



For Immediate Release

Beach Cities Health District Partners with Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, Local School Districts to Establish COVID-19 Screening Protocol

School staff and students will use web-based symptom assessment tool to gain access to campus

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REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (Aug. 27, 2020) – With daily health screenings now required for students attending school in-person in Los Angeles County, Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) has teamed with Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), the Hermosa Beach City School District, Manhattan Beach Unified School District and Redondo Beach Unified School District to launch a symptom assessment tool that can be accessed via smartphone to expedite entry to campuses for students and staff.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed us all to be innovative and resourceful in finding effective and efficient ways to ensure the health and safety of our community,” said Omkar Kulkarni, Chief Innovation Officer, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. “Children’s Hospital Los Angeles is committed to building a healthier future for children in Southern California and beyond, and we are proud to be working with the Beach Cities Health District to help secure the safety of students and staff as they return to school.”

While Beach Cities school districts began the school year on Aug. 26 in a distance learning format, the symptom assessment tool will be used by some school staff to return to campus, along with students enrolled in local Child Development Centers, with eventual plans to utilize the screening tool when students return to on-campus instruction.

“Student safety and social-emotional wellbeing are our top priorities as we reopen our schools,” said Dr. Steven Keller, Superintendent, Redondo Beach Unified School District. “We will continue to provide the high-caliber teaching and learning environment that Redondo Beach Unified School District is known for, while also following all of the health guidance and directives to keep our students, staff and family safe.”

The Los Angeles County Health Officer Order – Reopening Protocols for K-12 Schools requires schools to screen students, staff and visitors before entering campus. The screening must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, fever and any other symptoms the visitor may be experiencing, as well as any close contact with anyone at home, school or elsewhere that the individual has been told has tested positive for COVID-19.

Students and staff at Beach Cities school districts will have the option to use the symptom assessment tool, developed by CHLA in partnership with BCHD, through their mobile device before entering the school. Families are also encouraged to do daily temperature checks at home, so they are able to accurately answer the screening questions. The symptom assessment tool is available at www.bchd.org/covid-schools or <https://bchdcovidscreen.org>.

In-person screening will also be available for students and staff who are unable to access the symptom assessment tool through their mobile device by using the “Additional Screening” line at the school entrance.

“We are diligently preparing for the time when we can reopen all of our campuses, hopefully sooner than later – I know that our students and our employees miss being in school,” said Dr. Michael Matthews, Superintendent, Manhattan Beach Unified School District. “We know that it is better for our students to be in school, but to get them back, we must behave safely and responsibly, while ensuring that our children do the same. This means wearing masks, washing our hands, staying at least 6-feet away from non-household members, and limiting interactions with people outside of our households whenever possible.”

“It is our greatest hope that we will be able to resume in-person instruction as soon as we can safely do so,” said Dr. Jason Johnson, who was appointed as the new Superintendent of the Hermosa Beach City School District in June. “We will continue to monitor what options are available to safely reopen schools and appreciate the passion and perseverance of our school community to support all of our children’s education.”

The state is monitoring all counties on six indicators to determine their progress in slowing the spread of COVID-19. These metrics include testing capacity, how much transmission of the virus is happening in the community, how many people are currently hospitalized for COVID-19, and the capacity of hospitals to care for people with COVID-19 with adequate numbers of available Intensive Care Unit beds and ventilators. LA County is meeting five of the state’s six indicators, only missing the mark on the threshold of having less than 100 cases per 100,000 residents. As of August 25, the case rate is 196 cases per 100,000 residents.

While Governor Gavin Newsom has allowed local health officers the discretion to grant waivers to allow schools to reopen for in-classroom instruction for students in grades TK through grade 6 once case rates are under 200 per 100,000 people, after LA County reached that threshold earlier in the week, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer announced that LA County would not be opening up the waiver process for schools at this time, and would continue to review the guidance from the state.

When schools do reopen, they must have COVID-19 prevention and response plans in place, including promoting healthy hand hygiene, requiring face coverings for all staff and students in the third grade and above, maintaining distance inside and outside of the classroom, checking for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and having a plan in place for when someone becomes sick.

“When campuses open this school year, students will need to do more than pack a backpack and a lunch each morning,” said Tom Bakaly, CEO of BCHD. “This easy-to-use symptom assessment tool, developed by Children’s Hospital Los Angeles, will help families to get their kids ready to go to school and keep their campus and community healthy.”

The goal of the symptom assessment tool is to support student, staff and family health and well-being. During COVID-19, BCHD is supporting school efforts to:

- Adapt programs to support the distance-learning environment, including LiveWell Kids Garden and Nutrition, 8-Minute Morning Exercises, Brain Breaks and MindUP
- Create additional mental health and social-emotional wellness support for students, staff and families

- Assist in the health and safety protocols for return to campus including screening, testing and COVID-19 care navigation

BCHD will also be launching a warmline for parents and staff to navigate health and safety concerns regarding COVID-19, along with mental health information and referrals, by calling 310-374-3426, ext. 256, on school days between 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Parents and staff are encouraged to identify the school they are calling from to be connected to a BCHD COVID-19 Care Navigator.

About Beach Cities Health District

Beach Cities Health District is among the leading preventive health agencies in the nation and has served the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach since 1955. As a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases in every lifespan. BCHD also operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness facility where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive fitness center that is the only Medical Fitness Association-certified facility in California. Visit www.bchd.org or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.

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