

# School Entry Tuberculosis Risk Assessment Requirement

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Tuberculosis Control Program

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**1. What do students need to meet the TB screening requirement in LA County (LAC)?**

The TB risk assessment requirement for LAC is for all students attending a TK-12 school in LAC to at least once complete a TB risk assessment on initial school entry to the County. School districts may determine to require TB risk assessments at additional grades. Ideally, because of the high morbidity of TB disease in LAC, students should complete school entry risk assessments at TK/K, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

**2. Can a child start school before a TB risk assessment has been completed?** Children without symptoms of TB disease may attend/start school without completing a TB risk assessment and have up to 90 days to complete the TB risk assessment. Children 10 years old or older with TB symptoms must be excluded from school and cleared by their provider.

**3. Can a student attend/start school if a TB risk is identified on the TB risk assessment?**

The healthcare provider completing the TB risk should include a TB symptom review with the TB risk assessment. Children under 10 years old do not need to be excluded from school if a TB risk factor is identified, but TB evaluation has not been completed. Any child 10 years old or older with TB symptoms must be excluded from school and cleared by their healthcare provider. If a child 10 years old or older has a TB risk factor identified on the assessment and has no symptoms of TB, they may attend/start school.

**4. Who can administer the TB Risk Assessment?**

A physician (MD/DO), NP, PA, PHN, RN, or LVN can administer the TB risk assessment and TB symptom review. If the risk assessment and TB test are positive and requires a physical exam and chest x-ray, a physician (MD/DO), NP, or PA must sign the clearance form.

**5. Can the TB risk assessment be administered remotely?**

The TB risk assessment can be administered over the phone by a school nurse or medical provider; however, the TB symptom review must be done in person or telehealth by their healthcare provider or any licensed clinical provider.

**6. What is the required timeframe for TB testing for a student if a TB risk is identified on the TB risk assessment?**

Students who have a positive TB risk assessment must have a TB test (either IGRA or TST) completed within 90 days of school entry.

**7. What is the required timeframe for chest x-ray for a student with a positive TB test?**

Ideally, the chest x-ray should be done within one month of the positive TB test.

**8. Can a student with a positive TB test continue attending school until their chest x-ray is completed?**

Children with a positive TB test and without symptoms of TB disease may attend/start school before finishing their TB evaluation. Ideally, the chest x-ray in asymptomatic children should be done within one month of the positive TB test. Children 10 years old or with TB symptoms and a positive TB test must be excluded from school and cleared by their provider.

**9. If the student recently (or in the past) attended a district or school in LA county, will they need repeat TB screening?**

The student does not need to repeat the TB risk assessment if completed once and is able to provide the documentation of previous risk assessment, even if completed over a year ago. If there is no documentation, the student will need to complete a new risk assessment. Ideally, additional TB risk assessments should be completed in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and entry to high school. Healthcare providers should retain records of completed TB risk assessments, evaluation, and treatment are encouraged to document the outcomes and risk assessment in CAIR.

**10. What happens if a student does not have documentation of completed TB evaluation after a positive TB test or completion of preventive treatment?**

Parents of students without documentation of completed TB evaluation or TB infection treatment should receive a parent education packet. The student must have a TB symptom review completed by their healthcare provider or any licensed clinical provider to determine eligibility to attend school. Children under 10 years old do not need to be excluded from school if a TB symptom is identified. Any child 10 years old or older with TB symptoms must be excluded from school and cleared by their healthcare provider.

**11. What is the recommendation for TB screening for students transferring from districts or schools in the Long Beach or Pasadena public health jurisdictions?**

It is recommended for all counties and cities, including the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena, to recognize the LAC or California risk assessment. The student does not need to repeat the TB risk assessment if completed once and is able to provide the documentation of previous risk assessment, even if completed over a year ago.

**12. What is the recommendation for TB screening for a student from other California school districts transferring into an LAC school?**

LAC will recognize completion of the California pediatric risk assessment to complete the LAC TB risk assessment requirement as long as the risk assessment was done within 1 year of school entry into the LAC school.

**13. If a student has traveled out of the country for 30 days or longer, do they need repeat TB screening?**

- Yes, if the child has a new additional risk factor, including travel outside of the US to a country with elevated TB rate for 30 days or longer, the TB risk assessment should be repeated within 8 weeks of returning.
- Re-screening should only be done in children who previously tested negative and have new risk factors since the last risk assessment.

**14. Who determines if a student has symptoms?**

Students younger than 10 years old may attend school regardless of symptoms. Students 10 years old or older should have a TB symptom review completed by a school nurse or licensed healthcare provider to clear to attend school. If TB symptoms are identified, the student must be cleared by an evaluation with a medical provider, including a chest x-ray.

**15. How will medical providers be informed about this TB risk assessment requirement?**

The LAC Education Sector team will be resourced with the TB risk assessment requirement information to distribute with other health screening requirements for schools. The Southern California Regional Community of Practice to End TB will educate providers about school entry requirements in Southern California.

**16. Will providers have the TB risk assessment document?**

The document can be found at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/tb/docs/PedsTBRiskAssessment.pdf>.

**17. Can a student attend school if the process of medical exemption extends beyond the limit of days for independent study?**

If the student is asymptomatic, then the student may attend school in person. If granted a medical exemption, the student should have an annual TB symptom review completed before each school year. If TB symptoms are identified and student is 10 years old or older, the student should be excluded from school until cleared by a medical provider. If TB symptoms are identified in a child younger than 10 years old, the child should not be excluded, but the resolution of TB symptoms should be confirmed.

**18. What if parent refuses to do the TB risk assessment?**

If the child is assessed to be in good health, provide the parent a TB education packet. Consider administering the TB risk assessment if licensed healthcare provider, e.g. school nurse is accessible. Assess the child for TB symptoms and if identified, exclude children 10 years old or older from attending school until cleared by a medical provider.

Failing to perform the risk assessment, testing, and treatment qualifies as neglect and if other signs of neglect are present, then report to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) if deemed appropriate.

**19. What if the student has documentation of a previous positive IGRA/TST from outside the U.S.?**

The student with documentation of a positive IGRA/TST will need to have a medical evaluation, including a CXR in the United States, US Territories or US Military Base Medical Facility.

**20. If someone does not want to submit to a risk assessment, can they get a TB test?**

Yes, a TB test (either IGRA or TST), performed up to twelve months prior to registration for school, may be completed instead of a TB risk assessment. If the test is positive, the child must have a medical evaluation by a licensed primary care provider in the U.S., including a chest x-ray and physical exam, with documentation of these results on the risk assessment form and provided to the child's school. Try to avoid testing of low-risk populations.