

VQB5 Local Observation Procedures - FAQs for 2021-2022

Guidelines and protocols for conducting Local CLASS observations in VQB5 Practice Year 1 can be found in the [VDOE Local CLASS Observations Best Practices Guidebook](#).

FAQs : General Observation Protocols

1. For record keeping, can local observers secure their own CLASS score sheets after the observations are completed?

- Yes, as long as scoresheets can be stored securely and are easily accessible if requested for an audit by the PDG Community Lead and/or the state (VDOE/VECF).
- Scoresheets from local observations must be saved for at least two years after the observation.

2. How detailed should CLASS observation notes be?

- Observation notes form the foundation for the coding process, and good notes increase the chances that the code assigned is a true representation of the classroom. Taking good notes includes being objective, using short-hand or abbreviations, including direct quotes and specific examples about CLASS dimension indicators.
- According to the CLASS manual, notes must be taken for each dimension during every observation cycle. Notes should reflect the key elements of the dimension and not extraneous information. Chapter 2 in each age-level CLASS manual provides a sample scoresheet with notes.
- Additional tips and strategies for taking notes during CLASS observations can be found [HERE](#).

3. Will VQB5 accept an observation cycle less than 20 minutes?

- For Pre-K and Toddler observations, observation cycles should be 20 minutes long. There are a few circumstances where it is allowable for a cycle to be less than 20 minutes, such as a fire drill or sudden illness of the teacher that occurs in the middle of an observation cycle. In these situations CLASS codes can still be assigned provided that at least 10 minutes of observation have occurred.
- Infant CLASS cycles are typically 15 minutes in length.
- Local observers should use the guidance in Chapter 2 of each age-level CLASS manual, in the section on "*Rules for What to Observe and Terminating a Cycle*".

4. Can cafeteria meals (breakfast or lunch) be included in a CLASS observation?

- Since breakfast and lunch are routine activities in which children engage on a daily basis, they can be observed. However, because the structure of cafeteria time for PreK children can vary greatly, deciding whether or not to observe meals served in a school cafeteria should be a local level decision.
- PDG Communities and local observers should consider whether or not the classroom teacher/s are present during cafeteria meals as well as how cafeteria time fits into the overall daily schedule to ensure that both structured and unstructured time periods are included in the CLASS observation.
- Additional guidance, along with suggestions for addressing common challenges in the cafeteria can be found [HERE](#).

5. Can outdoor center time be included in a CLASS observation?

- Structured outdoor activities (i.e. teacher guided or teacher led) can be included in PreK CLASS observations. Therefore, if center time is set up outdoors to be a structured activity, it can be included in the observation. Recess or outdoor free time should not be included in PreK CLASS observations.
- All outdoor activities can be included during Infant and Toddler CLASS observations because of the level of care and guidance infants and toddlers need from adults at all times.
- Additional information about when it's appropriate to observe outdoors for different age-levels, can be found [HERE](#) and in Chapter 2 of the CLASS manuals.

FAQs: COVID Related

Guidance for safely and effectively collecting CLASS data in schools and programs with in-person teaching during the pandemic is provided from Teachstone - [Guidance for Conducting CLASS Observations of In-person Teaching During COVID](#)

1. What if a program is not currently allowing visitors, or is limiting visitors. Will the teachers still need to be CLASS observed?

- PDG Community leads will work with site leaders and administrators to understand each program's specific visitor health and safety protocols during COVID. If it is determined that local CLASS observers are not allowed in classrooms at this time, PDG Community leads should consider using other observation modalities, including [remote-live observations](#) and [video-recorded observations](#).
- Programs with internal staff who are reliable in CLASS, should use their own staff members to conduct local CLASS observations.

2. If a classroom is scheduled for a local observation, but has to quarantine for a period of time, or has to close temporarily, will they still be required to complete a local CLASS observation?

- Yes, classrooms that are closed temporarily should have their CLASS observation rescheduled. It is an expectation that all classrooms are observed and it is important to provide supportive feedback to all educators who are participating in VQB5.
- If the local CLASS observation is scheduled when a classroom is in quarantine or the program is temporarily closed, PDG Community leaders will make every effort to reschedule the observation within the designated fall and/or spring observation windows once the quarantine period is over, or when the program reopens.

3. How are CLASS scores impacted when children and teachers in classrooms are wearing masks and using social distancing?

- Local observers should use the following dimension and indicator level guidance provided by Teachstone when conducting local CLASS observations during COVID.
 - [PreK COVID in-person observation guidance](#)
 - [Toddler COVID in-person observation guidance](#)
 - [Infant COVID in-person observation guidance](#)

If you have additional questions about VQB5's local CLASS observation procedures, please contact Kris Meyers - kris.meyers@doe.virginia.gov