

# **VVUSD Illness Protocol**

Updated 3/22/21 Per [TEA SY 20-21 Public Health Planning Guidance](#)

**If presenting with COVID-19 symptoms including but not limited to:** *feeling feverish (chills, significant muscle pain or aches, shaking or exaggerated shivering) or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, loss of taste or smell, cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea* **the individual must adhere to the following steps before readmittance:** Parent/Guardian should call the student's pediatrician, MEHOP, or the Health Department hotline for guidance regarding the presenting symptoms and if testing for COVID-19 is warranted, **Dial 211 ext. 6.**

- 1. For those who have symptoms of COVID-19 & Test POSITIVE:** *The school system will screen the individual to determine the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:*
  - a. At least **24 HOURS** have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); AND
  - b. The individual has **improvement in symptoms**; AND
  - c. At least **10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared
- 2. For those who have symptoms that could be COVID-19 and who is not evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19,** *such individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to the campus until the individual has completed the same three-step set of criteria listed above.*
- 3. If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period,** the individual must either:
  - a. obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or
  - b. obtain an acute infection test at an approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
- 4. If the individual has tested positive for COVID-19 and believes the test was a false positive, and wants to return to school before completing the above stay at home period, the individual must either**
  - a. Obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis, though for health privacy reasons the note does not need to indicate what the alternative diagnosis is, or
  - b. Obtain two PCR acute infection tests at a physician's office or approved testing location (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.
- 5. For those who have NOT had COVID-19 Symptoms but Tested Positive and are Under Isolation and directed to care at home** may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:
  - a. At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed \*symptoms since their positive test. If the individual develops symptoms, then symptom-based strategy should be used.

**\*Note:** Symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these persons are in the course of their illness, it is possible that duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.

## Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- Schools must immediately separate any student who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school until the student can be picked up by a parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- Schools should clean the areas used by the individual who shows COVID-19 symptoms while at school (student, teacher, or staff) as soon as is feasible.
- Appropriate communication between health services, the District RN, Administrators, Attendance Clerks, Parents, and healthcare providers will be conducted so that everyone is on the same page regarding the protocol for returning to in person school vs. the need to stay home and attend virtual instruction.

## Health Services Response to Positive COVID-19 Cases

- If an individual who has been in a school is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must notify its local health department, in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws and regulations, including confidentiality requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- Schools must close off areas that are heavily used by the individual with the lab-confirmed case (student, teacher, or staff) until the non-porous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected, unless more than 7 days have already passed since that person was on campus.
  - Campus Principal will call McLemore to initiate their sanitizing protocol
- Close Contacts will be identified according to definition
- Consistent with school notification requirements for other communicable diseases, and consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, schools must notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in a school if a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any on campus activities.
  - The Superintendent will utilize the School Messenger system to send out either an SMS Text Message or a Voice Call to the affected campus.
- Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school, including an individual working or learning remotely, is test-confirmed to have COVID-19, the school must submit a report to the Texas Department of State Health Services via an online form. The report must be submitted each Monday for the prior seven days (Monday-Sunday).
- The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is working closely with the [Texas Education Agency \(TEA\)](#) and the [Texas Division of Emergency Management \(TDEM\)](#) to monitor, track, and coordinate public health responses to COVID-19 cases in Texas public schools.
- This form is to be used by Texas Local Education Agency (LEA) staff to report laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in public schools. Case information should be supplied for a student, teacher, or staff member who participates in any on campus activity and is lab-confirmed with COVID-19. Cases are tracked on a dashboard maintained by the Texas COVID-19 Education Committee (TCEC) and used to inform the Governor's Office, DSHS, and TEA executive staff, LEAs, and other stakeholders. There will be a public link generated that the school district will post on the website for easy viewing access.
  - Public link: <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/schools/texas-education-agency/>

## Close Contacts of Positive COVID-19 Cases

### 1. Identification of Close Contacts

- *As overseen and requested by the Texas Department of State Health Services- The VVUSD Health Services Team will confidentially identify those who were considered to be in close contact.*
- Definition of Close Contact:

- a. Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- b. Being within 3 feet for a total of approximately 15 minutes throughout the course of a day; however, additional factors like case/contact masking (i.e., both the infectious individual and the potential close contact have been consistently and properly masked), ventilation, presence of dividers, and case symptomology may affect this determination.

Either (a) or (b) defines close contact if it occurred during the infectious period of the case, defined as two days prior to symptom onset to 10 days after symptom onset. In the case of asymptomatic individuals who are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, the infectious period is defined as two days prior to the confirming lab test and continuing for 10 days following the confirming lab test.

## 2. Subsequent steps:

- Consistent with legal confidentiality requirements: Parents of students who are considered to have been close contact will be notified **as soon as possible**.
- Stay-at-home period:
  - As of December 2, 2020, the CDC amended their guidance to allow two shorter options for the stay-at-home period. Based on current CDC guidance, the stay-at-home period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms:
    - 10 days after the last close contact without testing, so long as they continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate precautions through day 14
    - 7 days after the last close contact, after receiving a negative test result (administered at least 5 days after the last close contact), so long as they continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate precautions through day 14
  - - For staff who are necessary to preserve school operations, school systems can choose not to require any stay-at-home period, so long as the affected staff continue to monitor themselves daily for symptoms and take appropriate precautions through day 14.
- Parent/Guardian will be notified to monitor temperature & symptoms. Temperature screening is recommended in the morning and the evening. Symptoms consistent with COVID-19 include: *feeling feverish (chills, muscle pain or aches, shaking or exaggerated shivering) or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit, loss of taste or smell, cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea*. If any of these symptoms develop over the 14 day incubation period, the parent will be highly encouraged to have the student tested.
- The Health Services Team will:
  - Confidentially monitor the status of each individual over the course of their quarantine period. This will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
  - Communicate with the local health department authorities and verify the individual's "release" date or the need for a medical release with the staff member or parent/guardian and attendance clerk.
- **If the student at anytime over the quarantine period begins having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the student shall not return until:**

- At least **24 HOURS** have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); AND
- The individual has **improvement in symptoms**; AND
- At least **10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared

**If the symptomatic individual wants to return sooner than the above criteria, they must:**

- obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative 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

### **3. Additionally, the CDC updated guidance on March 8, 2021, to indicate that:**

- A vaccinated individual does not need to stay at home following close contact exposure to a test-confirmed individual if the following conditions are true:
  - The exposed individual is fully vaccinated (at least two weeks have passed since receiving the second dose of a two-dose vaccine or the first dose of a single-dose vaccine)
  - Have not experienced any COVID-19 symptoms following close contact exposure to a test-confirmed individual.
- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. ○ Individuals who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

### **Household members**

**(including siblings and parents who are staff members within the school district)**

- Should quarantine while the individual's test results are pending
- Should be isolated from the sick individual
- Would be considered a close contact to a household member's positive case and should be quarantined according to instructions listed above, starting when the household member has recovered- or - 10 days after the positive test or symptom onset.

If the "close contact" is quarantined at home with no symptoms, siblings and other household members are considered "indirect" contact and would not have to quarantine unless the individual develops symptoms and is tested and/or positive for COVID-19.

### **Traveling**

A student, staff member, substitute, or visitor who travels outside of the United States of America must notify the District RN and quarantine away from the school for 14 days starting the day of return.

### **Exclusion for illnesses other than COVID-19**

- **Alternative Diagnosis with symptoms consistent of COVID-19**
  - May return when medically cleared by a physician
- **The first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment for a bacterial infection** (pink eye, strep throat, etc.)

- May return after 24 hours after starting antibiotics for a variety of bacterial infections or when medically cleared by a physician
- **Undiagnosed, new, and/or untreated rash or skin condition** (i.e. hives, wound with purulent drainage, etc.)
  - May return when medically cleared by a physician

**Students, faculty, and staff will be highly encouraged to stay home if they are sick or immunocompromised. If an individual presents to school with the above-mentioned symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they will need to go home until clearance criteria for school return is met.**

For more information regarding exclusion criteria, please visit: [25 Tex. Admin. Code § 97.7](#)

Revised **3/22/2020** in regards to the TEA update to the [TEA Public Health Guidance](#).