

2021-2022 COVID-19 School Guidance

Updated June 29, 2021



HEALTH
Department

*This document was created by Allegan County Health Department to provide recommendations for mitigation strategies and procedures for quarantine in the school setting. **Future modifications to this document are expected for the 2021-2022 school year as CDC release updated guidance within the coming months.** ACHD school recommendations align with MDHHS recommendations and current CDC recommendations. The purpose of this guidance is to protect students, teachers, and staff, and maintain in-person learning.*

If there is outbreaks or ongoing spread in the future, local health orders or exclusions may be implemented.

- For questions, please contact ACHD School Liaison Emily Warren at EWarren@ALLEGANCOUNTY.org

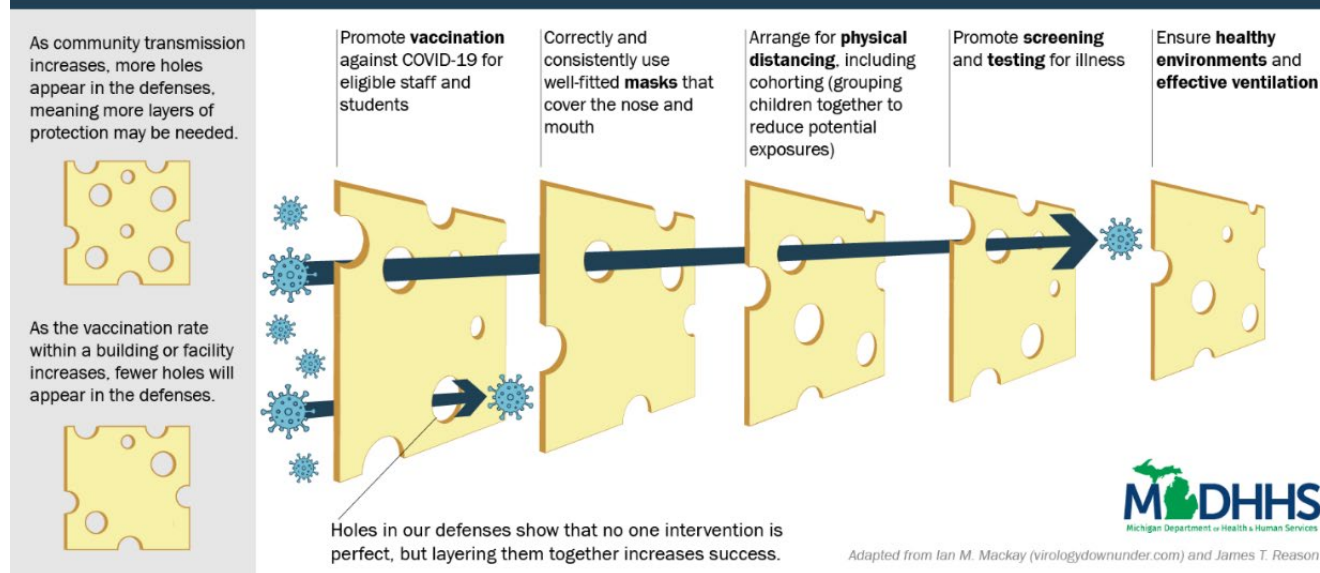
Legal disclaimer: *The contents of this document are made available to you for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal, financial or medical advice on any matter. This material may not reflect the most current COVID-19 developments and is subject to revision. In no event will Allegan County Health Department (ACHD) be liable for any decisions made or action taken in relation upon the information provided through this document.*

Mitigation Strategies

Schools can layer multiple prevention strategies developed by the CDC to prevent transmission within school buildings, reduce disruptions to in-person learning, and help protect the people who are not fully vaccinated, which currently includes all children under the age of 12 years. All prevention strategies provide some level of protection, and layered strategies implemented at the same time provide the greatest level of protection.

Layers of Defense Against COVID-19 in Schools

CDC recommended prevention strategies can be layered in different ways – the number and intensity of the layers can increase if community transmission increases



Key Prevention Strategies in schools include:

1. **Promoting Vaccination** against COVID-19 for [eligible staff and students](#)
2. **Face Masks:** Correctly and consistently using [well-fitted masks](#) that cover the nose and mouth. **There is a current [Federal Mask Requirement](#) for everyone to wear masks on school transportation.**
 - a. [Masks should be worn:](#)
 - i. By unvaccinated people aged 2 years and older (if fully vaccinated, they do not have to wear a mask)
 - ii. Any time you are in a public setting (grocery stores, concerts, and other events where large amounts of people are present)
 - iii. [Any time you are traveling](#) on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations
 - b. If masks are optional, it is encouraged to put steps in place to prevent bullying
 - c. If kids are outdoors and there are no outbreaks or ongoing spread in a building, masks do not have to be worn
3. **Social Distancing:** [Physical distancing](#), including cohorting children together to reduce potential exposures.
4. **COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing**
 - a. Encouraging students and staff to stay home if sick or having [COVID-19 symptoms](#)
 - b. Encouraging students and staff to get tested for COVID-19 if having symptoms or if they are not fully vaccinated and are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19
 - c. Conducting [screening](#) testing
 - d. Implementing [contact tracing](#) and quarantine, collaborating with the local health department
5. **Maintaining Healthy Environments**
 - a. Promoting [handwashing](#) and covering coughs and sneezes
 - b. Routine [cleaning](#) to help maintain healthy facilities
 - c. Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities (e.g., engaging in outdoor activities when possible and increasing [ventilation](#) for indoor activities)
6. More information for schools can be found at [Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19 | CDC](#) and [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention | CDC](#).
7. **Strict Mitigation** is defined as:
 - Screening K-12 school staff for COVID-19. School staff or students that report or have symptoms stay home.
 - [Cleaning](#) and promoting hand hygiene
 - Universal use of face masks for **unvaccinated individuals** in all classroom and non-classroom [settings](#), including hallways, school offices, restrooms, gyms, auditoriums, etc.
 - Physical distancing maximized to the greatest extent possible.
 - At least 3 feet apart in elementary schools.
 - At least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission for middle school and high schools. In areas of high community transmission, middle and high schools should be at least 6 feet apart.

Note: Schools and camps should consider using expanded testing for sports and extracurricular activities that present an increased risk of COVID-19 transmission. Testing can be used in combination with other prevention strategies to identify cases and reduce the risk of further transmission.

How to Assess Risk

The more COVID-19 in the community, the greater risk the school may face an outbreak and students may miss in-person learning time. Therefore, the number and intensity of prevention strategies can be adjusted based on the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community where the school is located. Prevention strategies can allow in person learning to be maintained, even during high levels of transmission in the surrounding community. The most current transmission levels for each county in the United States is available in the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#) (as is the percent of the population that is fully vaccinated). Consider the bi-weekly School Building Reports to assess risk level of buildings. ACHD will continue to provide bi-weekly school data reports.

ACHD will continue to work with schools for additional guidance on mitigation strategies if there is an outbreak in a facility.

Staff and Student Out-of-Classroom Exposure Quarantine

ACHD is currently recommending the 10-day reduced quarantine strategy.

Traceforce will call close contacts to monitor for development of symptoms for the duration of their quarantine period. Contacts are encouraged to self-monitor and call their local health department if they develop symptoms on days 11-14. Close contacts are required to quarantine for 10 days with the following exceptions:

- **Individuals who are fully vaccinated are not required to quarantine** (i.e., over two weeks have passed from receipt of the second dose in a two-dose vaccine series, or from receipt of a single-dose vaccine) **if they have remained asymptomatic since their last exposure to COVID-19.** (Immunocompromised people need to consult their healthcare provider about these recommendations, even if fully vaccinated.)
- Individuals previously diagnosed with COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they:
 - 1) have recovered from COVID-19 within the previous three months, measured from the date of symptom onset (or, if asymptomatic, the date of the first positive test); and
 - 2) are currently asymptomatic

Classroom Exposure Quarantine

Students identified as close contacts with exposure distance within 3 feet (i.e.<3 ft.) **must** quarantine in accordance with ACHD guidance above.

Students identified as close contacts in the classroom with exposure distance of at least 3 feet (i.e., between 3 and 6 feet) can follow the steps below in place of the traditional quarantine procedure if strict mitigation measures were in place:

1. Schools conduct contact tracing and report the close contacts to ACHD. Schools indicate on SharePoint that exposure was between 3 and 6 feet.
2. Parents/guardians are notified that students were identified as a close contact of at least 3 feet.
3. A modified quarantine letter is sent to the close contact.
4. **Students can attend school but must adhere to masking, social distancing, and avoidance of gatherings outside of school strictly for 10-days post exposure. Students should not participate in sports, extracurricular activities, or activities that require face cover removal without social distancing during this period.**
5. Students wear a mask; stay at least 6 feet from others.
6. Parents/guardians agree to cooperate with contact tracing efforts while monitoring symptoms for 14 days after exposure.
7. If students feel ill or develop symptoms of COVID-19, they should isolate at home and get tested for COVID-19.

Please Note:

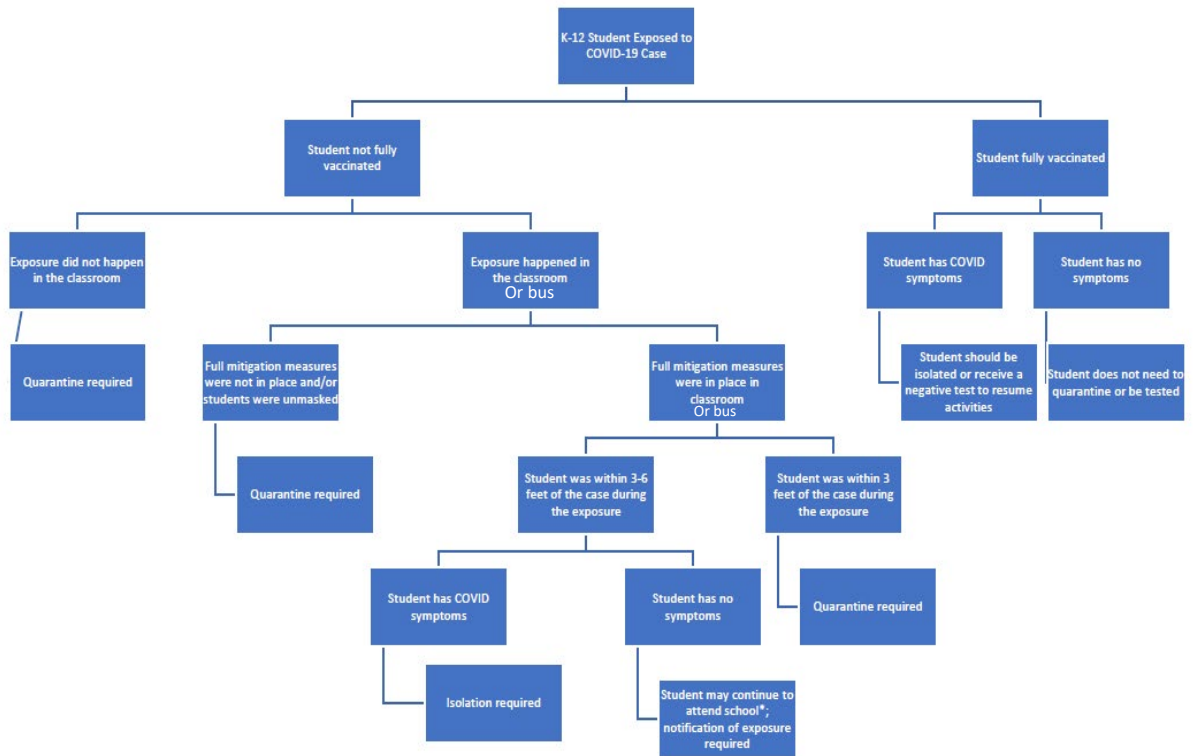
These modified measures for determining quarantine after exposures **apply to the classroom and buses** (there may be exceptions in other areas, such as the cafeteria, high-risk classes such as PE, band, choir, or during extracurricular activities, etc.) and **where strict mitigation measures are implemented and enforced**. Please see above for strict mitigation definition.

If any additional cases develop in the classroom or if ACHD identifies ongoing transmission in the building, ACHD may determine traditional quarantine is necessary to mitigate spread.

If ACHD or the school is unable to determine that the exposure occurred only in the classroom, the student would enter quarantine.

This option for modified quarantine does NOT apply to teachers or other school employees. These individuals are required to adhere to the general population quarantine guidelines.

Algorithm for assessing quarantine options based on K-12 student exposure.



*** Students can attend school but must adhere to masking, social distancing, and avoidance of gatherings outside of school strictly for 10-days post exposure. Student should not participate in sports, extracurricular activities, or activities that require face cover removal without social distancing during this period.**