



# **JOINT PROTOCOL**

---

## **COVID-19 SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS AND CONFIRMED CASES**

**JULY 24, 2020**

## OVERVIEW

The risk involved with the COVID-19 Pandemic presents school administrators with the need to make critical decisions when someone with symptoms is in the school building, when the school finds out about a confirmed case of someone linked to the school, or the school finds out that someone had direct contact with a confirmed case. School administrators require a protocol that can be used to effectively and consistently address these situations. In addition, the school must provide communications to families and staff about what steps will be taken when these situations occur. Having a defined process makes that communication possible.

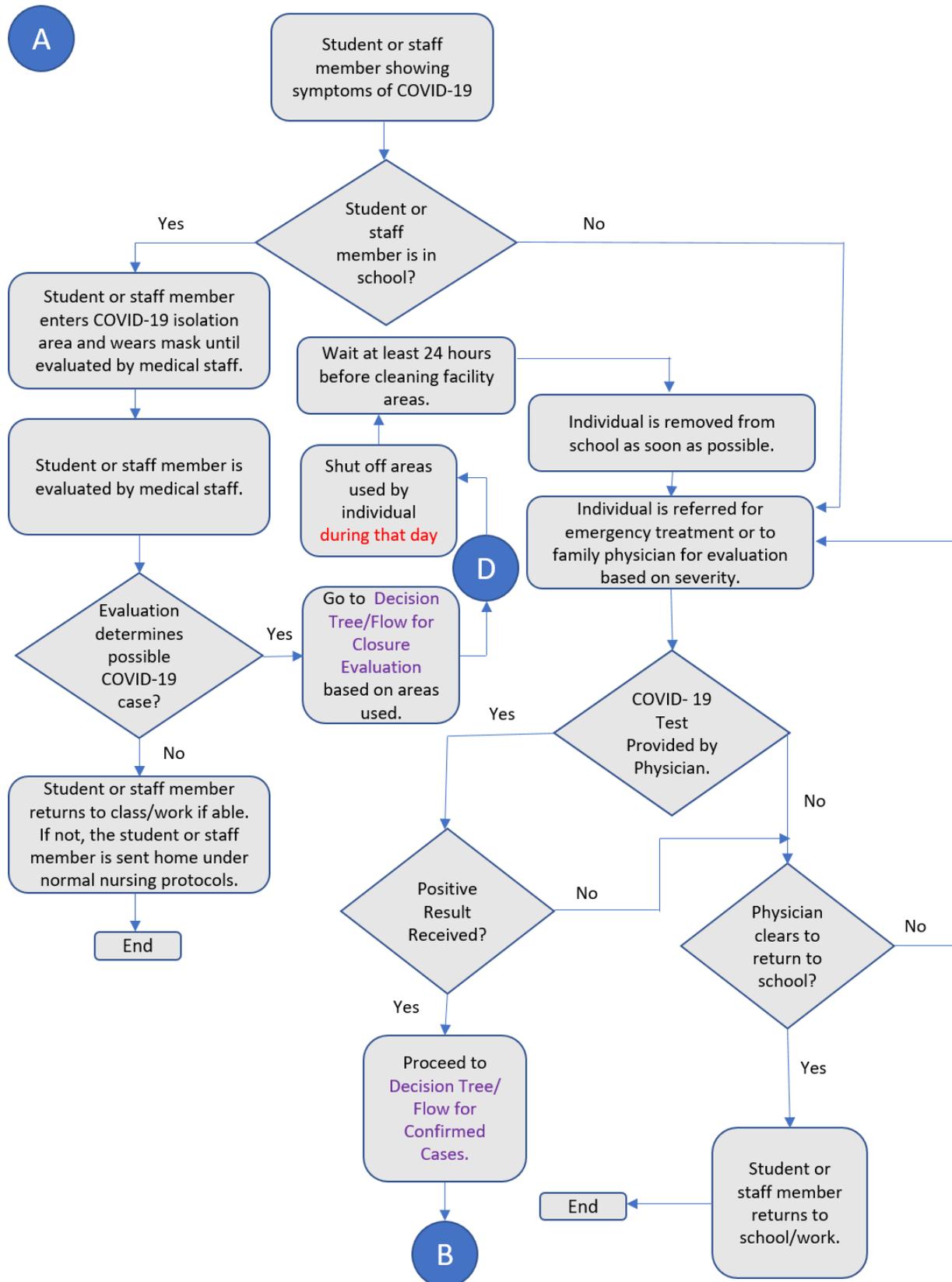
Consequently, a joint protocol has been developed for schools to use to determine the course of action that should be considered when these situations occur. Diagram one provides the decision tree and flow for if a symptomatic person is identified within the school environment or is linked to the school in some way. Diagram two provides the decision tree and flow for when a confirmed case is identified in someone linked to the school. Diagram three provides the decision tree and flow for when an individual has direct contact with a confirmed case and is linked to the school. Diagram four provides the decision tree and flow for when schools should consider closing based on the results of the other diagrams and the current situation within the school's respective communities.

It is important to understand that multiple sources have been consulted to develop this guidance. Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department of Health were consulted as were various other sources. This guidance is evolving on an almost daily basis, and adjustments may need to be made as new information is released.

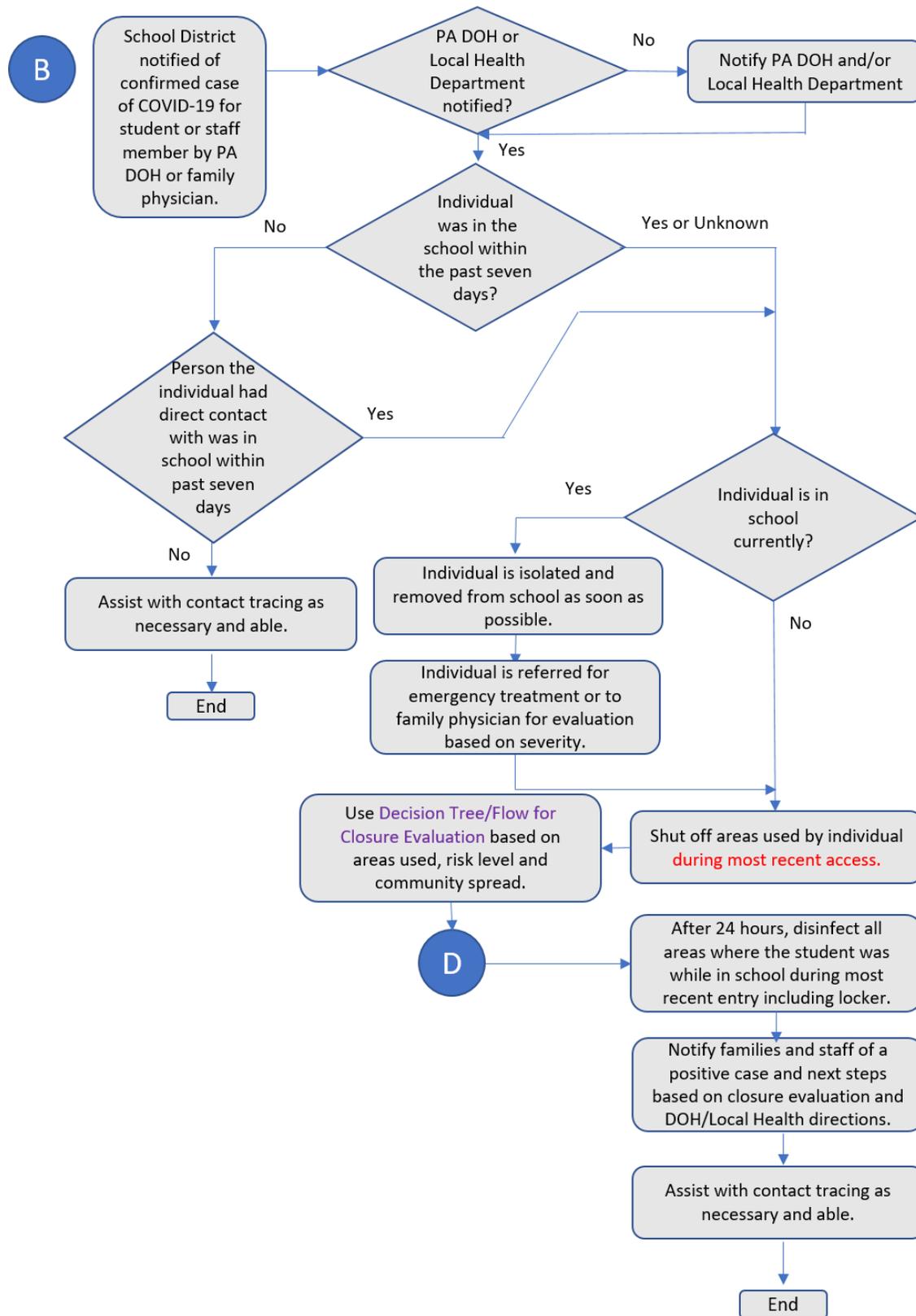
It is unclear how schools will receive information about confirmed cases and what information will be received. It is important to know as much detail about the situation as possible for decision making purposes. Therefore, the decision points in the flows provide critical questions that schools can ask related to the specific case to determine an appropriate level of response. A confirmed case as it relates to this document is based on information from a medical provider or municipal, county, or state health department.

It is highly recommended that schools involve their medical staff (e.g. school physician, school nurses, etc.) in their decisions along with local, county, and state health officials. This decision tree is intended to provide a high level of guidance to schools. It is understood that local schools will need to evaluate the situation at the time and make their decisions based on the current environment. It is also important for school districts to track local case data going forward to assist with decision making as it relates to school closures and community spread.

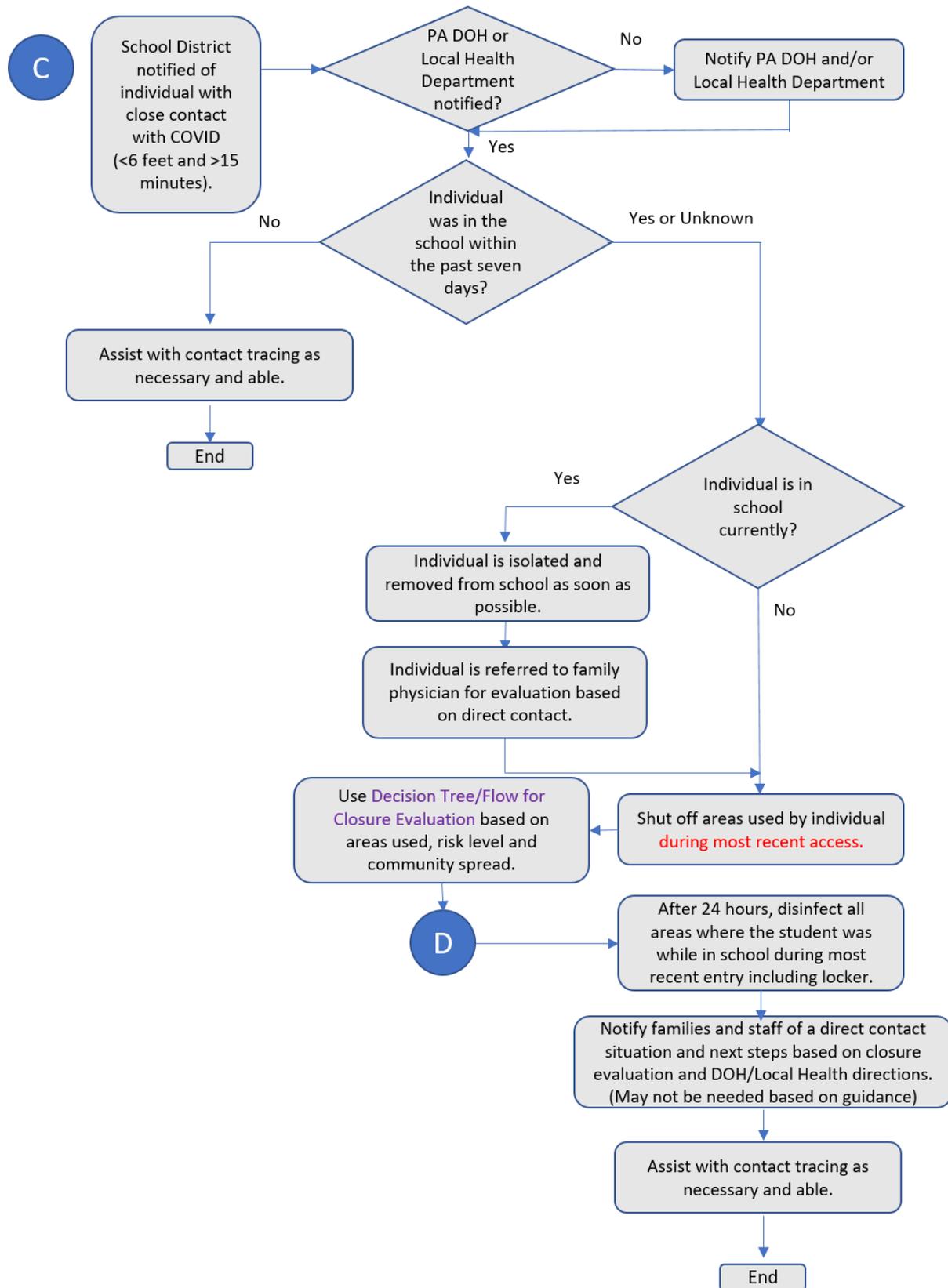
# DIAGRAM ONE: DECISION TREE/FLOW FOR SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS



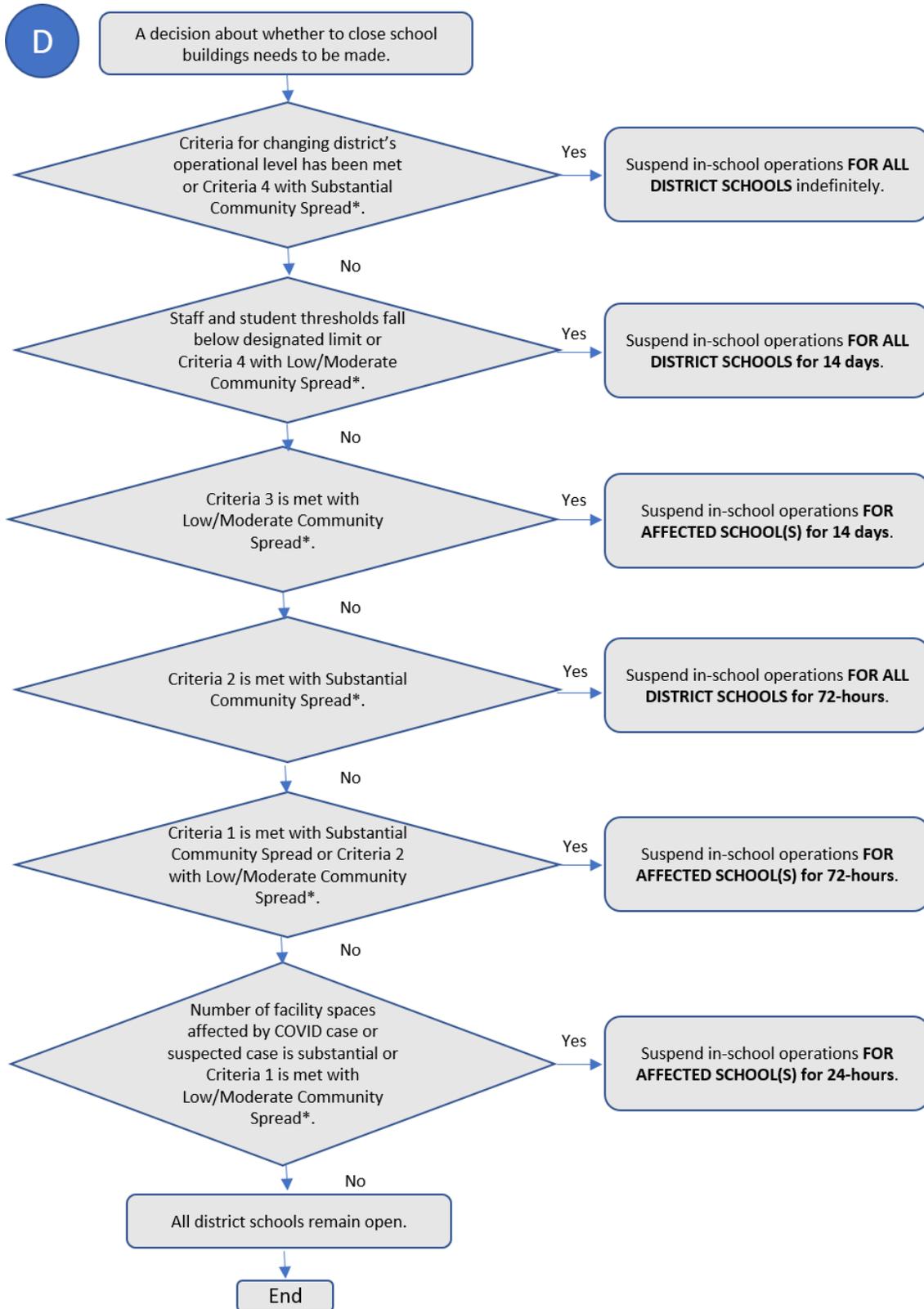
**DIAGRAM TWO: DECISION TREE/FLOW FOR CONFIRMED CASES**



**DIAGRAM THREE: DECISION TREE/FLOW FOR CONTACT WITH CONFIRMED INDIVIDUAL**



## DIAGRAM FOUR: DECISION TREE/FLOW FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE



\*Based on Risk Matrix (Fulton County Schools, 2020).

## RISK MATRIX

The Decision Tree/Flow for School Closure references criteria and level of spread based on the following matrix developed by the Fulton County Schools (2020). This matrix allows schools to use the number of cases within the school or schools and associated level of community spread to determine an appropriate level of response. This chart has been factored into the previously provided Decision Tree/Flow for School Closure.

Level of Community Spread, based upon State and Local public Health (L-M-S)	Criteria 1 1 Student or 1 staff member at one site OR 1 student or 1 staff member at multiple sites in different clusters	Criteria 2 2-4 Student or staff members at one site OR 2-4 students or staff members at multiple sites in different clusters	Criteria 3 5+ student or staff members at one site OR in one cluster (traceable)	Criteria 4 5+ students or staff members in multiple clusters (community spread)
<b>Low/No Spread</b> (incidence rate/100K of less than 5 per day in the county in the past week)	Close school(s) for up to 24-hours or on A/B schedule do not close	Close school(s) for 72-hours (minimum)	Close individual school or cluster for 14 days (minimum)	Close school(s)/district for 14 days (minimum)
<b>Moderate</b> (incidence rate/100K of between 6 and 100 per day in the county in the past week)	Close school(s) for up to 24-hours or on A/B schedule do not close	Close school(s) for 72-hours (minimum)	Close individual school(s) or cluster(s) for 14 days (minimum)	Close school(s)/district for 14 days (minimum)
<b>Substantial</b> (incidence rate/100K of more than 100 per day in the county in the past week)	Close school(s) for up to 72-hours	Close school(s)/district for 72-hours (minimum)	Close school/district for 14 days (minimum)	District closed until further notice

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT

As part of the decision making process related to confirmed cases, direct contact cases, and possible closures, schools should consult the respective county or municipal health department or the Pennsylvania Department of Health. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Health:

Pre-K to 12 schools are reminded to contact local DOH or CMHD staff before acting in response to a known or suspected communicable disease. Call DOH at 1-877-PA Health (1-877-724-3258); a representative is on-call 24 hours a day. Pre-K to 12 schools located in a jurisdiction with a CMHD should call the CMHD. DOH and CMHDs will provide guidance to schools regarding disease information, appropriate letters and communications, identification of high-risk individuals, appropriate action and treatment, and on-going support and assistance (2020, n.p.).

It is recommended that the school also maintain documentation of every contact with the county or municipal health department or Pennsylvania Department of Health.

## REFERENCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, March 18). Interim guidance for administrators of US institutions of higher education. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, April 10). Interim guidance for administrators of US K-12 schools and child care programs. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, May 19). Considerations for schools. retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, July 23). Preparing K-12 administrators for a safe return to school in fall 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>
- Fulton County Schools. (2020, June 17). Interim school closure decision matrix – based on current guidance 6/17/20. Retrieved from <https://go.boarddocs.com/ga/fcss/Board.nsf/files/BQQHC5479633/%24file/Closure%20Matrix%20v4.pdf>
- Pennsylvania Department of Health. (2020, July 16). Public health guidance regarding COVID-19 for phased reopening of pre-K to 12 schools. Retrieved from <https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/PublicHealthGuidance/Pages/default.aspx>