



U.S. Department of Education
COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan

January 2023

1. Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide COVID-19 Workplace Safety Protocols for all Department of Education (ED) Principal Operating Components (POCs). All POCs will incorporate these model safety principles into their daily business operations as appropriate. This implementation guidance applies ED-wide and prioritizes the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractor employees, visitors, and their families.

This plan adheres to the information outlined in the following guidance documents:

- [President's Executive Order \(E.O.\) 13991 on Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing](#);
- Office of Management and Budget [Memorandum M-21-15, COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles](#);
- Office of Management and Budget [Memorandum M-21-25, Integrating Planning for A Safe Increased Return of Federal Employees and Contractors to Physical Workplaces with Post-Reentry Personnel Policies and Work Environment](#);
- [Latest guidance](#) from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) workplace COVID-19 [guidance](#); and
- [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#) (Task Force) guidance, including the [Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles](#) (Updated September 15, 2022).

Purpose of Update

Recently, OMB and the Task Force issued additional and updated [guidance](#) for federal agencies. On September 15, 2022, the Task Force issued updated COVID-19 Workplace Safety: [Model Agency COVID-19 Safety Principles](#) that have been incorporated into this updated plan. These updated model COVID-19 safety principles set the protocols agencies must follow to comply with their obligations under section 2(a) of E.O. [13991](#). That updated guidance is reflected in this updated Workplace Safety plan.

This updated ED COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan amends and supersedes previously published ED-wide guidance on agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.

NOTE:

Executive Order 14043:

To ensure compliance with an applicable nationwide preliminary injunction, which may be supplemented, modified, or vacated, depending on the course of ongoing litigation, ED will take no action to implement or enforce the COVID-19 vaccination requirement pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) [14043](#) on Requiring Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination for Federal Employees. Any aspects of this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan related to the vaccination requirement pursuant to E.O. 14043 are not in effect and will not be implemented or enforced by agencies while the injunction is in place.

Executive Order 14042:

One or more court orders currently prohibit the enforcement of requirements of Executive Order (EO) 14042 on Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors against certain parties and within certain locations. At this time, consistent with guidance from OMB and the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, ED will take no action to enforce compliance with any contract clause implementing EO 14042 regardless of party or location. See the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force website for more information, including the latest guidance regarding the implementation and enforcement of EO 14042: [For Federal Contractors | Safer Federal Workforce](#)

2. Overview of Model Principles

The Federal Government is committed to addressing essential work requirements consistent with public health best practices. The Administration’s paramount concern is the health and safety of all Federal employees, onsite contractor employees, and individuals interacting with the Federal workforce. Including all persons in Federal buildings or on Federal lands. Section 4 of E.O. 13991 establishes the Task Force and directs it to “provide ongoing guidance to heads of agencies on the operation of the Federal Government, the safety of its employees, and the continuity of Government functions during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

ED will make decisions about health conditions on a facility-by-facility basis, consistent with CDC and Task Force guidance, rather than a “one size fits all” approach. We will follow all applicable laws and guidelines. We will adapt and deliver on our mission to the American people without compromising on what our employees need. When conditions are similar across geographical locations and facilities, our responses will be similar; when they are different, our responses will be different. ED will utilize the CDC recommendations related to [COVID-19 Community Levels](#), which measure the impact

of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems. We will update our plans as needed and provide notice to affected employees as appropriate.

COVID-19 Coordination Team

ED has established a cross-functional COVID-19 Coordination Team to support agency efforts to ensure the health and safety of our workforce and other individuals who visit ED GSA-owned and leased workplaces. The Team will:

- Meet regularly to review compliance with the ED COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan, protocols, and policies and consider - following consultation with the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force - implementing potential revisions as necessary.
- Ensure the agency COVID-19 Workforce Safety Plan, protocols, and policies are broadly communicated to agency employees and, as appropriate, onsite contractor employees, visitors to agency facilities, and in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences; and evaluate any other operational needs related to COVID-19 workplace safety.
- Coordinate with ED Senior Leadership to provide feedback to the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#).
- Provide input to the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Security, Facilities, and Logistics (OSFL) in preparation for their discussions with the General Services Administration (GSA), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). For privately owned and federally leased space, the Team will provide input to OSFL to coordinate with GSA and federal building security and safety committees.
- Participate in agency meetings to discuss required changes to established protocols if COVID-19 cases increase within a specific building or work setting. Proposed changes would be based on information obtained from federal and local public health official websites.
- To the extent possible, the agency will leverage existing meeting forums and union briefings to engage the various team members; however, separate team meetings may be called, as needed, to address specific issues.

The Team includes members from each ED POC; representatives from across the leadership team, including human resources, health and safety, facilities, legal counsel, a union representative, and an external public health expert. The Team will consult with ED's Senior Agency Official for Privacy. A list of ED's COVID-19 Coordination Team members can be found in *Appendix A*. If you have any suggestions or ideas, you can submit them to the Team at: COVID19CoordinationTeam@ED.GOV.

Communications and Change Management

Effective communications and change management are vital to protecting the workforce. Employees and contractors must understand the policies and procedures that have been implemented in the workplace. They also need to be aware of [CDC's How to Protect Yourself & Others](#) and local health guidance and recommendations to keep them safe outside of Federal buildings. ED is committed to transparency about the measures that are in place, the guidance relied upon, and the limitations and challenges we face in addressing the circumstances of COVID-19.

ED will continue to update this document along with the companion [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document and other relevant policies and guidance information and continue posting this information on the ED Intranet (connectED) [Coronavirus COVID-19 Resources](#) website.

Consultation and Engagement

The Deputy Assistant Secretaries for the Office of Human Resources, Office of Acquisition Management, Office of Security, Facilities, and Logistics, and other agency leaders, as appropriate, shall consult on the implementation of this plan with Federal employee unions, Federal contractors, employees, and any other interested parties, as appropriate.

3. Workplace Health and Safety Principles

Health and Safety

COVID-19 Community Levels

CDC has set recommendations related to [COVID-19 Community Levels](#), which measure the impact of COVID-19 illness on health and healthcare systems and inform the appropriate prevention strategies to utilize at a given time.

CDC provides county-level data showing the COVID-19 Community Level for each county in the United States, as determined by CDC. ED will utilize that data in determining the COVID-19 Community Level for a given facility by looking at the COVID-19 Community Level for the county in which the facility is located.

Therefore, ED will review the COVID-19 Community Level for each of its facilities on a weekly basis to determine any changes that should be made to agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols for the upcoming week; for example, and ED will review the COVID-19 Community Level each Friday and implement any changes to agency safety protocols due to changes in the COVID-19 Community Level starting the following Monday.

Scope

Pursuant to [E.O. 13991](#), Federal agencies must follow CDC guidance related to certain settings where different or additional layers of prevention are recommended by CDC, including, for example, [travel and the indoor transportation corridor](#), [schools](#), [health care settings](#), and [correctional facilities](#). Where there is a conflict with more general Task Force or CDC guidance, ED will follow the setting-specific CDC guidance.

In addition, to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, where a locality has imposed additional requirements related to COVID-19 that are more protective than those set forth in Task Force guidance, ED will follow those additional local requirements in Federal buildings, in Federally controlled worksites, on Government-operated transportation conveyances, and on Federal land in that locality. For example, if a locality has imposed mask-wearing requirements for indoor facilities, ED will apply those requirements in Federal facilities, even if not otherwise required under agency mask-wearing protocols.

Information about Vaccination

- **Leave to Obtain Vaccination.** To promote the safety of the Federal workforce and the public they serve, ED will grant leave-eligible employees up to 4 hours of administrative leave to receive any non-required dose of FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine. This includes employees who are not required to be vaccinated due to the nationwide preliminary injunction on implementation and enforcement of E.O. 14043.
 - The administrative leave will cover the time it takes to travel to the vaccination site, receive the COVID-19 vaccine dose, and return to work. If an employee needs to spend less time getting the COVID-19 vaccine dose, only the needed amount of administrative leave should be granted. Employees should obtain advance approval from their supervisor before using administrative leave for purposes of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine dose.
 - Employees may not be credited with administrative leave or overtime work for time spent getting a COVID-19 vaccine dose outside their tour of duty.
- **Leave to Accompany a Family Member to Obtain Vaccination.** To be consistent with Task Force guidance, ED will provide employees with up to 4 hours of administrative leave per dose to accompany a family member being vaccinated. For this purpose, a “family member” is an individual who meets the definition of that term in Office of Personnel Management (OPM) leave regulations (see 5 CFR 630.201).
- **Leave for Post-Vaccination Recovery.** ED will grant up to 2 workdays of administrative leave if an employee has an adverse reaction to any COVID-19 vaccine dose—regardless of whether that dose was required or not—that

prevents the employee from working (i.e., no more than 2 workdays for reactions associated with a single dose). If an employee requests more than 2 workdays to recover, ED may make a determination to grant emergency paid leave under the American Rescue Plan Act—if available—or the employee may take other appropriate leave (e.g., sick leave) to cover any additional absence. This policy on granting administrative leave is specific to the current COVID-19 pandemic situation and is designed to support agencies' missions by promoting the health and safety of the Federal workforce.

Vaccination Documentation and Information

NOTE: *ED will take no action to require or request employees and potential employees to provide information about their COVID-19 vaccination status solely for purposes of implementing the vaccination requirement pursuant to E.O. 14043 due to the nationwide preliminary injunction on implementation and enforcement of E.O. 14043.*

Consistent with CDC guidance, COVID-19 workplace safety protocols currently do not vary based on vaccination status or otherwise depend on vaccination information. ED has paused any efforts to require, request, or collect vaccination status information from any individual—including employees, contractor employees, visitors to agency facilities, or in-person attendees at ED-hosted meetings, events, and conferences—for the purposes of implementing agency COVID-19 workplace safety protocols.

ED will continue to preserve its vaccination information collection systems and the data collected to date from employees in accordance with the Federal Records Act and other records requirements. Furthermore, it is essential to preserve this information as COVID-19 workplace safety protocols may change in the future, or collection of this information from Federal employees may otherwise need to resume.

Mask-Wearing

When the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH in a county where an ED facility is located, pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED requires individuals—including employees, contractor employees, and visitors—who are 2 years or older, to wear a [high-quality mask](#) or respirator indoors in the facility, regardless of their vaccination status. This includes when Federal employees are interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities.

Nothing in CDC or the Task Force guidance precludes an individual from wearing a mask, if the individual so chooses when the COVID-19 Community Level is LOW or MEDIUM. When the COVID-19 Community Level is LOW or MEDIUM in a county where a ED facility is located, in most settings, to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will communicate to individuals, such as through signage, that mask-wearing is optional, and should not otherwise require individuals to wear a mask, except where required by Federal, State, Tribal, territorial, or local laws, rules, regulations, or

existing collective bargaining agreements. If ED identifies unique operational circumstances in certain workplaces that may require other or additional prevention measures, ED will consult with the Task Force regarding exceptions, per the Exceptions section below.

When individuals are required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator when COVID-19 Community Levels are HIGH, and when ED instructs individuals to wear a high-quality mask or respirator for post-exposure and post-isolation precautions, to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will inform individuals that high-quality masks or respirators include respirators that meet U.S. or international standards (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94), masks that meet a standard (e.g., ASTM), or “procedure” or “surgical”-style masks. When mask-wearing is not required, ED will otherwise avoid limiting the types of masks that can be worn by individuals in Federal facilities.

When individuals are required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) in Federal facilities, ED mask-wearing protocols will reflect that:

- Masks and respirators should be well-fitting and worn consistently and correctly (over mouth and nose).
- Masks or respirators should be worn in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floorplan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms).
- Individuals do not need to wear masks or respirators when outdoors.

ED can provide for limited exceptions to mask-wearing, such as when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door, or for a limited time when an individual is eating or drinking and maintaining distance from others.

Masked individuals may be asked to lower their masks briefly for identification purposes in compliance with agency safety and security requirements.

In ED-operated vans, cars, trucks, and other motor pool passenger vehicles, agencies must recommend that individuals wear high-quality masks or respirators (such as N95s) when there are multiple occupants.

General Reasonable Accommodations

- If a federal employee or federal contractor employee which to seek a reasonable accommodation request related to mask-wearing, nothing in the ED COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the ED Reasonable Accommodation Policy, which remains in effect.
- To seek a medical or religious accommodation, the employee must do so within an established timeframe by ED. Employees must provide necessary documentation in support of their accommodation request.

- Requests should be submitted to the direct supervisor and the following mailbox: ReasonableAccommodations@ed.gov.

Signage and Online Notice of Mask-Wearing Requirements

To be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will post and update physical signs and post information online on its websites, making clear what mask-wearing requirements apply in each Federal facility.

When the COVID-19 Community Level is HIGH in a county where a federal facility is located, to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will post physical signs providing notice of the requirement for all individuals to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as N95) indoors in the facility pursuant to E.O. 13991.

When the COVID-19 Community Level is LOW or MEDIUM in a county where a federal facility is located, to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will post physical signs providing notice that mask-wearing is optional.

Screening Testing

To be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will not implement COVID-19 serial or point-in-time screening testing in its Federal facilities.

Symptom Screening

No Entry for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or Suspected COVID-19 as follows:

- If a federal employee, contractor employee, or visitor has fever or chills, or if they have other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19 such as new or unexplained onset of cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing, new or unexplained loss of taste or smell, or new or unexplained muscle aches, they should not enter a federal workplace.
- If an individual suspects that they have COVID-19, such as because they have new or unexplained COVID-19 symptoms, but they do not yet have test results, they should not enter a Federal workplace and should get tested if they have not already done so.

To be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will require that all employees and contractor employees working onsite at an agency workplace and all visitors to ED facilities complete symptom screening before entering an ED facility. Employees, onsite contractors, or visitors may use the CDC COVID-19 Facility Access [Tool](#) to quickly evaluate whether or not they have symptoms of COVID-19. If individuals have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they should not enter an ED workplace. Any individual with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 will be advised to isolate,

pursuant to CDC guidelines, and in compliance with State, local, and Tribal laws, and regulations.

ED also requires that all employees complete symptom screening prior to interacting with members of the public in person as part of their ED official responsibilities.

Symptom screening can be self-conducted and does not need to be verified by ED personnel.

Developing COVID-19 Symptoms While Onsite

Pursuant to E.O. 13991, ED requires that any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who develops fever, chills, or other new or unexplained symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or who tests positive for COVID-19, while onsite during the workday immediately wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) and promptly leave the workplace.

Post-Exposure Precautions

If an asymptomatic individual has a [known exposure to someone with COVID-19](#), ED will not prevent the individual from entering Federal facilities or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities.

Pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance on [post-exposure precautions](#), ED will instruct individuals who are known to have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, to:

1. Wear a high-quality [mask or respirator](#) (such as an N95) while indoors at an ED workplace or interacting indoors with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities as soon as possible after notification of exposure and continue to do so for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed;
2. Take [extra precautions](#), such as avoiding crowding and physically distancing from others, when they know they are around people who are [more likely to get very sick from COVID-19](#) while onsite at an ED workplace or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities, for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed; and
3. Watch for [COVID-19 symptoms](#) for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed.

For purposes of calculating the 10 full days, day 0 is the day of their last known exposure to someone with COVID-19, and day 1 is the first full day after their last known exposure.

Required Testing for Those Known to Have Been Exposed

- As part of ED's testing protocols, and pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED requires that such employees and contractor employees who are known to have been exposed to COVID-19 and are onsite at an ED workplace or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities be tested for current infection with a [viral test](#) at least 5 full days after their last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6).
- Employees receiving notification of a recent or suspected exposure to SARS-CoV-2 at their worksite and who are concerned that they may have been exposed can find Information on diagnostic testing, how to request a test kit and/or the process for reimbursement on the [Coronavirus COVID-19 Resource](#) connectED website. The test can be both self-administered and self-read by the employee if ED has the employee certify as to when they took the test and that they received a negative result.
- If the individual tests negative, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will instruct the individual to continue to follow the above precautions for 10 full days from the date they were last known to have been exposed. If they test positive, or if they at any time develop COVID-19 symptoms, they must follow ED's protocols on [isolation](#).
- If the individual that has been known to be exposed to COVID-19 is not working onsite at an ED workplace or interacting with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities within 10 days of the known exposure, then the agency should not require them to be tested.
- If the individual that has been known to be exposed to COVID-19 had tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 30 days and subsequently recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms, then they do not need to get tested after a known exposure. If the individual that had been known to be exposed to COVID-19 had tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 31-90 days and subsequently recovered and remains without COVID-19 symptoms, then they should be tested using a viral antigen test. (See also: [CDC guidance on specific testing recommendations for those that have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days.](#))

Isolation and Post-Isolation Precautions

Any individual with probable or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, must not enter a Federal facility or interact with members of the public in person as part of their official responsibilities, consistent with CDC guidance on [isolation](#) and the workplace safety protocols set forth by ED, and monitor their symptoms.

This includes people who have an initial positive diagnostic [viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms, and people with symptoms of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested.

To be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will allow:

- Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and never developed symptoms to return to working onsite at an agency workplace or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities after 5 full days following their positive COVID-19 test (day 0 being the day the individual was tested).
- Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 and had symptoms to return to working onsite at an agency workplace or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities after 5 full days from the onset of symptoms (day 0 being the day of symptom onset), once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms are improving. Note that loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

If an individual:

- Had moderate illness (if they experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) or severe illness (they were hospitalized) due to COVID-19, or they have a weakened immune system, then to be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED will advise the individual to delay returning to working onsite at an ED workplace or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities for a full 10 days.
- Had severe illness or has a weakened immune system, they should consult their healthcare provider before ending isolation.
- Is unsure if their symptoms are moderate or severe or if they have a weakened immune system, ED will advise the individual to talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Post-Isolation Precautions

Once an individual has returned to working onsite at an ED workplace or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities after having tested positive for COVID-19 and isolated consistent with [CDC guidance on isolation](#), then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will instruct the individual to continue to take precautions consistent with CDC guidance for at least 10 full days after their first day of symptoms, or after the date of a positive viral test for asymptomatic individuals, including wearing a high-quality [mask or respirator](#) (such as an N95) when around others, avoiding eating and drinking around others, avoiding environments such as dining facilities, gyms, or other places where they may need to be unmasked around

others, and avoiding being around people who they [know are at high risk for severe disease from COVID-19](#).

- As it relates to mask-wearing after returning from isolation, ED will also inform such individuals that they can opt to take two viral antigen tests authorized by the FDA to detect current COVID-19 infection, starting on day 6. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the individual may remove their mask sooner than day 10.
- If either of their antigen test results are positive, the individual should continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until they have two sequential negative results. This may mean that the individual would continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10. If at any point their COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, ED will instruct the individual to again not to enter a Federal facility or interact with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities, restarting at day 0, consistent with E.O. 13991 and CDC recommendations on [isolation](#) and the protocols set forth by ED.

Official Travel

There are no Government-wide limits on official travel (i.e., travel conducted under an official travel authorization), regardless of an individual's vaccination status. Individuals should follow the travel policy of ED as sponsor of the official travel.

In approving official travel, ED, as sponsor of the official travel, will:

- Inform the traveling individual that CDC recommends that individuals make sure they are up to date with COVID-19 vaccines before travel;
- Recommend that the traveling individual consider being tested for current infection with a viral test as close to the time of departure as possible (no more than 3 days) before travel;
- Instruct the traveling individual to adhere strictly to CDC guidance for domestic and international travel before, during, and after official travel;
- Instruct the traveling individual to check their destination's COVID-19 Community Level before traveling, and to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) while on-duty and around others indoors at their destination, if the COVID-19 Community Level in the county where their destination is located is HIGH;
- Instruct the traveling individual to make sure they understand and follow all travel restrictions put in place by State, Tribal, local, and territorial governments; and
- Advise the traveling individual to prepare to be flexible during their travel, as restrictions, policies, and circumstances may change during their travel.

ED will issue specific travel guidance as needed to account for the specific requirements of the agency's mission.

Travel for Individuals with Known Exposure

For asymptomatic individuals who have had a known [exposure](#) to someone with COVID-19 within the past 10 days, ED will approve official travel, consistent with the agency's travel policy. If the individual remains without COVID-19 symptoms before traveling, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will instruct the individual to, in addition to other standard pre-travel instructions related to COVID-19:

- Wear a high-quality [mask or respirator](#) (such as an N95) the entire time they are on-duty and around others indoors for the full duration of their travel that falls within the 10 full days after their last known exposure;
- Not travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if they will not be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) when around others indoors for the full duration of their travel within the 10 full days after their last known exposure; and
- Follow other aspects of [post-exposure protocols](#), including the requirement for individuals with a known exposure to be tested for COVID-19 after 5 full days following their last known exposure (ideally, on or after day 6)—note that this testing may need to occur while the individual is traveling, and that ED does not need to require that employees wait for the results of this post-exposure diagnostic test to undertake official travel, including return travel.

If the individual develops COVID-19 symptoms after official travel has been approved, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will instruct the individual to not undertake further official travel, including under that previously approved travel authorization, and to instead follow agency protocols consistent with the Task Force guidance on travel for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms (see next section).

Travel for Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms or a Positive COVID-19 Test

Pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will not approve official travel (i.e., travel conducted under an official travel authorization) for individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and are waiting for an initial diagnostic viral test result, and ED will not approve official travel for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 5 full days after their first day of symptoms, or after the date of the initial positive diagnostic viral test for asymptomatic individuals.

If an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 has returned to working onsite at an agency workplace or interacting with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities (once they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing

medication and their other symptoms are improving), then ED will approve official travel for the individual. Pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance, ED will instruct the individual to, in addition to other standard pre-travel instructions related to COVID-19:

- Wear [a high-quality mask or respirator](#) (such as an N95) the entire time they are on-duty and around others indoors for the full duration of their travel that falls within the period they are otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator after ending [isolation](#), consistent with Task Force guidance;
- Not travel on public transportation such as airplanes, buses, and trains if they will not be able to wear a high-quality mask or respirator (such as an N95) when around others indoors for the full duration of their travel that falls within the period, they are otherwise required to wear a high-quality mask or respirator after ending isolation, consistent with the Task Force guidance; and
- Follow other aspects of [post-isolation](#) protocols.

If, after official travel has been approved, the individual's COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, then pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance on isolation, ED will instruct the individual to not undertake further official travel, including under any previously approved travel authorization, and to again not enter a Federal facility or interact with members of the public as part of their official responsibilities, restarting at day 0 of isolation protocols.

Meetings, Events, and Conferences

All in-person attendees at any meetings, conferences, or events hosted by ED must comply with relevant COVID-19 safety protocols, including as it relates to any mask-wearing when COVID-19 Community Levels are HIGH, pursuant to E.O. 13991 and consistent with CDC guidance or where required by State, Tribal, territorial, or local laws, rules, regulations, or existing collective bargaining agreements.

For ED-hosted meetings, events, and conferences, there are no Government-wide restrictions.

To be consistent with Safer Federal Workforce Task Force guidance, ED has paused asking in-person attendees at agency-hosted meetings, events, and conferences to provide information about their COVID-19 vaccination status, where COVID-19 safety protocols at the meeting, event, or conference location do not vary based on vaccination status.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All medical information collected from individuals, including vaccination information, test results, and any other information obtained as a result of testing and symptom monitoring, will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy, and will be accessible only to those with a need to know. ED will consult its Senior Agency Officials for Privacy on matters related to the collection and handling of personally identifiable information and identify a point of contact for all questions relating to personal medical information.

Workplace Operations

Improving Ventilation and Air Filtration

To be consistent with the Task Force guidance, ED has made and will maintain improvements to indoor ventilation and air filtration throughout Federal facilities to the maximum extent feasible, regardless of COVID-19 Community Levels. In consultation with occupational safety and facilities experts as appropriate, ED considers making use of portable air cleaners with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters in indoor common areas and meeting rooms, particularly where ventilation or air filtration is otherwise challenging to improve, where crowding cannot be avoided, or in high-risk settings.

Facilitating Physical Distancing and Avoiding Crowding

To be consistent with Task Force guidance, when COVID-19 Community Levels are MEDIUM or HIGH, ED will post signage encouraging individuals, regardless of vaccination status, to consider avoiding crowding and physically distancing themselves from others in indoor common areas, meeting rooms, and high-risk settings in Federal facilities. Pursuant to E.O. 13991, CDC guidance for physical distancing in specific settings, including healthcare and high-risk congregate settings, must be followed, as applicable.

When COVID-19 Community Levels are MEDIUM or HIGH, ED may consider establishing occupancy limits for indoor common areas and meeting rooms in Federal facilities, and in high-risk settings within Federal facilities, where necessary, including where ventilation and air filtration is challenging to improve, or crowding cannot otherwise be avoided.

Collective Bargaining Obligations

Consistent with President Biden's policy to support collective bargaining, agencies are reminded to satisfy any applicable collective bargaining obligations under 5 U.S.C. Chapter 71. Therefore, ED will communicate regularly with employee representatives on COVID-19 workplace safety matters. ED will engage with employee unions at its earliest opportunity as ED adjusts agency COVID-19 workplace safety plans, protocols, and policies, and otherwise satisfy any applicable collective bargaining obligations.

under the law, if any, at the earliest opportunity, including on a post-implementation basis, where appropriate.

ED will also review existing collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) to assess whether these updated COVID-19 workplace safety protocols conflict with existing CBA provisions. To the extent that conflicting CBAs provisions exist, ED will bring the CBA into compliance with these updated COVID-19 workplace safety protocols at the earliest opportunity permitted under the law.

Continuous Evaluation

As local conditions, mission requirements, and the government's scientific understanding of COVID-19 evolve, this plan and our workplace safety policies and protocol will change. In addition, as part of the Administration's continued focus on the national response to COVID-19, ED expects that [CDC](#), [OSHA](#), [EPA](#), [GSA](#), [OPM](#), and the [Safer Federal Workforce Task Force](#) will continue to issue updated guidance and recommendations.

The ED COVID-19 Coordination Team will continuously evaluate this COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan and make updates as necessary. All changes to this plan will be communicated to employees and posted to the ED COVID-19 Intranet website.

4. Points of Contact

Questions regarding the ED COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan may be sent to COVID19CoordinationTeam@ED.GOV.

Appendix A: ED COVID-19 Coordination Team

Component/Office	Title
Office of Finance and Operations (OFO)	Acting Assistant Secretary for Finance and Operations
Office of the Secretary	Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Under Secretary	Chief of Staff
OFO/Office of Human Resources	Deputy Assistant Secretary for HR
OFO/Office of Human Resources	Director of Workforce Relations Division
OFO/Office of Security, Facilities and Logistics	Deputy Assistant Secretary for OSFL
OFO/Office of Security, Facilities and Logistics	Health and Safety Officer
Office of the General Counsel	Assistant General Counsel for the Division of Business and Administrative Law
Office of the General Counsel	Attorney
Office for Civil Rights	Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management and Planning
Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development	Executive Officer
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services	Executive Officer
Office of the Chief Information Officer	Chief of Staff

Component/Office	Title
Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs	Legislative Director
Office of Finance and Operations	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Management and Planning
Federal Student Aid	Chief Administrative Officer
Office of Communications and Outreach	Deputy Assistant Secretary, for Management and Planning
Office of Postsecondary Education	Deputy Assistant Secretary, for Management and Planning
Institute of Education Sciences	Executive Officer
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education	Deputy Assistant Secretary, for Management and Planning
Office of English Language Acquisition	Deputy Director
Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education	Deputy Assistant Secretary, for Management and Planning
National Assessment Governing Board	Executive Officer
American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE)	AFGE Union Representative
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	External Medical Officer

This page intentionally left blank.