon as feasible. See additional information on [cleaning protocols](#).



Recommendations

- Work with the school nurse to identify and prepare a location on campus where individuals can be safely separated should any exhibit potential symptoms.
- Prepare a secondary area on campus appropriate for students and teachers to continue learning if their primary area must immediately be closed off for disinfecting.
- Use the [Beginning of Year Notification Letters](#) template to share the overview of notification procedures with teachers, staff, and student families at the start of the school year.

TEA

