



## Life School Athletics COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines and Return to School Plan

### Key Principles

- Following guidance, directive, and recommendations from state and local health authorities.
- Practicing COVID-19 safety protocols, including social distancing and infection control practices (handwashing, face coverings, etc.).
- Students, teachers, staff and essential campus visitors will be encouraged to sanitize and/or wash their hands frequently.
- Cleaning and sanitation – routine and enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures will be implemented.
- Safe access to facilities – facility entry and exit points will be coordinated to minimize personal interaction and facilitate social distancing.
- Screening procedures for student-athletes - daily symptom screening assessment will be required of student-athletes for practice and competitions.
- Screening procedures for staff and visitors - daily symptom screening will be required for practices and competitions.
- Life School staff, parents/guardians, and student athletes will be asked to take responsibility of self-monitoring themselves per UIL/TEA and Life School guidelines.
- Spectators, or student groups not involved in the UIL event, are not permitted to enter the field or court before, during, or after the contest. Spectators and players will not be allowed to intermingle during a contest. Spectators must leave in a timely manner at the end of competitions and not hang around the facility.

## Practice and Competition Facilities

### Disinfection and Sanitation

- Facility cleaning – athletic facilities will be disinfected and sanitized per industry guidelines. Emphasis will be given to disinfecting high touch surfaces and surfaces that are used by multiple student-athletes, and disinfecting between users.
- Equipment will be sanitized after each use and before the next student group uses the equipment. Approved cleaning and disinfectant supplies will be provided by Life School.



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- Enhanced cleaning – specific athletic facilities in which an individual with a confirmed COVID-19 positive has been identified, will undergo enhanced disinfection per CDC and TEA guidelines.
- Both athletes and staff will sanitize their hands before, during, and after workouts. There will be multiple hand sanitizing stations located throughout the athletic facilities and school.

## **Student-Athlete Requirements**

- Mask or face coverings will be worn at all times, other than when active exercise is occurring. This includes team meetings, locker rooms, coaches' offices, buses, weight rooms, and transitioning between facilities, etc.
- Students with a positive COVID-19 test will be required to obtain a physician release before returning to practice or competition and go through Life Schools COVID-19 Return to {Play Protocol.
- Athletes will be required to self-screen each day prior to showing up for workouts.
- Athletes will stay home if they answered "YES" to any screening questions or if they do not feel well.
- Athletes will park or be dropped off at predesignated areas (if applicable).
- Athletes will use hand sanitizer before entering the facility and when applicable during workouts.
- Water will be provided by touchless water dispensers when possible. Life School Athletics encourages all student-athletes to bring their own personal water bottle.

## **Staff Requirements**

- Staff will self- screen daily per TEA and UIL guidelines.
- Staff will stay home if they answered "YES" to any screening questions or if they do not feel well. Staff will notify supervisor if they have a "YES" response.
- Staff will use hand sanitizer before entering the facility, during workouts, and when applicable.
- Staff will wear a mask or face covering at all times while working with student-athletes.
- Staff will ensure that all UIL/TEA protocols will be followed before home and away competitions.



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## **COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing, & Management – Per UIL**

Required screening for COVID-19 symptoms before attending or participating in activities:

- In evaluating whether an individual has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, consider the following question: Have they recently begun experiencing any of the following in a way that is not normal for them?
  - Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Cough
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Shortness of breath
  - Headache
  - Chills
  - Sore throat
  - Shaking or exaggerated shivering
  - Significant muscle pain or ache
  - Diarrhea
- Before each game, contest, or event, school staff/administration/student-athletes/ student support group/volunteers/officials and any individuals otherwise affiliated with any contest will be required to self-screen per UIL and TEA guidelines before entering the building/stadium for athletic contests.
- Life School will require staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before participating in UIL activities or entering areas where UIL activities are being conducted. Staff must report to the school nurse if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and, if so, they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, they must report to the school nurse if they have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, as defined at the end of this document, and, if so, must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. Close contact is defined in this document below.
- Parents must ensure they do not send a student to participate in UIL activities if the student has COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or is lab-confirmed with COVID-19 until the below conditions for re-entry are met. School systems may consider screening students for COVID-19 as well. Screening is accomplished by asking questions by phone or other electronic methods and/or in person. The screening questions should also be asked of a student's parent if that parent will be dropping off or picking up their student from inside areas where UIL activities are being conducted.



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- Before visitors are allowed access to areas where UIL activities are being conducted, Life School will have all visitors self-screen to determine if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or are lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so, they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as noted below. Additionally, school systems must screen to determine if visitors have had close contact with an individual who is lab-confirmed with COVID-19, and if so they must remain off campus and away from areas where UIL activities are being conducted until the 14-day incubation period has passed. When practical, screening questions could be supplemented with temperature checks of adults.
- Schools are permitted to prevent any individual who fails the screening criteria from being admitted into school facilities or sites where UIL activities are being conducted until they meet the criteria for re-entry as described below. Any individual for whom screening cannot be confirmed should be presumed symptomatic until confirmed otherwise.

## Individuals Confirmed or Suspected with COVID-19

- In the case of an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when **ALL** of the following criteria are met:
  1. At least one day (24 hours) have passed fever free without the use of medication
  2. Symptoms improvement (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
  3. 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
  4. An Acute infection test at an approved testing location comes back negative for COVID-19 (<https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>)
  5. **OR**, A doctor's note indicating an alternate diagnosis turned into the school nurse and athletic training staff.
- In addition to the criteria and processes described above, a student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 must receive clearance from a physician prior to returning to participating in UIL activities.
- 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 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 (a) obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis or (b) receive two separate confirmations at least 24 hours apart that they are free of COVID-19 via acute infection tests at an approved COVID-19 testing location found at <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.



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## Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus

- 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.
- 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.
- Students who report feeling feverish should be given an immediate temperature check to determine if they are symptomatic for COVID-19.
- This document refers to “close contact” with an individual who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-. 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:
  - Being directly exposed to infectious secretions (e.g., being coughed on); or
  - Being within six 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.

- 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.

## Required Actions if Individuals with Lab-Confirmed Cases Have Been in a School or in an Area Where UIL Activities Are Being Conducted

- If an individual who has been in areas where UIL activities have been conducted 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 seven days have already passed since that person was on campus.



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- 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 UIL activities.

## **Locker Rooms and Other Congregate Settings**

- Schools should make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in these areas.
- Life School custodial staff will regularly and frequently clean and disinfect including all frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, lockers, and restrooms. Athletic Coordinators will need to communicate with the campus head custodian a schedule of use of all athletic facilities such as but not limited to weight rooms, gyms, locker rooms, etc.
- Any equipment that will be kept in student lockers and/or in these areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each day prior to students accessing these areas. Schools should develop a plan for managing the storage, cleaning and disinfecting, and redistribution of student equipment.
- School staff will monitor locker rooms and other areas where students may congregate to ensure effective use of school protocols. When possible, schools should open windows and/or doors or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in these areas.
- ***Schools must require staff and students to wear face coverings while inside locker rooms, meeting rooms, athletic training rooms, and other areas where students may congregate other than shower facilities. Rotation schedule for student athletes will need to be created.***

## **Laundry Procedures**

- As part of their overall plan, schools should develop a plan for mitigating risk of spreading COVID-19 when disinfecting, cleaning, and laundering items such as towels, practice clothes, and uniforms. This plan should include protocols for redistributing these items to students. Involved staff should be trained specifically on these protocols.
- All practice clothing will be taken home by student athletes on a daily base for washing. Game uniforms and accessories may be laundered on campus as per discretion of the head coach.

## **Parent/Guardian Communication Plan**

- Frequent communication will be sent to all parents/guardians outlining return to campus plan & safety measures.



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- Organize meeting (virtually/in person) for all parents/guardians with Head Coach and athletic trainers.
- Constant and detailed communication via email or social media with parents/guardians.
- Communication with parents regarding any possible exposure to COVID-19 by their child.

## Preparing Staff and Athletes

- All Life School coaches will meet with campus athletic coordinator, head coach, and campus athletic trainers to learn new procedures and protocols (*Zoom OR in person*).
- Student-athletes and parents will participate in an orientation meeting with their coach to walk through the entry and exit procedures for their specific high school or junior high.

## Preparing Facilities

- Sanitation supplies delivered, installed, and placed in pre-determined places.
- Trash cans delivered and placed strategically for paper towels used at racks.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be set up throughout the facility for use.

## Game, Contest, and Event Management – Per UIL

In addition to the above guidelines, rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to games, scrimmages, and events:

## Teams and Participants

- If the school is planning to offer transportation for students, schools should follow [TEA guidance](#) related to such transportation.
- Teams and participants are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
- The host site should designate a cleaned and disinfected area for teams to unload and load buses separate from fans, spectators, and other individuals not essential to the team or group.
- Visiting team/group locker rooms should be cleaned and sanitized by the host site before the visiting team arrives. Visiting teams/groups are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment once it is unloaded. Schools should limit access to these facilities to only students and staff essential for the game, contest, or event.
- Before each game, contest, or event, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen all staff members, contractors, volunteers, sports officials, contest judges, and any individuals otherwise involved in working the event. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.



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- Fan and spectator areas including bleachers, stands, walkways, and other spectator areas should be at least six feet from team /group areas such as team benches or performance areas. Where distancing is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as face coverings, implementing engineered controls such as physical barriers, or other risk mitigation efforts the school deems appropriate.
- As previously indicated, water or other drinks and/or food may be provided. Schools or host sites should consider doing so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.
- Other areas used by participants, such as press box areas, should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use. Sites should develop plans for providing access to these areas that limit or remove potential contact between participants and non-participants.
- The host site should provide sports and contest officials an area to enter and exit separate from fans when possible. Officials should be provided a dressing and meeting area, if applicable, that has been cleaned and disinfected prior to their arrival.
- Pregame or pre-event meetings between teams and/or sports and contest officials should be planned to allow appropriate distancing between individuals.
- Pregame and post-game gestures of sportsmanship should be conducted between teams and sports and contest officials in ways planned to help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.
- All participants should be provided with entry and exit plans for contest areas that maintain separation from non-participants and fans. Individuals not essential to the team or group should not be given access to contest areas, performance areas, courts, or fields at all before, during, or after contests and events.

## **Student Groups Not Directly Involved in the Game or Contest – Per UIL**

- Student groups such as marching bands, cheerleaders, drill teams, and other groups approved by the school district may attend and perform at games or contests in which they are not competing. Schools should consider limiting the number of participants to those essential to the performance.
- These student groups should remain separate from the game or contest participants at all times. These student groups should avoid mixing with fans or non-group members throughout the game or contest.
- Student groups are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
- Schools should consider limiting the number of students and staff given access to the playing areas and ensure protocols for entering and exiting the playing areas are in place.



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- Fans and spectators should be located to provide at least 10 feet of distance from bands playing wind instruments from the stands.
- These students should maintain appropriate distancing from game or contest participants at all times, including when on the sideline.

## **Spectators, Audiences, Fans, and Media – Per UIL**

- Schools may allow spectators to attend games, contests, or events within a maximum 50% capacity limitation, provided that appropriate spacing between spectators is maintained according to the protocol, and according to the following:
  - Visible signs and/or messaging stating any individuals who are confirmed to have, suspected of having, are experiencing symptoms of, or have been in close contact with an individual who has been confirmed to have COVID-19 should not enter the facility.
  - Spectators, audiences, fans, and media are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
  - Sites are encouraged to utilize remote ticketing options to help manage capacity limitations within a maximum 50% occupancy. Paper tickets and programming should be minimized to help avoid transferable materials.
  - If possible, set reserved times for entry to avoid mass arrivals.
  - Groups should maintain at least six feet of distance from other groups at all times, including the process of admission and seating. A group is defined as no more than 10 people including the members of the household and those persons who traveled together to the facility.
  - Spectators are not allowed on the field/court of play. This includes before, during, and after the competitions
  - Venues will be utilized at 50% capacity for social distancing and adhering to the directive.
  - Pathways for spectator ingress and egress should be clearly marked and unobstructed.
  - Schools should provide hand sanitizing stations and/or hand washing stations at entrances and inside the facility.
  - Seating, hand rails, and other common surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected prior to each game or contest.
  - Press Box seating should include social distancing of at least six feet between individuals when possible.



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- Schools should limit access to working media providing coverage of the event to ensure protocols are followed.
- Post-game interviews should be conducted while wearing face coverings and maintaining at least six feet of distance between the interviewer and individual being interviewed.

## **Concession Stands and Food Service – Per UIL**

- For games, contests, and events that will include concession stands or other food service, the following guidelines apply:
  - Staff, contractors, and volunteers involved in food service are required to wear face coverings as described in Executive Order GA-29.
  - Sites should avoid leaving condiments, silverware, flatware, glassware, or other traditional table top items on unoccupied tables or at the counter. Sites should only provide condiments or flatware upon request, and in single use, individually wrapped items.
  - Regularly clean and disinfect the food service counters and areas. Clean and disinfect dining areas (tables, etc.) after each patron departs.
  - Limit contact between the individuals involved in food service and patrons as much as possible. Have employees, contractors, and volunteers follow proper food-handling protocols.
  - Before each game, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen staff, contractors, and volunteers who will be involved in food service prior to events. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.