



**Republic of the Philippines**  
**LEGAL EDUCATION BOARD**  
Quezon City

*As the legal education system welcomes the new academic year amidst the continuing public health emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, the task of ensuring that the right to education is protected and promoted through continuity of learning shall be fulfilled by the Legal Education Board and all relevant stakeholders in their respective localities. Thus, in support of public health advisories, and following national and local government directives, law schools shall be equipped with proper guidelines in order to have an effective and safe transition from the traditional education set-up to hybrid and modern learning environments thus ensuring quality legal education remains accessible to all.*

*The following recommendatory guidelines are hereby promulgated for the safe return of students, faculty members, administrators and staff to our schools:*

**Memorandum Circular No. 62, Series of 2020**

**SUBJECT: GUIDELINES FOR THE SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL**

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**Section 1. Declaration of Policies** – In the exercise of academic freedom, law schools shall design and implement their own occupational health and safety standards within their institutions to protect the academic community from the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with the following general principles which reiterates Legal Education Board (LEB) Memorandum Circular (LEBMC) No. 56 (2020), as follows:

1. During this extraordinary health crisis, the inherent right to life, health and integrity of the human person takes precedence over academic goals.
2. Any and all academic interventions that will be adopted at this time must be premised on the values of compassion, empathic understanding, and solidarity, with care to mitigate existing technological, gender, and socio-cultural-economic inequalities that may be exacerbated by the crisis.
3. Law schools are encouraged to adopt innovative ways of teaching and delivery of instruction that will enable continued learning without imposing additional

hardship or burden on the students, faculty members and administrative officials and personnel during these difficult times.

4. Consistent with LEB Memorandum Order (LEBMO) No. 18 (2018), the Higher Education Institution (HEI) of which the law school constitutes a unit shall be treated as one environment or ecosystem that shall have a consistent safety policy over all its constituent departments and units.
5. It is also recognized that the HEI is in the best position to determine the most appropriate interventions that must be made to protect the welfare of its academic community, and therefore the primary responsibility of the institution is heavily emphasized.
6. Additionally, education as a right requires the entire legal education community to work together as the duty to ensure continuity of learning for all is shared by both the Board and the stakeholders.

**Section 2. *Definition of Terms*** – For purpose of this Memorandum Circular, the following terms are defined, as follows:

1. **Asynchronous Learning** – a type of instructional delivery where the instructor and the students do not interact in real time. This may include self-guided learning modules, recorded video and audio content, posted lecture notes, online discussion boards, and similar methods.
2. **Exposure by Contact** – applies to a person who is directly exposed to a COVID-19-infected individual through the following methods:
  - a. Providing direct care to suspect, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 patients without the proper use of PPEs;
  - b. Face-to-face contact with a probable or confirmed case within 1 meter and more than 15 minutes;
  - c. Direct physical contact with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19; and,
  - d. Other situations as indicated by local risk assessments.
3. **Exposure by Residence** – applies to a person who stays in a locality where there is a sustained community level transmission.
4. **Exposure by Travel** – applies to a person who travels from a country or area where there is a sustained community level transmission to an area with no sustained community transmission.
5. **In-person Classes** – a classroom set-up where the participants are physically present in the same place with limited need for communication technology for instructional delivery.

6. **Instructional Flexibility** – refers to an openness to and the use of modern learning management systems and modalities to overcome the challenges of remote classes. This shall also include the recalibration of teaching methodology to focus on foundational and critical topics appropriate for graduate studies, instead of a detailed and exhaustive approach to instruction.
7. **Learning Autonomy** – refers to the expectation of and increased level of independence by the law students, as graduate students, to manage their academic goals on the basis of their capacities, resources and pace with limited interventions from their instructors.
8. **Multiple Learning System** – an integrated classroom set-up that combines both remote and in-person learning designed for continuity of learning.
9. **Potential Carrier** – a person who has exhibited the symptoms for COVID-19. A potential carrier can be classified as a suspect or a probable case.
10. **Probable Case** - a probable case of COVID-19 is:
  - a. A suspect case who has been tested for COVID-19 but the results are inconclusive.
  - b. A suspect case who has tested positive for COVID-19 but the test was not conducted in a national or subnational coronavirus reference laboratory, or an officially accredited laboratory for confirmatory testing.
11. **Remote Classes** – a classroom set-up where the students and the instructor are not physically present in the same place, and which relies on communication technology and other tools for delivery of instruction.
12. **Suspect Case** – The following are considered as suspect case as per the Department of Health (DOH)'s classification:
  - a. A person with severe acute respiratory illness – fever of 38°C or higher, cough or sore throat, shortness of breath, and may even include severe pneumonia – whose cause is undetermined prior to testing for the coronavirus.
  - b. A person with influenza-like illness – fever of 38°C or higher, and cough or sore throat – and who lives in or has traveled to an area that reported local transmission of the coronavirus during the 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms.
  - c. A person with influenza-like illness and has had contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 in the two days prior to the onset of that confirmed or probable case's illness or before that confirmed or probable case showed negative on repeat testing.
  - d. A person with fever or cough or shortness of breath or other respiratory symptoms and is one of the following: 60 years old or older;

with a comorbidity or pre-existing illness; in high-risk pregnancy; a health worker.

13. **Symptoms** – refers to COVID-19 symptoms which include:
  - a. Sore Throat;
  - b. Body Pains;
  - c. Headache; and,
  - d. Fever, including other flu-like symptoms which are cough, cold, body malaise, fatigue.
  
14. **Synchronous Learning** – a type of instructional delivery where the instructor and the students interact in real time usually through a virtual platform enabled by communication technology. This may include video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chatting, live-streaming and similar methods.
  
15. **Vulnerable Individuals** – persons who are highly susceptible to COVID-19. Vulnerable individuals include the following:
  - a. Those with high-risk pregnancy;
  - b. Those 60 years old and above;
  - c. Those of any age with co-morbidities or pre-existing illness, such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, COPD, cancer, blood dyscrasia, chronic liver and kidney disease or with immunocompromised status; or,
  - d. Those who live with family members or immediate household members who are classified as vulnerable individuals.

### **Section 3. Interpretation –**

1. These guidelines shall only be recommendatory in character, except when they reiterate the national pandemic guidelines by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), public health advisories of the DOH, and the Local Government Units (LGUs), in which case they shall be mandatory to promote the general welfare.
  
2. These guidelines shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the advisories on the continuing public health emergency as issued by the IATF, DOH, LGUs and other related agencies. In case of conflict, these guidelines shall only be applied in a suppletory manner.

### **Section 4. Continuity of Learning -**

1. It is the shared duty of the law school to ensure continuity of learning to protect the right to education, and to this end, it shall employ innovative ways of teaching and delivery of instruction without imposing additional hardship or burden on the academic members.

2. The innovations introduced by schools in the delivery of the law programs, such as the Juris Doctor, the Master of Laws and the Doctor of Laws, shall take into account their nature as degrees in the graduate level of education employing the appropriate level of instructional flexibility and learning autonomy.
3. Law schools are encouraged to employ a multiple learning system which emphasizes integrating modern approaches that blend remote, online, in-person classes and other modalities in instructional delivery.
4. The provision of remote access to library and online learning resources, to the extent possible, by law schools is also expected.

#### **Section 5. *Modality of classes* –**

1. To combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, law schools are greatly encouraged to conduct classes remotely.
  - a. The conduct of in-person classes shall not be permitted, unless allowed under both national IATF guidelines and local government directives. For this purpose, IATF and LGU regulations that pertain to the holding of classes by HEIs shall be understood to include the law school, unless otherwise determined by the Board.
  - b. If both remote and in-person classes are feasible, a multiple learning system is preferred.
2. In any modality chosen by the school, instructional standards must be maintained.
  - a. In the context of limited in-person learning, focus on higher order thinking skills is encouraged in the development of assessment methods for student's performance.
  - b. Finally, at all times, faculty members must hold their classes in a reasonable manner that achieves the academic goals of the course without employing excessive, unjustifiable or harsh means.

**Section 6. *Holistic Health*** – The duty of law schools over the welfare of its academic members shall be understood to include both physical, mental and psychosocial health needs, and appropriate health services must be made available, as far as practicable, to students, the faculty, administrators and other personnel.

#### **Section 7. *School Operations* –**

1. *Community Quarantine.* Pursuant to the Omnibus Guidelines on the Implementation of Community Quarantine in the Philippines, as amended, issued by the IATF, the operations of law schools and conduct of classes shall be allowed in varying degrees depending on the community quarantine status of the concerned locality, as follows:

<b>STATUS</b>	<b>Administrative Services</b>	<b>Classes</b>
Enhanced Community Quarantine	No operations, and only payroll managers are allowed to report	In-person classes are not allowed
Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine	50% capacity of support operations allowed	
General Community Quarantine	Full capacity of support operations allowed	Limited in-person classes are allowed
Modified General Community Quarantine		
New Normal		
Localized lockdowns	No operations	In-person classes are not allowed
School quarantine		

2. *Essential staff.* Law schools are encouraged to explore alternatives for its essential administrative and support services such as online transactions and work-from-home arrangements for staff.
  - a. The administrative and support services that are considered essential to the operations of the school may assign skeletal staff to report, which shall refer to those assigned to the following offices:
    - i. Accounting;
    - ii. Human Resources;
    - iii. Cash Disbursement;
    - iv. Maintenance;
    - v. Property;
    - vi. Security;
    - vii. Utility;
    - viii. Building Administrators;
    - ix. Information Technology and Communications; and,
    - x. Other similar departments.
  - b. When operations are allowed, administrative and support services staff shall strictly comply with minimum public health standards and sanitation protocols.
  - c. Whenever practicable, the school shall provide transportation services for its essential staff.
  
3. *Reduction of class size.* In case of in-person classes, minimum public health standards must be fully implemented.
  - a. Classes must be reduced to 50% of the regular size.
  - b. Classrooms must only have the number of chairs based on the reduced class size.
  
4. *Physical classroom management.* Classrooms shall be off-limits and shall be opened only during the designated time of use.
  - a. Classrooms should only be opened 15 to 30 minutes before each class time for cleaning and disinfection.

- b. Students and the instructor are allowed to enter 5 minutes before the start of the class time.
  - c. In the classroom, student and instructor chairs must be so placed to maintain minimum of six feet distance between them, with proper markings to indicate the required physical distancing between participants.
  - d. There shall also be a designated entrance and exits for each room.
  - e. In case there is only one door, and in the entire duration of the class, the participants shall not be allowed to crowd together.
5. *Libraries.* Libraries shall be permitted to operate only when in-person classes are allowed.
- a. At all times, libraries shall operate up to a maximum of 50% of its total capacity only.
  - b. Librarians are also mandated to maintain sanitation protocols inside and in the vicinity of the library.
6. *Flow of human traffic.* The law school premises must at all times not exceed 50% of its capacity, and no mass gatherings of any kind is allowed.
- a. All students and instructors who do not have a scheduled class in a given day will not be allowed inside the premises, except for urgent concerns with the dean or other academic members.
  - b. Within the premises, there should be designated doors or paths leading to the separate entrance and exits.

Section 8. ***In-person classes*** – In case a law school chooses to conduct in-person classes, the following guidelines are recommended for implementation:

1. *Self-Screening.* All individuals must be able to assure, to the best of their ability, that they are COVID-19 free, or have not come in contact with a potential carrier, or have not been tagged as a suspect or a probable case, in order to report back to work or study, either through a government-standard test, or in the absence of such, a thorough self-screening procedure.
  - a. In the absence of a test, for an individual who wishes to come back to law school, they must first answer a self-screening flowchart, which is attached to this LEBMC as Annex A, to determine if they are COVID-19 free, or at least did not come in contact with a potential carrier, a suspect or a probable case.
    - i. Self-screening includes the determination whether the returning individual has any of the recognized symptoms of COVID-19 as outlined in the checklist attached to this LEBMC as Annex B.
    - ii. Nonetheless, regardless of their self-screening results, vulnerable individuals are discouraged to return to work or study.
  - b. Personal Hygiene Materials. Individuals who have no symptoms and are cleared to return to school must make sure that they have the following in their personal effects:

- i. alcohol or hand sanitizer;
      - ii. face mask;
      - iii. face shield;
      - iv. tissues or wet wipes;
      - v. School ID; or,
      - vi. any Government-Issued ID.
    - c. Regular Self-Checking. Individuals must conduct the self-screening test every time prior to going to the law schools' premises. They should also be mindful of any changes to their health while in the premises of the law school:
      - i. Any individual who experiences the onset of any of the symptoms while in the law school shall immediately advise the class health and safety point person.
      - ii. In such a situation, the case isolation and monitoring protocol under Section 9 of this LEBMC shall be engaged.
      - iii. If any individual experiences the onset of any of the symptoms after going to school, they shall immediately advise the occupational health and safety officer of the law school, and the case isolation and monitoring shall also be engaged, as appropriate.
2. *School and Workplace Etiquette*. In the law school premises, an individual is expected to adhere to the following:
- a. Personal cleanliness must be maintained, as follows:
    - i. Individuals must disinfect themselves before entering the premises. Disinfectants and footbaths should be readily available in major entrances and exits of the school as well as in common areas.
    - ii. Individuals must always take care of the disinfection of their personal belongings.
  - b. Proper hygiene is expected of everyone, as follows:
    - i. Everyone must observe proper sneezing and coughing etiquettes. Guide on proper sneezing, coughing, and washing of hands must be posted in conspicuous places inside the school.
    - ii. Everyone is also expected to wash and disinfect their hands regularly.
3. *Chief Occupational Health and Safety Officer (COHSO)*. There shall be a point person assigned by the school who shall be made in charge of the implementation of the school's guidelines and sanitation protocols.
- a. All daily reports on sanitation and disinfections are to be sent to the COHSO, who shall report to the Dean on a weekly basis.
  - b. All sanitation protocol-related issues must be forwarded to the COHSO and they shall make sure that all sanitation protocols are in place and are working.
  - c. The COHSO may also recommend further improvements to the existing protocols and guidelines set up by the school, based on their own

observations or from the suggestions and feedback from other academic members.

4. *Class health and safety point person.* The responsibility of the COHSO shall be exercised in every class by the class point person.
  - a. They shall maintain the sanitation protocols of their class and remind members of their duties.
  - b. The class point person shall also be tasked with reporting any issues or incidents pertaining to sanitation protocols or health-related issues to the COHSO.
  
5. *Sanitation Guidelines.*
  - a. Sanitation Materials. The school administration must make sure that the following are procured and ready by the time of return to school:
    - i. Alcohol or hand sanitizer placed in conspicuous places;
    - ii. Aerosol sprays for regular room disinfection;
    - iii. Soap, tissue, and other hygiene materials;
    - iv. Non-contact thermal scanners;
    - v. Foot baths; and,
    - vi. Sanitation tents (to be placed in the designated entrance of the school or building).
  - b. Foot baths and Sanitation Tents. Foot baths and sanitation tents must be provided at the entrance of the building or the premises. Everyone is required to walk through both the provided foot baths and sanitation tents before being allowed to enter the premises.
  - c. Temperature and visible symptoms screening. All individuals before entering the premises shall be screened first.
    - i. Security personnel shall be equipped with a non-contact digital temperature scanner.
    - ii. Each individual entering the premises must first have their temperatures taken with no exceptions.
    - iii. The following shall be denied entry based on health concerns:
      1. Anyone who will register to have a temperature reading of at least 37.5°C (on their first and second try) shall not be allowed to enter the premises.
      2. All individuals showing any symptoms, or not wearing face masks, will also be denied entry into the school premises.
    - iv. All visitors who are on urgent matters that are allowed to enter the school's premises shall be asked to provide their contact details for record purposes.
    - v. The case isolation and monitoring protocol must be observed in dealing with persons denied entry on the basis of health concerns.
  - d. Protective Gear. All individuals within the premises of the law school shall wear their corresponding protective gear, as follows:

- i. Everyone must always wear their face masks and face shields, and have their alcohol or sanitizers, and tissues to their personal effects at all times;
  - ii. Members of the disinfecting team must always wear the necessary protection equipment such as face shield, face masks, jacket, and disposable gloves.
- e. Two-step regular disinfection. In addition to the normal cleaning operations of the janitorial personnel especially on frequently touched surfaces, the classrooms and offices shall be regularly disinfected twice every work day.
  - i. Main disinfection step – Primary and thorough disinfection of the office premises shall be done every day at the end of the physical operations of the school.
    - 1. This shall be scheduled for about an hour, after the last class of the day.
    - 2. The disinfection shall cover the entire school, which includes the classrooms, administrative offices, common spaces, washrooms, library as well as furniture and equipment
    - 3. The disinfection shall be facilitated by the school’s janitorial and maintenance personnel.
    - 4. No other personnel or students and faculty members, except the security staff, shall be allowed back to the office after the disinfection for the remainder of the day.
    - 5. After disinfection, the head of the janitorial or maintenance personnel in charge of disinfection must report to the COHSO for any issues, incidents, and or findings during the disinfection.
  - ii. Supplementary disinfection step – Disinfection must also be done at the beginning of the day on the common areas, corridors, and classrooms to supplement the cleaning done during the main disinfection step the afternoon or night before.
    - 1. The disinfection shall primarily focus on classrooms, and its chairs, tables, and other furniture and fixtures, which shall be facilitated by the janitorial or maintenance personnel.
    - 2. Administrative office staff on the other hand, are expected to clean and disinfect their respective workstations.
    - 3. If necessary, the administration may allot time for light disinfections between scheduled classes.
  - iii. Emergency disinfection protocol – An emergency thorough disinfection of the school premises shall immediately be implemented at any point upon happening of the following situations:
    - 1. A student, faculty member, or an employee experiences the onset of any symptoms while in the office and the isolation and monitoring protocol has been engaged;

2. After monitoring of a risky case, the school quarantine protocol under Section 9(5) of this LEBMC has been engaged.
- f. Restrooms. Restrooms shall be maintained with a higher level of sanitation.
    - i. Restrooms shall be regularly disinfected within the day, or at least once an hour.
    - ii. Sanitation materials, which includes soap, hand sanitizers and the like, and disinfectants shall be conspicuously placed inside the restroom for ready use.
    - iii. Guides on proper hand washing must be posted in the restrooms.
  - g. Use of air-conditioning units. Unless necessary, the use of air-conditioning units shall be heavily discouraged to prevent aerosol transmission. Instead, opening of windows or use of alternative cooling methods is encouraged.
  - h. Vehicles. Vehicles are to be parked in the assigned area and shall be subjected to disinfection. Furthermore, entering and exiting vehicles from the school premises are to be recorded for contact tracing purposes.

Section 9. ***Case Isolation and Monitoring Protocols*** – If any individual is refused entry to the office premises on health concerns, or is isolated because of the onset of any symptom, the following protocol shall be engaged:

1. *Risky case* – The following individuals are considered risky cases under this protocol:
  - a. A student, faculty member or staff who wishes to enter the office premises but during the temperature and visible symptoms screening is determined to be showing symptoms;
  - b. Any individual who experiences the onset of any symptom while in the school premises; or,
  - c. Any individual who, after going inside the school premises, shall experience any of the symptoms at home.
2. *Denying entry* –
  - a. Any individual who, upon temperature and visible symptoms screening, is determined to be a risky case shall be denied entry.
  - b. If the individual does not seem to require assistance, then no further interaction shall be made between the security staff and the individual. The individual shall be asked to leave immediately.
  - c. If the individual appears to require assistance, then the specific isolation protocols shall be engaged.
3. *Isolation protocol* –
  - a. A risky case who requires assistance shall be immediately isolated and placed in a designated holding area outside the school’s premises.
  - b. Only the COHSO or deputized agent, wearing the required protection gear, shall be allowed to consult and assist the risky case. If the risky case is a

student, faculty or staff, the COHSO, before approaching the holding area, shall also collect the individual's personal effects, place these in a plastic bag and bring to the holding area.

- c. The risky case shall be assisted for them to get home, by providing them with a phone call and other similar help.
  - d. If the risky case requires more critical assistance because of the nature of their condition, the COHSO shall offer calling emergency health services.
  - e. When the risky case has successfully vacated from the designated holding area, the COHSO shall then engage the monitoring protocol.
  - f. The emergency disinfection step shall be immediately be implemented, as necessary.
4. *Monitoring protocol* –
- a. The conditions of all risky cases shall be regularly reported to and monitored by the COHSO. The monitoring must be done at least once a day for 14 days.
  - b. The officer shall, to the best of their ability, keep track of the changes in symptoms and other conditions of the risky case.
  - c. If in the monitoring process, it is determined that the risky case's symptoms have worsened to make them a Suspect Case, has become a Probable Case, or has tested positive for COVID-19, then the school's quarantine protocol shall be engaged.
  - d. The monitoring process shall be continued for each risky case until after 14 days, or the patient has recovered, whichever entails a longer period.
5. *School quarantine protocol* –
- a. Other than the school administration, only the Dean, upon recommendation of the COHSO, shall have the authority to engage the law school's quarantine protocol.
  - b. When engaged, the Dean and his office shall coordinate immediately with the local barangay and city public and health officials for their information.
  - c. The school shall immediately be vacated, and the emergency disinfection protocol shall be engaged.
  - d. The entire school's administrative operations shall be migrated to virtual platforms for 14 days covering the quarantine period, and no personnel shall be allowed to return to work during this period. The public shall be properly informed of such fact.
  - e. After 14 days, the Dean, together with the COHSO, shall reassess whether the quarantine period shall be extended.
6. *Recovered individuals* –
- a. When an individual has fully recovered, a health certificate shall be required for the individual to be able to resume study or work.
  - b. For individuals who are suspect or possible case, or has exposure from travel, contact or residence, shall, before being allowed to report to work in the physical office or study, be required to secure a Certificate of Completion of the 14-day quarantine period.

7. *Readiness for emergency* –

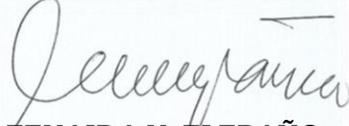
- a. All individuals are expected to prepare for emergency evacuation of premises when necessary.
- b. Office employees are therefore required to keep their work stations and personal effects in proper order to effectuate their prompt exit from the office premises when necessary.
- c. Office employees shall also regularly store their virtual work files on online and movable storage devices.
- d. An emergency evacuation plan that will ensure the orderly exit of all individuals and prevent the formation of crowding, shall be drawn up by the school for implementation when needed.

Section 10. ***Implementation***

1. *Coverage* – These guidelines are immediately executory and shall apply until revoked.
2. *Refresher course students* – These guidelines shall also apply in the operation of the refresher course.
3. *Adjustments in implementation* – As reasonably required by exigency, the Dean or the school administration may adjust these guidelines to facilitate the accomplishment of occupational health and safety and ensure faithful compliance with national government directives and public health advisories.

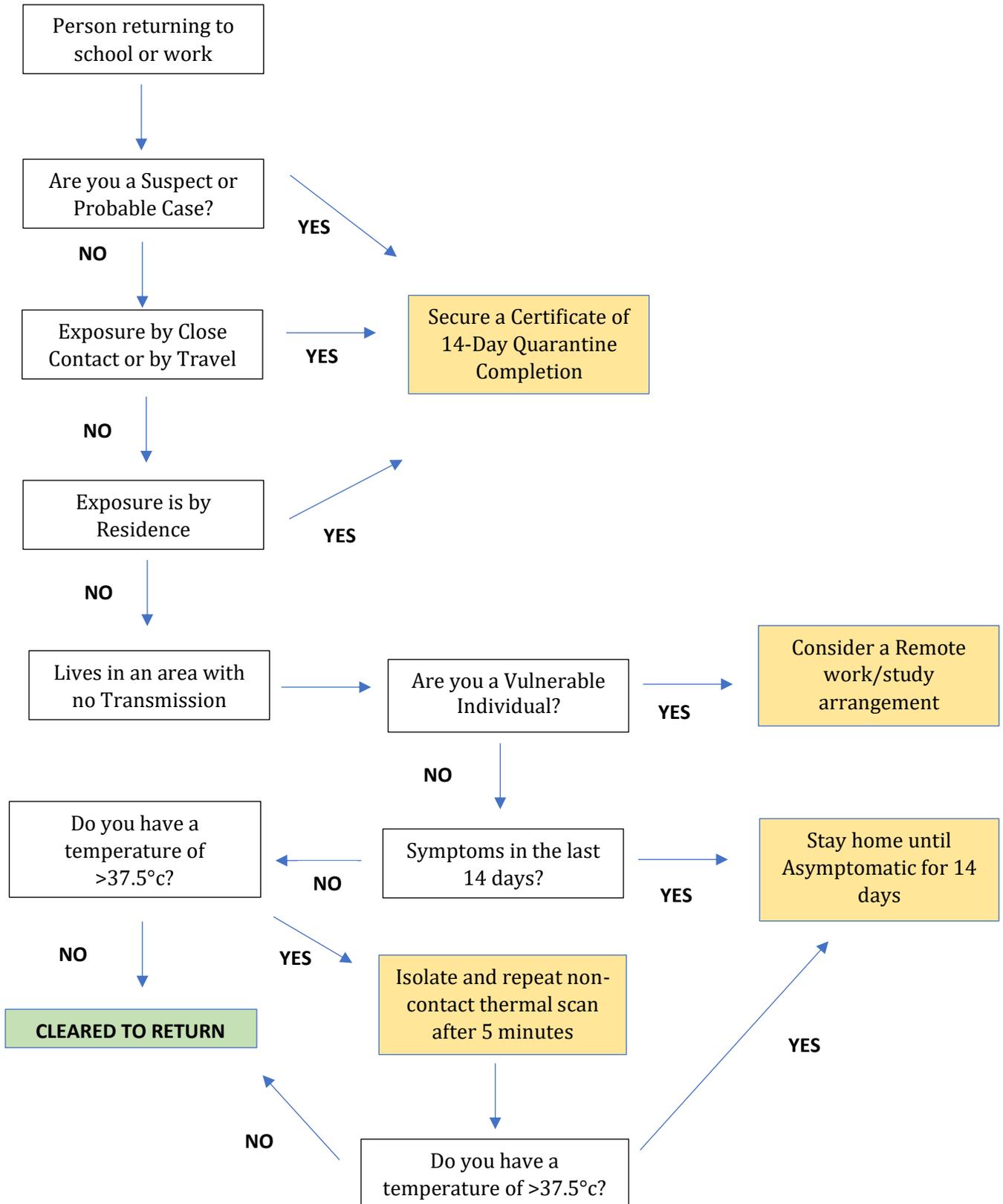
Issued under the seal of the Legal Education Board this 24th day of July 2020 in Quezon City.

For the Board:



**ZENaida N. ELEPAÑO**  
OIC, Commissioner

**ANNEX A**  
**Flow chart for returning individuals**



ANNEX B  
***Checklist of COVID-19 Symptoms***

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 37.5°C