

DeWitt-Lavaca Special Education Cooperative

Strong Start 2020-2021

Action Plan in Response to COVID-19



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Introduction

As our communities continue to navigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the DeWitt-Lavaca Special Education Cooperative remains committed to its purpose of providing a continuum of special education services to students in the nine-member districts while reestablishing our schools where students, families, and staff feel safe. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, many steps can be taken by schools to reduce the risks to students, teachers, staff, and their families. These steps are outlined in the following DLSEC Strong Start 2020-2021 Action Plan as it outlines protocols that will be put into effect in the DLSEC Instructional Programs instructional settings to reduce the impact of COVID-19 conditions upon returning to the new school year.

Because of the state of flux created by the virus, this Action Plan is considered a living document. The guidelines referenced in this plan are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Education Agency, and state/local agencies. Local agencies and administration will continually monitor health conditions of our communities and adjust protocols as needed to ensure compliance with public health guidelines as well as local, state, and federal law.

FOUR PRACTICE ACTION PLAN



NOTICE



PREVENT



RESPOND



MITIGATE

DLSEC will:

1. Provide notice to parents, guardians, and the public.
2. Implement practices to prevent the virus from entering the school.
3. Respond to a lab-confirmed case in the school.
4. Implement prevention and mitigation practices to reduce the likelihood that an outbreak occurs on campus.

On-Campus Health and Safety Protocols

SELF-SCREENING PROTOCOLS PRIOR TO CAMPUS ENTRY

In addition to the measures by DLSEC staff outlined in this action plan, all students, parents, employees, and visitors are asked to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, check their temperature before coming to campuses, and stay home when sick.



PREVENT

ENTRY SCREENINGS AND TEMPERATURE CHECKS

All students, staff, and visitors to campus will undergo daily screenings conducted by assigned DLSEC staff members at designated entry points on campus. Signage detailing COVID-19 symptoms will be posted in these locations for reference.

Before entering the building, all individuals will be asked if they are experiencing any symptoms. Those who respond 'yes' will be isolated to a designated area to the care of the DLSEC nurse supervisor and/or health aide. Those who respond 'no' will be forwarded to temperature screening. All individuals who are not experiencing symptoms and have met the temperature standard (100° F) will be allowed entry onto campus. The same thermometer will be utilized for a particular bus or entryway to ensure consistency of devices. Temperatures will be recorded daily on a weekly spreadsheet to accurately gauge a baseline temperature for individuals. Entry screenings and temperature checks will be conducted by DLSEC staff trained on procedure and confidentiality regulations.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100° F
- New experience of loss of taste or smell
- New uncontrolled cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Fatigue
- Congestion and/or runny nose
- Significant muscle ache or pain
- Diarrhea , nausea, vomiting or abdominal pain
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Confusion
- Bluish color to lips

PRESENCE OF SYMPTOMS

Each campus will designate an office or room for the DLSEC nurse supervisor and/or health aide to isolate those individuals exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. This room will be sized with sufficient space to allow for at least 6 feet for social distancing purposes. The nurse supervisor and/or health aide will conduct a clinical assessment for an individual (student or staff) and complete the 'DLSEC On-Campus Employee/Student Presenting Symptoms' form listed in the appendix.

Trained staff will clean the area(s) heavily used by the student or staff who shows COVID-19 symptoms after the individual has been relocated to the isolation area as soon as feasible.

Parents/guardians of students who are ill will be notified and should make arrangements to pick the student up from the designated isolation area within 1 hour. After being sent home, students must meet the defined criteria outlined in the 'Return to Campus Criteria' handout before returning to school.

Staff displaying COVID-19 symptoms will follow district protocols for separation from students and other staff members, testing, and returning to work. Criteria listed in the 'Return to Campus Criteria' handout applies to staff as well. For individual guidance, staff should contact their immediate supervisor or the DLSEC Director of Operations.

CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED DIAGNOSIS

The following applies to those individuals (student and staff) who have either been lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or those with COVID-19 symptoms previously listed by do not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19:

- The school will notify DeWitt or Lavaca County 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).
- Consistent with legal confidentiality requirements, the school will notify all teachers, staff, and families of all students in the school if a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case is identified on campus.
- The school will notify staff and parents/guardians of students known to have had close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual.

The definition of **CLOSE CONTACT** is evolving with our understanding of COVID-19, and individual scenarios should be determined by an appropriate public health agency.

In general, **CLOSE CONTACT** is defined as:

- a. being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
- b. being within 6 feet for a cumulative duration of 15 minutes; 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.

PRACTICES TO RESPOND TO A LAB CONFIRMED CASE ON CAMPUS



LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT NOTIFIED

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 and FERPA.



AREAS CLOSED FOR CLEANING

All areas heavily used by the individual will be closed off to access until the nonporous surfaces in those areas can be disinfected.



COMMUNICATION TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

Consistent with school notification requirements and legal confidentiality requirements, all staff and families of a school will be notified of a lab-confirmed case.

REENTRY CONDITIONS FOR STUDENT AND STAFF

Any students or staff who themselves either were lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or experience the symptoms associated with COVID-19 must stay at home throughout the infection period and cannot return to campus until the school system screens the individual to determine any of the below conditions for campus re-entry have been met:

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria have been met:
 - at least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications);
 - the individual has improvement in symptoms (see list on page 5); and
 - at least ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- In the case of an individual who has 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.
- 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:
 - obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or
 - receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID-19 via acute infection tests.

Criteria to return to campus is outlined in the appendix of this action plan.

FACILITY CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Safety of our students and staff is our first priority. Upon reopening on August 19, all classrooms and rooms associated with the DLSEC Instructional Programs have been completely cleaned and disinfected. Daily scheduled disinfection measures outlined below are to be taken to reduce the risk of spread the virus. Staff will be required to maintain these standards:

- **Workspaces**, such as classrooms, therapy rooms, and offices, will be cleaned at the end of each use/day.
- **Appliances**, such as refrigerators and microwaves in staff-only areas, will be cleaned at the end of each day.
- **Electronic equipment**, such as iPads, shared keyboards, copier machines, telephones, will be cleaned between each use.
- **General high-frequency objects**, such as door handles, light switches, sinks, and tables, will be cleaned at least 4 times a day and between groups.
- **Common areas**, such as hallways or computer labs, will be cleaned at least 4 times a day and between groups.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

In order to assist schools with their safety measures, the Texas Education Agency is providing districts with PPE. This contribution has been added to the DLSEC's purchase of touchless forehead thermometers, face masks for students and staff, gloves, Plexiglas desktop shields, hand sanitizer, and face shields.



MITIGATE

FACE COVERINGS/MASKS

Schools are required to comply with Governor Abbott's Executive Order GA-29 regarding the wearing of masks. Students (age 10 and over) and staff will utilize face coverings when moving through hallways, transitioning to and from buildings, and while in common areas including restrooms, gyms, etc. Face coverings will also be utilized to the greatest extent possible in the classroom setting. It is understandable that wearing of masks may be impractical for some individuals and in some settings. Recess and P.E. are times where a mask may be removed during physical activity as long as students and staff maintain the six feet social distance expectation.

For students in ECSE through age 9, the determination of whether wearing a mask is developmentally appropriate is up to the student's parent or guardian. According to TEA's guidance, it is not developmentally appropriate for students in kindergarten and below to wear masks. Also, it may not be developmentally appropriate for some other students, including those with cognitive or physical disabilities, to wear masks.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Every effort will be made to practice social distancing in the school setting. Classroom sizes will be kept small when possible. Desks or tables will be distanced as much as instructionally possible with the goal of maintaining a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals.

SANITIZER STATIONS

Hand sanitizer will be provided to all classrooms and common areas for student and staff use. Students and staff will make use of hand sanitizer after transition times when entering the classroom.

TRANSITION, ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES

Student transition times within common areas will be staggered to promote social distancing. PPE in the form of masks will be worn by students and staff during transition times.

No-contact pick-up and drop-off times will be required for students who are car riders. Parents will meet classroom staff directly outside the front entrance to collect students. Families are encouraged to assign one person who is not high risk to consistently pick up and drop off their student each day.

Parents or guardians who wish to pick up their student before the end of the school day will need to call ahead to the office or teacher in order for students to be accompanied to parent vehicles upon arrival.

Bus unloading at arrival time will be staggered to allow for symptoms screenings and temperature checks by DLSEC staff. One district bus will be dismissed at a time to ensure proper screening, documentation, and social distancing.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Visitors will be limited to essential individuals who have scheduled appointments on campus. All visitors must adhere to the screening process and PPE expectations.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Modifications will be made to the daily schedule to allow for procedures to prevent and mitigate the effects of COVID-19. Meals will be served in the classroom and/or open-air areas on the campus. Recess and P.E. times will be staggered to allow for optimal

social distancing. The room housing the Sensory/Motor Lab at the RISE Elementary Building will be closed to its intended use; however, a large portion of its activities will be conducted in other areas of our campus. Adjustments to bus loading times will be allowed to ensure social distancing and sanitation.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Face coverings/masks, sanitation protocols, and social distancing parameters are set by the district providing the student's transportation. Parents and guardians should contact their child's home district for more information about health and safety protocols on district transportation.

STAFF TRAINING

It is imperative that all employees understand the safety requirements, protocols and expectations to ensure everyone stays safe and aides in the prevention of the spread of the virus.

Training by DLSEC instructional programs staff will be presented remotely to ensure the understanding and preparedness to align with this manual. Janitorial staff will receive training specific to deep cleaning and sanitation of high-traffic areas as well as areas inhabited by a COVID-positive individual.

HANDWASHING AND SANITIZATION LESSONS FOR STUDENTS

Training regarding the importance of safety and health of students, staff, and our communities will also extend to all students in the DLSEC instructional programs. Lessons regarding proper handwashing, cleanliness of our work and class spaces, personal hygiene, and self-awareness of one's own health will be incorporated into daily lesson plans.

On-Campus Instruction & Virtual Learning Platform

INSTRUCTIONAL OPTIONS

Two pathways for instruction are available for students – traditional, on-campus & virtual learning.

Option 1: Traditional, On-Campus – Students will return to on-campus learning on Wednesday, August 19. All academic and related services will be delivered on site.

Option 2: Virtual Learning – Students will receive all academic and related services via computer-based instruction. Technology is required. Learning will take place with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Attendance will be taken daily, and grading/progress monitoring will be consistent with on-campus policies.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS OF VIRTUAL LEARNING

The goal of virtual instruction is high levels of learning for all students. The remote instruction model for students requires a strong partnership between the school and home. Student academic work and related services will ensure engagement that is equivalent to direct content and services that the students would be engaged in over a normal school year. To ensure high levels of learning for all students, the students' learning schedule will require students to participate in asynchronous learning.

Asynchronous instruction is defined as a curricular experience where students engage in the learning materials on their own time, interacting intermittently with the teacher via the computer or other electronic devices or over the phone. Asynchronous instruction includes pre-recorded videos. Teacher interaction with students will be predictable, following a regular, clearly-defined schedule. Teachers will schedule interactive sessions with students and will have daily office hours during which they will be available to provide additional instructional support to parents and students. Students will be expected to participate in daily learning sessions and submit assignments each day (Monday- Friday).

Families should expect to spend a minimum of 180 minutes for ECSE- Grade 5 daily completing learning activities and an additional 45 minutes of ongoing practice and application of skills. Grades 6-12 should expect to spend a minimum of 240 minutes daily.

GRADING PERIOD COMMITMENT

Student and their families are asked to commit to either on-campus or virtual learning no later than two weeks prior to the start of the school year to help prepare curriculum and instruction for all students AS WELL as commit to the option chosen for the duration of the six weeks grading period. Changes prior to the end of a grading period will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Information for DLSEC Action Team

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Appendix



RISE PROGRAM

School Commitment Options 2020-2021

OPTION 1:

Traditional, On-Campus Learning

- On-campus learning for all academic and related services
- Monday through Friday with traditional school hours
- Following of health and safety protocols outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the governor's office, which includes the wearing of masks by staff and students
- Establishment of DLSEC Action Plan to mitigate COVID-19's effects to students, staff and communities

OPTION 2:

Virtual Learning

- At-home, internet-based learning for all academic and related services
- Monday through Friday with a set schedule (exact times will be established and communicated)
- Scheduled but limited virtual interaction with instructional staff to ensure high engagement and instruction equivalent to campus-based learning
- Technology support provided to student to access learning

COVID-19 STUDENT SCENARIOS

Student is either lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 or is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19:

- The student does not report to school.
- The student may return to campus after 10 days have passed from positive test result or symptom onset, the student has improvement in symptoms AND at least 72 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- Upon confirmation of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 on a campus, the DLSEC will communicate with teachers, staff and families of students who were potentially exposed.

Student reports one or more symptoms BEFORE entry to building using screening tool:

- The student does not report to school.
- The student may return to campus after 10 days have passed from symptom onset with improvement in symptoms AND at least 72 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Student reports experiencing one or more symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day:

- The student will be sent to the campus isolation room.
- Nurse staff will follow the Illness Isolation Plan.

Student reports having prolonged close contact with someone who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19:

- The student does not report to school.
- The parent/guardian should contact the child's primary care physician for guidance and remain home to monitor symptoms for 14 days.

Student reports someone in their home was exposed to someone who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19:

- Student may report to school as usual. This is not considered to be prolonged close contact as the contact is someone who is NOT lab-confirmed.

**To be considered exposed to COVID-19, you need to have prolonged close contact with a person who has the virus. Close contact includes living in the same household, caring for a sick person with the virus, being within 6 feet of a sick person with the virus for at least 15 continuous minutes without the use of a face covering or being in direct contact with secretions from the sick person.*

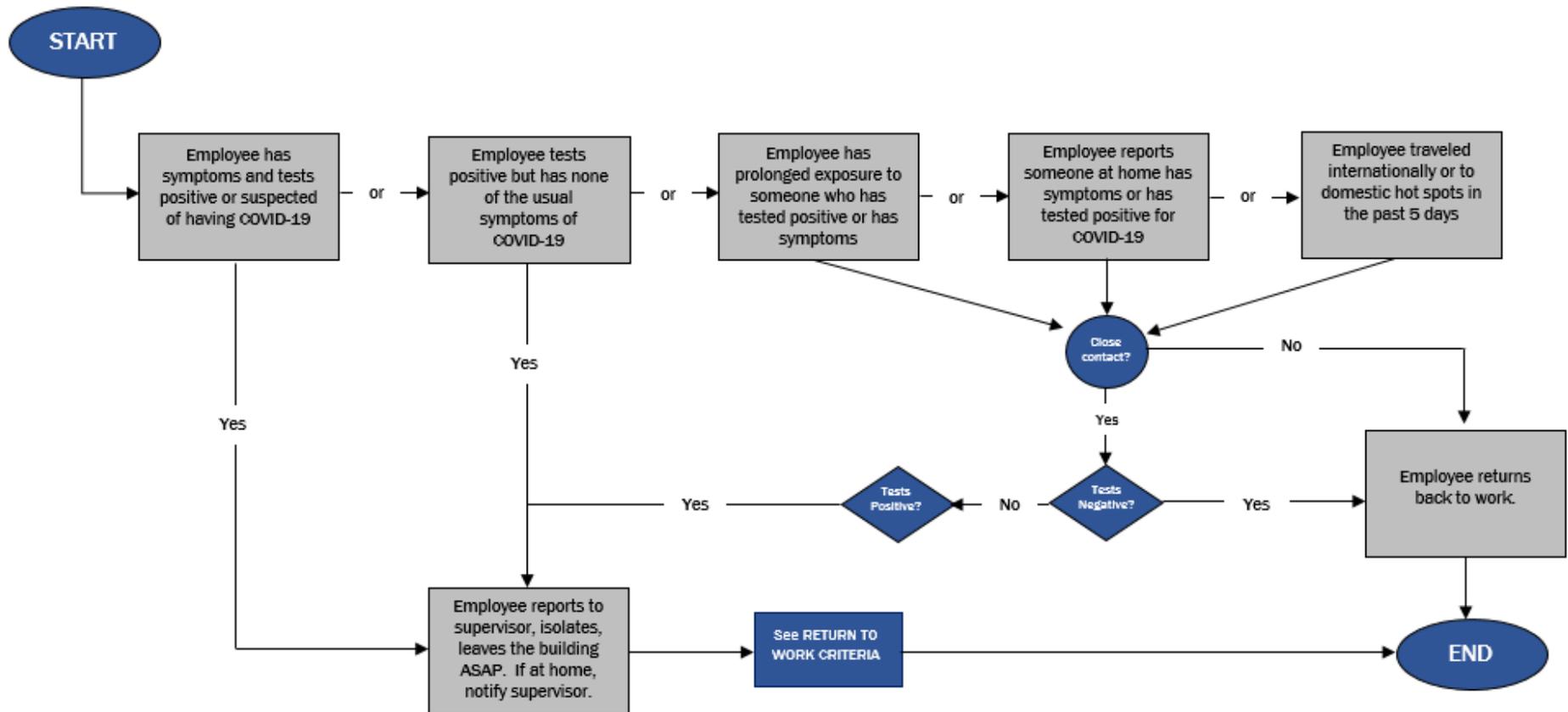
COVID-19 ILLNESS ISOLATION PLAN

- Any student with a temperature greater than or equal to 100°F and/or showing symptoms of COVID-19 will be treated as a possible positive case.
- Symptomatic students will be required to apply a face covering, report to the designated isolation area, and the parent/guardian will be notified for pick-up.
- The ill student will remain isolated with assigned designated staff member to be monitored and receive medical care, if needed, until parent/guardian arrives for student pick-up.
- The ill student should be picked up by parent or guardian (or other person designated in student's school records) within one hour of being contacted by the school.
- A tracking system will be utilized to ensure students who are sent home ill do not return sooner than allowed by current guidelines unless medical documentation is provided stating the student is clear to return to school.
- Monitoring staff member must perform hand hygiene and wear PPE for the duration of the time spent with student during isolation period.
- Administrator will immediately notify the county health department and will follow their guidance.
- After students and staff are removed from the isolation area, it will be sanitized using approved germicidal agents by DLSEC custodial staff wearing appropriate PPE.
- The student does not return to school. He/she may return to campus after 10 days have passed from symptom onset with improvement in symptoms AND at least 72 hours have passed with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.



EMPLOYEE FLOWCHART FOR EXPOSURE TO OR POSITIVE TEST OF COVID-19

To be considered exposed to COVID-19, you need to have prolonged close contact with a person who has the virus. Close contact includes living in the same household, caring for a sick person with the virus, being within 6 feet of a sick person with the virus for at least 15 continuous minutes or being in direct contact with secretions from the sick person.





STUDENT FLOWCHART FOR EXPOSURE TO OR POSITIVE TEST OF COVID-19

To be considered exposed to COVID-19, you need to have prolonged close contact with a person who has the virus. Close contact includes living in the same household, caring for a sick person with the virus, being within 6 feet of a sick person with the virus for at least 15 continuous minutes or being in direct contact with secretions from the sick person.

