

2020-2021 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines

Updated November 12, 2020

The following guidance related to UIL activities, based on the public health situation as we understand it today, applies to the 2020-2021 school year. This guidance is effective immediately. Changes to the public health situation in the coming months may necessitate changes to this guidance.

Given the varying numbers of COVID-19 cases across different areas of the state, and the vast geographic area in the state of Texas, UIL is presenting modifications for the 2020-21 school year that reflect the situation at this time. UIL will continue to work with state officials and monitor CDC and other federal guidance to determine any potential modifications that may become necessary. Schools should be prepared for the possibility of interruptions in contest schedules. District Executive Committees should work and plan to accommodate, as best possible, for these interruptions.

These guidelines are in addition to guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and intended to be implemented along with TEA guidance, which applies to academic and extracurricular non-UIL activities. The information below includes a requirement for schools to develop a plan for mitigating risk of COVID-19 spread during UIL activities. Schools should take their local context into account and follow all state requirements when considering UIL activities.

It is recommended that each school identify a staff member or group of staff members to serve as compliance officer(s) to oversee effective use of these protocols. Schools must follow all requirements of state authorities in addition to the requirements below.

Face Coverings- Executive Order GA-29

Executive Order GA-29, regarding face coverings, applies to all UIL activities effective July 3, 2020. This includes the 2020-2021 school year. As the public health situation changes, and/or if subsequent Executive Orders are issued by Governor Greg Abbott, these guidelines may be further modified.

- For the purposes of this document, face coverings include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth.
- All employees, parents, visitors and students ten years of age or older must wear face coverings or face shields upon entry to an area where UIL activities are being conducted and when not actively practicing or playing in the contest, unless an exception listed below applies.
- The face coverings requirements do not apply to a school in a county that meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of Executive Order GA-29, unless the local school system chooses to implement these requirements locally. Even in these circumstances, the wearing of face coverings or face shields is strongly encouraged.

Exceptions to the wearing of face coverings or face shields include:

- Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- While a person is consuming food or drink;
- While the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water.
- When a congregating group of persons maintains at least 6 feet of social distancing; or
- Any other reason or circumstance indicated under Executive Order GA-29.

General Operational Guidelines

REQUIRED OF ALL SCHOOLS:

TEA requires all school systems to develop a plan for mitigating COVID-19 spread in schools. UIL guidelines require schools to include UIL activities for the 2020-2021 school year as part of this plan and carefully plan for mitigating risk of spread as students and staff participate in them. Schools must post these plans on the homepage of the school website or other easily accessible area of the school website. These plans do not require UIL or TEA approval.

Required Screening

Required Screening before attending or participating in activities:

If staff have not been screened by the school for purposes of participating in instructional activities, schools must implement these screening protocols before allowing staff to participate in UIL activities.

- Schools must require staff to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before participating in UIL activities or entering areas where UIL activities are being conducted. Symptoms are listed at the end of this document. The self-screening should include staff taking their own temperature. Staff must report to the school if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms or are test-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 if they have had close contact with an individual who is test-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 test-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.
- Before visitors are allowed access to areas where UIL activities are being conducted, school systems must screen all visitors to determine if they themselves have COVID-19 symptoms (as listed in this document) or are test-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 test-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

- Any individuals who themselves either: (a) are test-confirmed to have COVID-19; or (b) experience the symptoms of COVID-19 (listed below) 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 are met:
 - at least one day (24 hours) have 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.
 - In the case of an individual that is asymptomatic but has received a positive COVID-19 test result, the individual may not return to the campus until ten days have passed since a positive test.
 - 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 (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 a physician's office, approved testing location, or other site) that comes back negative for COVID-19.
 - 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 participation in UIL marching band or athletic activities.
 - 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, approved testing location, or other site) at least 24 hours apart that come back negative for COVID-19.

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 may be symptomatic for COVID-19.

Close Contact

This document refers to "close contact" with an individual who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19. 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 6 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 test-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.

Required Actions if Individuals with Test-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 test-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 test-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.
- 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 test-confirmed COVID-19 case is identified among students, teachers or staff who participate in any UIL activities. If the person who is test-confirmed to have COVID-19 participated in a contest against another school(s), the school must notify other school(s) and sports/contest officials involved in the contest.
- Upon receipt of information that any teacher, staff member, student, or visitor at a school 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).

COVID-19 Symptoms

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
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Shaking or exaggerated shivering
- Significant muscle pain or ache
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Screening Questionnaire Information

- When asking individuals if they have symptoms for COVID-19, school systems must only require the individual to provide a "Yes" or "No" to the overall statement that they are symptomatic for COVID-19, as opposed to asking the individual for specific symptom confirmation. School systems are not entitled to collect information during screening on the specific health information of an individual beyond that they are symptomatic.
- Once it is determined that individuals who responded "Yes" to either of these questions have met the criteria for re-entry, school systems must destroy those individuals' responses.

Performance Areas, Band Halls, Locker Rooms and Other Congregate Settings

- Schools should make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in these areas.
- All congregate areas should be regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected including all frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, lockers, and restrooms.
- 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.
- Schools should consider identifying staff to 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 airflow 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, training rooms, band halls and other areas where students may congregate other than shower facilities.
- 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.

Practice and Rehearsal Activities

In addition to the above general guidelines and rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to practice activities during the 2020-2021 school year.

- All surfaces in practice areas should be thoroughly disinfected throughout and at the end of each day.
- Any equipment should be regularly disinfected before, during, and after practice sessions.
- Schools may provide food, water or other drinks. If they provide these items, schools should do so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.

Game, Contest, and Event Management

In addition to the above guidelines and 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.
- 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

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.
- 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

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:

- Schools and/or host sites should post 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.
- Schools should not allow seating in consecutive rows, and should block off seating to maintain a minimum six feet of distance between groups.
- 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.
- 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 between the interviewer and individual being interviewed.

Concession Stands and Food Service

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 tables or containers.
- 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.