



Health, Human & Veterans Services

Public Health Advisory – Public, Non-Public, and Boarding Schools August 17, 2021

A school environment that supports in-person learning and provides public health protections for students, staff, and visitors is an objective the Wayne County Health Department (WCHD) shares with parents/guardians and educators. Based upon current new cases and vaccination rates in Wayne County, the WCHD strongly recommends all K-12 schools adopt COVID-19 mitigation plans that include prevention strategies outlined below.

Consistent with recent guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), K-12 schools should implement multi-prong prevention and mitigation protocols that include the following:

1. **Consistent and Proper Mask Use** – This strategy includes universal face mask wearing for students, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. Wearing a properly fitted face covering is a prevention strategy promoted by the CDC, MDHHS, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Moreover, immunocompromised children *and* adults are at a higher risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 in an environment without universal masking. Thus, a universal indoor masking protocol is a key measure to protect immunocompromised children and adults. See links below for more information:

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/147/4/e2020048090.full.pdf>

<https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/early/2021/05/11/peds.2021-052336.full.pdf>

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/COVID-19_Guidance_for_Operating_Schools_Safely_728838_7.pdf

2. **Social Distancing** – This strategy requires physical distancing of at least three (3) feet between individuals. When this protocol is implemented, then no self-quarantine is required in the K-12 school setting when an individual is identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case and the following exists:
 - a. The close contact remains asymptomatic; and,
 - b. The exposure occurred only in the classroom while both the COVID-19 positive case and close contact were masked and maintained at least three feet of distance between them. See link below for more information.

[Promising Strategies for Encouraging COVID-19 Protective Behaviors, Including Mask Wearing and Physical Distancing, Identified in New Guidance | National Academies](#)

3. **Ventilation** – A proper ventilation strategy helps reduce the number of virus particles in the air and can reduce transmission risk. The following measures can be taken to increase ventilation indoors:
 - a) Open windows
 - b) Open windows and place a box fan(s) in the window(s) or in a place where ventilation will be enhanced
 - c) Use a dedicated exhaust fan
 - d) Use a portable air filter
 - e) Upgrade the HVAC system that is already being used

NOTE: Window air conditioners should not be used since most units do not use outside air.

Below is a link to a summary of ventilation guidelines: <https://covid.ri.gov/covid-19-prevention/indoor-air-circulation?language=en>

4. **Promote COVID-19 Vaccination** – National data shows that more than 90 percent of the new COVID-19 cases are among unvaccinated or not yet fully vaccinated persons. All staff and students 12 years and older should get vaccinated to protect themselves and others from illness. The WCHD will work with all school districts to provide COVID-19 vaccinations for eligible students and staff.

Additionally, the CDC recommends a third dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech for persons aged 12 years and older, and Moderna for persons aged 18 years and older) for certain immunocompromised individuals after an initial 2-dose primary series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine has been received. Thus, the WCHD strongly recommends immunocompromised students and staff seek advice from a medical provider about whether they should receive a third dose of a 2-dose Pfizer BioNTech or Moderna vaccine.

5. **Symptom monitoring, getting tested and staying home when sick** – School mitigation plans should require staff and students (regardless of vaccination status) to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms including fever (temperature of 100.4 Fahrenheit or above), new cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, or onset of chills and muscle aches. When an individual is experiencing symptoms, they should get tested for COVID-19, and if they test positive do not report to school and follow the self-quarantine instructions below.

Self-Quarantine for a School Setting

An individual who has been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, and thus is potentially exposed to the virus, must self-quarantine for ten (10) days. However, if the individual is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms after ten (10) days they must continue to quarantine until they are completely free of COVID-19 symptoms.

Exception to Self-Quarantine Requirement

No self-quarantine period is required for a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case in the school setting **when an individual is and remains asymptomatic** and one of the following applies:

1. Within the past five (5) months the close contact had a positive, confirmatory COVID (PCR) test;
OR
2. Fourteen (14) days have passed since the close contact was vaccinated with the second dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or one dose of a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine; **OR**

3. The potential exposure to COVID-19 occurred in a classroom while both the positive COVID-19 case and close contact were masked, and they maintained at least three (3) feet of physical distance between them.

This exception to self-quarantine does not apply if a close contact starts to experience COVID-19 symptoms.

The WCHD continues to closely monitor COVID-19 data points, and it will issue further guidance for school settings, if warranted.

Additional Resources

For MDHHS Guidance for operating schools safely during COVID-19:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/COVID-19_Guidance_for_Operating_Schools_Safely_728838_7.pdf

For MDHHS self-quarantine information:

www.michigan.gov/containcovid

For CDC Guidance for School Settings:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Issued today, the 17th day of August 2021 by:

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