



UPDATED LOA COVID Protocols and Options 2023-2024

In an effort to provide convenient, effective, timely, and cost-saving health care for our students and staff, to help keep students in school and on campus, and to help provide our families with more choices, Lake Oconee Academy is pleased to continue our partnership with [ESE Telehealth](#) and will be updating our protocols based on new guidance from the [CDC](#) and the [GA Department of Public Health \(DPH\)](#).

Per these updated guidelines, LOA's protocols and systems include (1) options for on-campus testing for multiple ailments (including COVID, flu, and strep), (2) on-campus virtual support from licensed nurse practitioners, and (3) on-campus options for students exposed to COVID, so they do not need to shift off campus and quarantine at home – unless they become symptomatic and/or test positive.

As part of LOA's partnership with ESE Telehealth, the school will continue to administer highly accurate rapid COVID tests, with just a short swab in the lower nostril (not the more invasive procedure that goes farther up the nose). With only a 10-minute turnaround, these tests offer 99% accuracy on negative tests and 85% on positive tests. As part of the ESE Telehealth system, LOA will continue to report results electronically, which are readily transferable to the primary care physicians of our families. This testing option will be approximately half the cost of other testing options, with the cost billed directly to insurance, Medicaid (which will not impact any medical benefits), or paid onsite with cash or check. Parents/guardians will be contacted before a student is tested and may be present for the testing – either virtually or in person.

In terms of actual **protocols**, the key elements are as follows:

- *Positive Cases* – will stay home until there has been a 24 hour noted improvement in overall symptoms, and fever-free (without the use of medication) for at least 24 hours;
- *Symptomatic Students* – if on campus, will be seen by our staff and can consult a Telehealth practitioner, and then test if it is deemed necessary, with positive cases isolating (per above) and negative cases being addressed accordingly (including sent home for cough, muscle aches, sore throat, and/or fevers, etc.);
- *Exposed Students* – will remain on campus if asymptomatic.

LOA still supports any student and faculty member that chooses to mask, if he or she desires. We encourage all families to take a few minutes to [sign up for ESE Telehealth](#), which is quick, easy, and required for the onsite testing. We also encourage families to consider these updated on-campus options, both for the convenience of the testing and because we know that most of our students learn more and do better academically if they are on campus.

If you have questions, please contact Nurse Jessica or Dr. Bowling. You may also access the [Too Sick for School](#) information sheet for requirements for staying home when sick.