

2021-2022 COVID-19 School Guidance

Updated August 10, 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 may be made based on state and federal recommendations.** ACHD school recommendations align with [MDHHS recommendations](#) and [CDC recommendations](#). The purpose of this guidance is to protect students, teachers, and staff, and maintain in-person learning.*

Local health orders or exclusions may be implemented based on, but not limited to risk factors described below.

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

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What is Legally Required and What is Recommended to Keep Your Schools Healthy	
Requirements (like seatbelts)	Public Health Recommendations* (like motorcycle helmets)
Masking for all on buses per CDC Order**	Encourage or require COVID-19 vaccination
Report suspected and confirmed COVID-19 (and all other reportable diseases, outbreaks, unusual occurrences) to the health department as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R. 325.173(9)	Universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status
Post COVID-19 case counts on your website as per MDHHS Epidemic Order, Reporting of Confirmed and Probable Cases of COVID-19 at Schools	Physical distancing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between unvaccinated students: at least 3 ft. if masking, 6 ft. if not masking • Between unvaccinated staff or unvaccinated staff/student: 6 ft.
Keep employees sick with or exposed to COVID-19 home as required by Public Act 339	Screening testing at least weekly in staff, and in students as in Table 1 in the CDC Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools
Exclude children ill with communicable illness (such as COVID-19) from school as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R 325.175 (2) :	Ensure proper ventilation
Assist LHD with contact tracing as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R. 325.174(2)	Encourage proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette
	Regular cleaning and disinfection
	Exclude non-employee close contacts from all school grounds and activities during quarantine (employees required to be excluded per PA 339)
*Recommendations per the CDC, MDHHS, and ACHD **Certain people with disabilities who, because of their disability, cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, are exempted from CDC's mask-wearing requirement.	

Why should you do what is *recommended*?

Under the Revised School Code, public schools have a responsibility to provide “for the safety and welfare of pupils while at school or a school sponsored activity or while *en route* to or from school or a school sponsored activity” ([MCL 380.11a](#)).”

Why you should do what is *required*?

For individuals who do not report as required, or who impede public health in its duty to implement and enforce laws to protect the public’s health, these sections from the Michigan Public Health Code apply:

[333.1291 Obstruction of person enforcing health law](#)

A person shall not willfully oppose or obstruct a department representative, health officer, or any other person charged with enforcement of a health law in the performance of that person’s legal duty to enforce that law.

[333.1299 Violation as misdemeanor; prosecution](#)

- (1) A person who violates a provision of this code for which a penalty is not otherwise provided is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- (2) A prosecuting attorney having jurisdiction and the attorney general knowing of a violation of this code, a rule promulgated under this code, or a local health department regulation the violation of which is punishable by a criminal penalty may prosecute the violator.

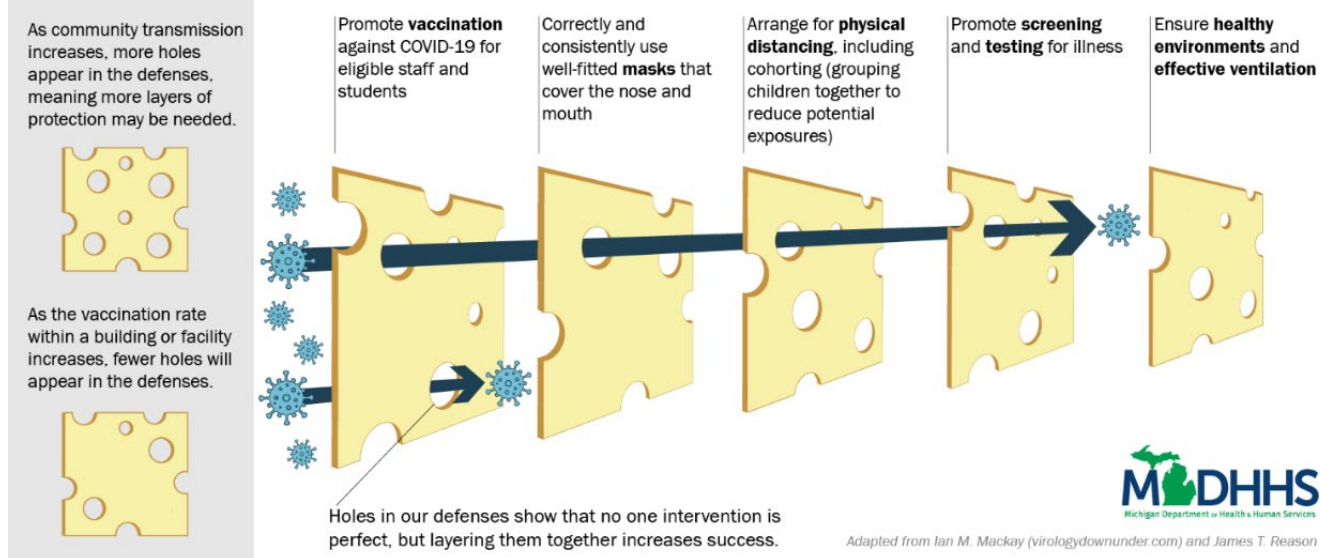
Furthermore, teachers and administrators are [certified](#) in Michigan. Certain criminal convictions may result in denial, suspension, or revocation of the certificate by the State Superintendent [[MCL 380.1535a](#)].

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](#)¹ for everyone to wear masks on school transportation.**
 - a. CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to schools, regardless of vaccination status. This prevention strategy is crucial to allowing students to maintain in-person learning.
 - b. CDC has recommendations for [proper use of masks](#).
 - c. If masks are optional, it is encouraged to put in place steps to prevent bullying
 - d. 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

¹ Certain people with disabilities who, because of their disability, cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, are exempted from CDC's mask-wearing requirement. See Disability Exemptions of the Order section from the [CDC Order](#)
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- c. Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities (e.g., engaging in outdoor activities when possible and increasing [ventilation](#) for indoor activities)
- More information for schools can be found at CDC's [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
- **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 **all 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 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.

Metrics 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.

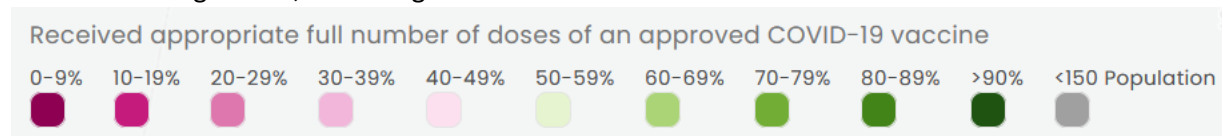
ACHD will look at the following data points to support school superintendents and administrators in making informed and educated decisions that are best for school operations, students and staff. ACHD will also use these data points when considering local public health orders. These metrics will be included in the bi-weekly School Data Reports send to school superintendents for assessing risk level of buildings.

- CDC's [Levels of Community Transmission](#), defined below. The MI Start Map has different levels set up compared to CDC. Use the [CDC Risk Level Calculator](#) to see level of community transmission based off of data from <http://mistartmap.info>
 - **Risk Factors to Consider:** Community transmission level is considered substantial or high.

Indicator - If the two indicators suggest different transmission levels, the higher level is selected	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days	0-9.99	10-49.99	50-99.99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs ¹ that are positive during the past 7 days	0-4.99%	5-7.99%	8-9.99%	≥10.0%

- **Vaccine Coverage Rate**, based on school level coverage (staff and students) or census tract level coverage. ACHD will use an internal dashboard for this data.
 - **Risk Factors to Consider:** Coverage in School Aged and Community for the Census Tract where school district is located is low.

Vaccine Coverage Rates, low to high



- **Morbidity/mortality rate**, especially in school age children
 - **Risk Factors to Consider:** (1) Deaths and hospitalizations in county above threshold, (2) increase in fully vaccinated individuals hospitalized/is virus becoming vaccine resistant), (3) 18 and under death and hospitalization rates, (4) Long COVID prevalence impacts long term morbidity
- **A new variant present and is vaccine resistant**
 - **Risk Factors to Consider:** (1) vaccine efficacy is low against dominant variants present, (2) an increase in breakthrough cases overall and identified variant, (3) Higher morbidity and mortality in individuals fully vaccinated
- **Outbreaks in school building present:** an [outbreak](#) is defined as two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff with onsets within a 14-day period, who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing.
- **Ongoing spread happening in a school building:** ongoing spread defined as multiple cases (3 or more) among students or staff with onsets within a 14 - day period, who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing

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 quarantine²** (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/Bus 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 or on the bus 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:

² Per [CDC Guidance on Fully Vaccinated Individuals](#), “if you’ve had [close contact](#) with someone who has COVID-19, you should get tested 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don’t have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative. You should isolate for 10 days if your test result is positive.”

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.

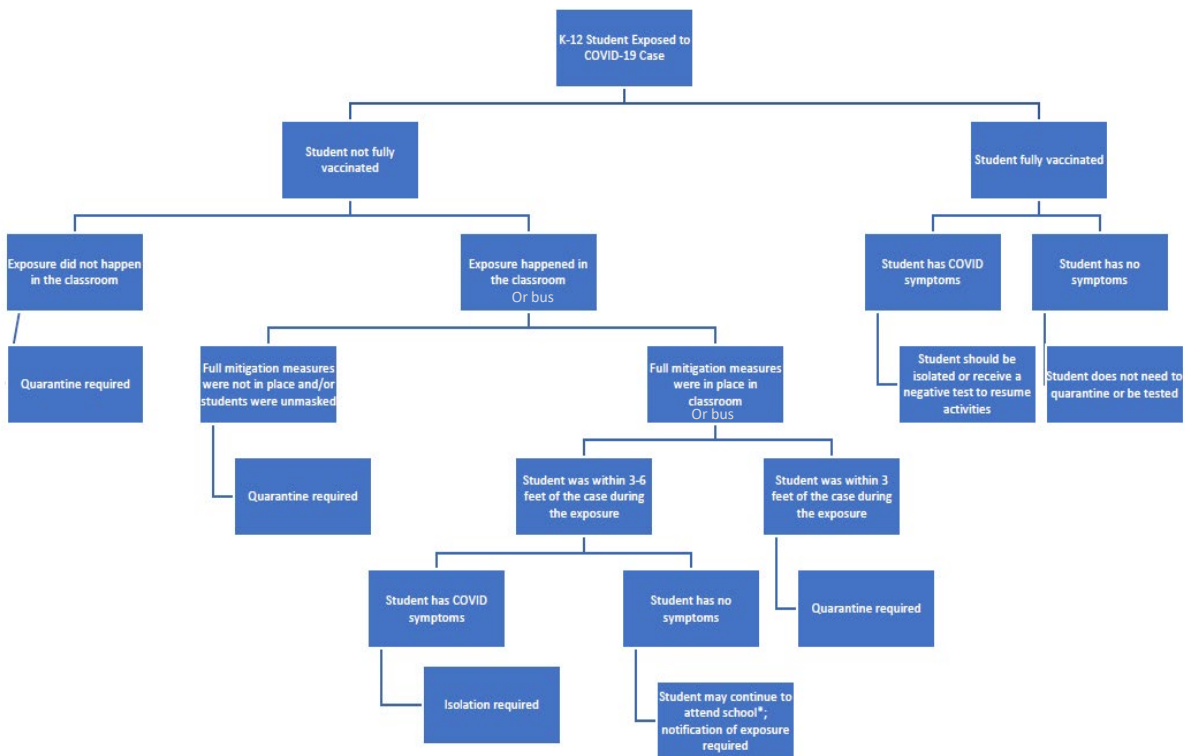
*If universal masking is not a requirement in school, those who were wearing masks while identified as a close contact will qualify for modified quarantine measures.

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.**

Updates:

8/10/2021 – added risk factors to consider for local public health orders, box for legal requirements and recommendations in schools, added note on testing for fully vaccinated individuals regarding quarantine,