

COVID-19: Role of Public Health and Colleges/Universities in Preparedness and Response Efforts



Topic	Public Health Role	College/University Role
Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist in identifying resources for diagnostic testing for colleges and universities, including private and public testing options. Encourage automated reporting of lab results in a machine-readable format to public health to improve the timeliness of reporting, decrease data entry burden/errors, and improve completeness of lab data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure access to diagnostic testing for COVID-19, including adequate capacity to obtain, administer, and process those tests For colleges/universities conducting their own lab testing, partner with public health to implement reporting of all minimum data fields for SARS-CoV-2 results (positive and negative) in a timely manner, in a machine-readable format, with a goal of automated electronic laboratory reporting (ELR)
PPE and Cloth face coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make recommendations for the appropriate use of PPE and cloth face coverings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate supply of PPE for healthcare and other relevant staff Ensure that students and staff have access to cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of disease
Identification of Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up on reports of suspected and confirmed cases Interview cases to identify potential source(s) of exposure and identify all close contacts Enroll cases in active monitoring with Local Health Department (LHD) Partner with Student Health Center to assess any potential workplace exposures and enroll exposed staff into monitoring Preserve the anonymity of patients and practitioners, according to §32.1-41 of the <i>Code of Virginia</i>. In situations where divulging a patient’s name may be required to identify other potentially exposed individuals, VDH will seek permission from the patient for release of information; the release will be conducted in the most minimally compromising manner (such as to a single point of contact in the Student Health Center). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute educational messages to students about COVID-19 symptoms and steps to take if they become ill Ensure that Student Health Centers can safely evaluate ill students. Partner with LHD to assess any potential exposures and enroll exposed staff into monitoring Report suspected and confirmed cases to LHD. Assist public health in follow-up of cases, such as in identifying students sharing a classroom or dorm Protect the confidentiality of students and staff who are part of Case and Contact Investigations Implement recommendations for cleaning/disinfection, including areas where cases have been (rooms, dorms, classrooms, buildings, etc).

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Isolation of Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that cases are isolated appropriately and released from isolation, based on the VDH symptom- or test-based strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students who live on-campus, ensure appropriate housing is identified for cases during their isolation period (ideally single room with private bathroom)
Follow-up with Contacts of Cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with all contacts identified by the cases. Place contacts in quarantine and enroll in public health monitoring in the Sara Alert system. Refer contacts for testing as recommended. Release from quarantine as indicated, or coordinate for medical care/evaluation if symptoms develop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with outreach to students identified as contacts, as requested by LHD Ensure appropriate housing is identified for contacts during their quarantine period (ideally single room with private bathroom) Assist with coordination of medical evaluation for students who live on-campus.
Essential Needs of Students and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local government, community organizations, and the college/university to ensure that essential needs are met for students and staff in isolation or quarantine who do not live on campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students who live on-campus, ensure that essential needs are met, including those in isolation or quarantine. Ensure ability to deliver meals to those on campus in isolation or quarantine.
Social Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make social distancing recommendations for colleges and universities. Use case, contact and outbreak data to inform recommendations for social distancing and closure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop plans to increase social distancing in classrooms, dormitories, dining halls, common areas, etc. Develop contingency plans to halt classes and shut down campus operations if disease spread reaches critical values. Communicate to parents and students about plans.

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Communications/ Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide health education messages and messages to reduce the spread of disease. ● Coordinate outbreak investigations; provide specific disease prevention and control recommendations to reduce spread of disease. ● Communicate summary information on the number of cases and contacts in the jurisdiction, district, and/or region to provide situational awareness for colleges/universities. Ensure that anonymity of individuals is preserved and that colleges/universities have data necessary for adequate planning and preparations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure that students have access to distance learning options so that they can keep up with work; ensure students and employees have absences excused and have access to mental health services. ● Widely communicate prevention and control messages, including information about outbreaks, disease prevention and control recommendations, steps to take if illness develops, etc ● Promote flu vaccination when available and COVID-19 vaccination (if it becomes available)