

2021-2022 COVID-19 School Guidance

Updated August 26, 2022



HEALTH
Department

This document was created by Allegan County Health Department (ACHD) to provide recommendations for mitigation strategies and procedures for exposures and quarantine in the school setting. **Future modifications to this document may be made based on state and federal recommendations.** ACHD aligns with [CDC recommendations](#) (last updated August 11, 2022). The purpose of this guidance is to protect students, teachers, and staff, and to maintain in-person learning. [MDHHS K-12 Opening guidance](#) should be considered in addition to the ACHD guidance.

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.

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.

What is Legally Required and What is Recommended to Keep Your Schools Healthy	
Requirements (like seatbelts)	Public Health Recommendations* (like motorcycle helmets)
Provide “for the safety and welfare of pupils while at school or a school sponsored activity or while in route to or from school, or a school sponsored activity,” as specified under the Revised School Code, MCL 380.11a(3)(b).	Encourage COVID-19 vaccinations and booster shots
Report suspected and confirmed COVID-19 cases (and all other reportable diseases, outbreaks, unusual occurrences) to the health department as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R. 325.173(9)	Recommend and make masking accessible for staff, students, and visitors who may be immunocompromised and/or have risk factors for increased illness from COVID-19.
Exclude children ill with communicable illness (such as COVID-19) from school as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R 325.175 (2)	Mask recommendations are as follows for each COVID-19 Community level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional at a low Community level • Those who are at high-risk for severe illness should wear a mask if their healthcare provider advises doing so at a medium Community Level • Staff and students should wear masks while indoors and on buses at a high Community level
Follow COVID-19 Employment Rights as defined under Michigan Public Act 238 of 2020 .	Testing recommendations for each COVID-19 Community level are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All levels - Ensure access to testing through point-of-care and at-home tests for staff and students • Medium and High – implement testing strategies for people who are exposed to COVID-19
Assist LHD with contact tracing as specified under Michigan Administrative Code R. 325.174(2)	Ensure proper ventilation
	Encourage proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette
	Regular cleaning and disinfection
	Support student access to COVID-19 testing through participation in the MI Backpack Program and other MI Safe Schools testing resources.
*Recommendations per the CDC, MDHHS, and ACHD	

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.

Mitigation Strategies

Schools can layer multiple prevention strategies developed by the CDC to prevent transmission within school buildings, and reduce disruptions to in-person learning. All prevention strategies provide some level of protection, and layered strategies implemented at the same time provide the greatest level of protection.

ACHD recommends that all individuals, regardless of vaccination status, should wear a mask during isolation and quarantine periods. [Making personal decisions](#) about mask use in certain settings is an important tool in mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Individuals, who feel sick, may be at high risk of infection, or who feel better protected when masked should choose to wear a mask to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Key Prevention Strategies in schools include:

1. **Promoting Vaccination** against COVID-19 for [eligible staff and students](#)
2. **Face Masks:** Staff and students may choose to mask at any time. It is recommended staff and students wear a mask when:
 - a. They have an exposure with someone who tested positive.
 - b. They have tested positive and are returning to school during the remaining 5 days of isolation (see Isolation Guidance).
 - c. They are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19.
3. **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 have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
 - c. Conducting [screening](#) testing for high-risk activities or if there is an outbreak
 - i. High-risk activities include: close contact sports, band, choir, theater); during key times in the year, for example before/after large events (such as prom, tournaments, group

travel); and when returning from breaks (such as, holidays, spring break, at the beginning of the school year).

- d. Help with contact tracing in partnership with the local health department.

MI Backpack Program: MDHHS has some at-home tests that will be available to schools through the MI Backpack Home Test program. The [MI Backpack Home Test Pilot Program](#) is a voluntary program offered by MDHHS for Michigan K-12 students, educators, staff, and their families who want an extra layer of protection against COVID-19. School districts can indicate their interest in participating in this program by completing [this survey](#).

Free At-home Testing Kits: Free at-home test kits are available for order from the United States Postal Service (USPS). Households can place up to three separate orders that will provide 4 test kits per order. Families can be directed to <https://www.covid.gov/tests/> or to call [1-800-232-0233](tel:1-800-232-0233) (TTY [1-888-720-7489](tel:1-888-720-7489)) to order their free at-home test kits.

4. 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)
 - i. Use CDC's [Interactive Ventilation Tool](#)

More information for schools can be found at CDC's [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

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 COVID-19 community levels.

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.

- Use the [COVID-19 Community Level by County Tool](#) to stay up-to-date on ACHD's COVID-19 Community Level. Levels can be low, medium, or high and are determined by looking at hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area. The COVID-19 community level is determined by the higher of the new admissions and inpatient beds metrics, based on the current level of new cases per 100,000 population in the past 7 days.

COVID-19 Community Levels – Use the Highest Level that Applies to Your Community				
New COVID-19 Cases Per 100,000 people in the past 7 days	Indicators	Low	Medium	High
Fewer than 200	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	<10.0	10.0-19.9	≥20.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	<10.0%	10.0-14.9%	≥15.0%
200 or more	New COVID-19 admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	NA	<10.0	≥10.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	NA	<10.0%	≥10.0%

- **Vaccine Coverage Rate**, based on school level coverage (staff and students) or census tract level coverage. Schools can now access this information through MCIR.
 - **Risk Factors to Consider:** Coverage in School Aged and Community for the Census Tract where school district is located is low.
- **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
- **Clusters in school building present:** A school associated cluster is defined as multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff within a specified core group **OR** at least three (3) within a specified core group meeting criteria for a school-associated COVID-19 case; with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other, **AND NO** likely known epidemiologic link to a case outside of the school setting.
- **Outbreaks in a school building present:** Multiple cases comprising at least 10% of students, teachers, or staff, within a specified core group **OR** at least three (3) cases within a specified core group meeting criteria for a probable or confirmed school-associated COVID-19 case with symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other; who were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting (i.e. household) outside of the school setting; **AND** epidemiologically linked in the school setting or a school-sanctioned extracurricular activity.

Staff and Student Exposures

ACHD will provide potential exposure letters for COVID-19, similar to other communicable disease letters. ACHD is focusing on minimizing severe disease, limiting the strain on the healthcare system, and enabling those at highest risk to protect themselves against infection and severe disease. Potential exposure letters will be given to individuals based on classroom and bus lists provided by schools. **Quarantine might be required if there is an identified outbreak or ongoing spread in the facility, despite low Community Level conditions.**

Recommendations regarding masking and quarantine may change as conditions evolve or Allegan County moves to a different COVID-19 Community Level. During future surges, additional access to testing resources, vaccination clinics, and therapeutic treatment may be made available as the situation warrants.

Staff and Student Isolation and Exposure Guidance

ACHD continues to prioritize in school learning for students.

- You **isolate** when you are already infected with COVID-19 and have tested positive, even if you do not have symptoms. Isolation is used to separate people who are infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected.

Isolation Guidance:

Students, teachers & staff who test positive for COVID-19 and/or display COVID-19 symptoms should isolate regardless of vaccination status:

- Stay home and isolate for 5 days; and
- If asymptomatic, monitor for symptoms for days 0 – 10 and isolate for days 0-5 (day “0” is day symptoms begin or day test was taken for those without symptoms); and
- If symptoms have improved or no symptoms developed, return to school, while wearing a well-fitted mask, for days 6 -10 (5 additional days); or
- Stay home for days 0 - 10 if unwilling/unable to wear a mask.

(If you have a fever, stay home until you are fever free for a period of 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications.)

Exposure Guidance:

ACHD is following the current COVID-19 exposure guidance recommendations; this guidance may change if COVID-19 cases and/or hospitalizations rise.

- During days 1-10 following exposure:
 - Watch for symptoms, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Wear a high-quality mask around others indoors for 10 days.
 - Test 5 days after exposure. If symptoms develop, test immediately and isolate until receiving test results. If they test positive, then follow isolation recommendations.
 - For the full 10 days after last exposure, avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease, and nursing homes and other high-risk settings

Allegan County School Exposure Guidance

All students exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status or previous infection, are recommended to:

Watch for symptoms for 10 days



Wear a high quality mask around others indoors for 10 days



Test 5 days after exposure (or sooner if you develop symptoms)



"Day 0" is the day of the student's last contact with someone who has COVID-19.

If a student develops symptoms, they should isolate. Refer to our "How to Handle Symptoms" flow chart.



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For more information, see our [2022-2023 COVID-19 School Guidance](#)

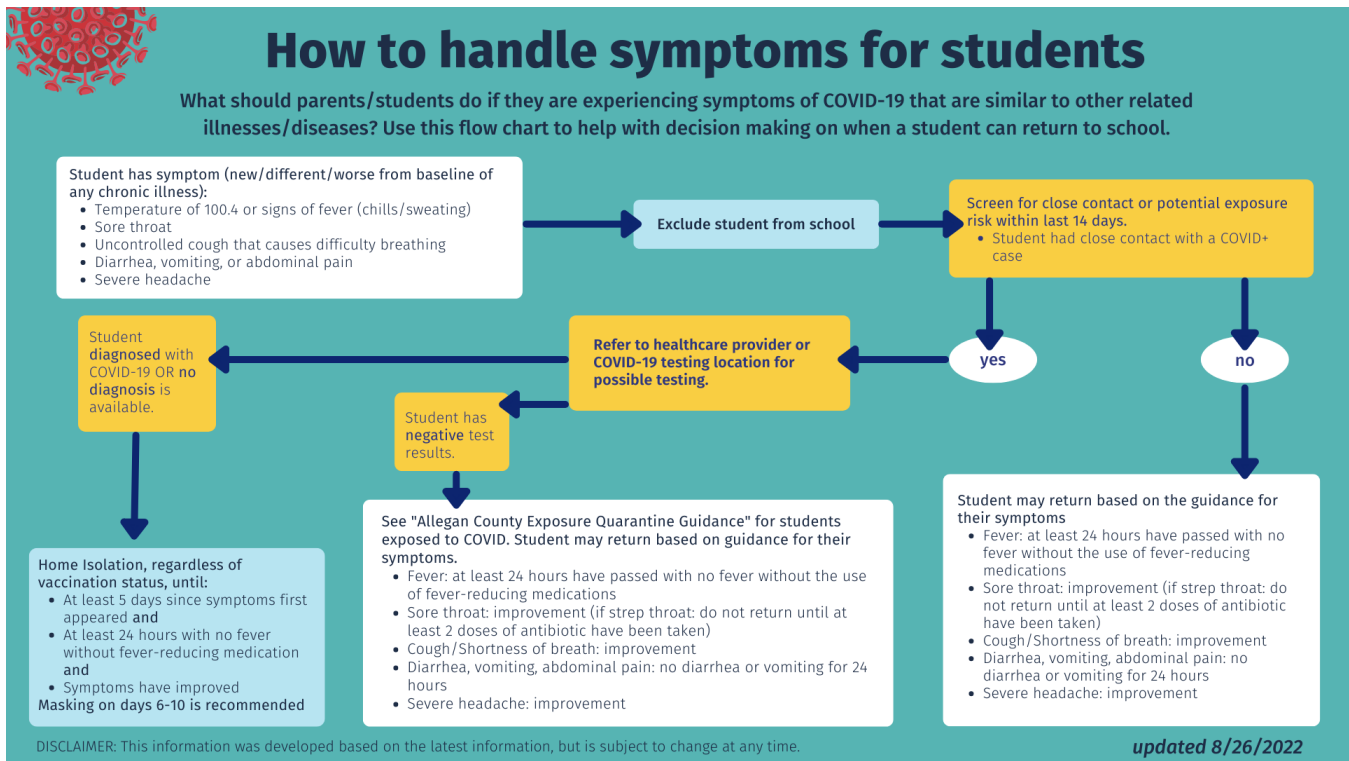
updated 8/26/2022

How to Handle Students with Symptoms

Any individual that displays **COVID-19 symptoms**, regardless of vaccination status, should isolate and be tested for COVID-19. Please use the flow chart below to determine when the individual can return to school. For additional guidance, please refer to the MDHHS "[Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#)" handbook.

STAY HOME: GENERAL ILLNESS	CAN RETURN TO SCHOOL WHEN
Fever of 100.4° F or above	Fever has ended for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication such as acetaminophen (i.e., Tylenol) or ibuprofen (i.e., Motrin, Advil).
Vomiting (defined as vomiting two or more times within one day)	Vomiting has ended for at least 24 hours and child can hold down food and water (OR a healthcare provider has determined their vomiting is not infectious). If they were diagnosed with norovirus, then should be 2 days (48 hours) without vomiting.
Diarrhea (defined as two loose bowel movements in one day)	Diarrhea has ended for at least 24 hours (OR a healthcare provider has determined it is not infectious). If they were diagnosed with norovirus, then should be 2 days (48 hours) without diarrhea.
Rash	Any rash with fever should be checked by a health care provider. They can return once rash has a diagnosis and known to not be contagious, is being treated, or has healed.
Skin sores (if weeping or draining)	Can return if covered with a waterproof dressing and drainage is contained.
Impetigo, lice, ringworm, or scabies	After receiving at least one dose of proper treatment.
Fifth Disease	Child does not need to stay home if they feel well.
Hand, foot, and mouth disease	As long as none of the blisters on hands are draining or the drainage is contained, they can go to school.
Impetigo	After receiving at least one dose of treatment. Cover the lesions if possible.
Influenza	Fever has ended for at least 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medication.
Mononucleosis	Return when able to tolerate school activity; no sports until cleared by healthcare provider.
MRSA	Keep area covered and drainage contained, otherwise does not need to stay home.

Pink Eye	Child does not need to stay home if they feel well.
Strep throat/Scarlet Fever	At least 12 hours after the start of antibiotic treatment.



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,

8/24/2021 – Added ACHD K-6 Mask Requirement

9/22/2021 – Updated outbreak definition, added cluster definition, updated quarantine guidance section

12/29/2021 – Updated quarantine guidance section

1/12/2022 – Added updated quarantine guidance graphics and quarantine guidance section

03/04/2022 – Added and updated COVID-19 guidance and graphics surrounding the CDC's Community Level framework released 2/25/2022

3/18/2022 – Added information on MDHHS updated school guidance

08/17/2022 – Updated document and graphics to reflect updated CDC COVID-19 recommendations, removed "Layers of Defense in Schools" graphic from MDHHS.

08/26/2022 – Updated exposure graphics