

Guidance for Parents of Children in K-12 Schools

This guidance is dated 7/30/2021, and is subject to change at any time based on new recommendations or guidance from MDHHS, CDC, and new scientific findings regarding COVID-19.

What is our recommendation to schools in Barry and Eaton counties from BEDHD?

BEDHD recommends that schools follow the COVID-19 recommendations from [MDHHS](#) and [CDC](#). These involve a layered approach of prevention strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission to students, staff, and the greater community. Local school districts, in consultation with local public health, should select preventive strategies based on an ongoing assessment of 1) [the current level of community transmission of COVID-19](#), 2) the current level of in-school transmission of COVID-19, and 3) the capacity of the school's facilities, staff, and resources.

These prevention strategies are:



Staying home when sick



Promoting Vaccination

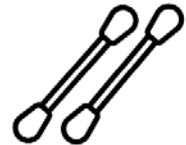


Consistent & Correct Mask Use

(The CDC now recommends universal masking for students, staff, and visitors in K-12 settings regardless of vaccination status)



Physical Distancing/
Cohorting



Screening & Testing
(3-5 days post-exposure, regardless of vaccination status)



Ventilation



Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette



Contact tracing paired with isolation & quarantine



Cleaning & Disinfecting

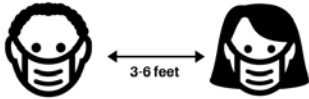
School-based prevention strategies may change throughout the school year, particularly as COVID-19 transmission changes, vaccinations become available to younger persons, or we learn more about the disease.

BEDHD consults with each school to interpret current data on COVID-19 cases, local trends and outbreaks, and provide guidance on response to outbreaks in school settings. BEDHD encourages schools to prioritize in-person instruction while implementing as many preventive measures as possible to reduce transmission.

Some preventive measures are required for schools. There is a CDC [order](#) for face coverings on school bus transportation. Case notification to the local health department and contact tracing is required by the [Michigan Public Health Code](#). Schools should continue to follow their infectious disease policies, such as requiring students and staff to stay home when sick.

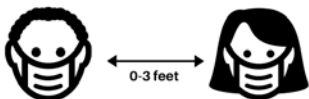
Students who are exposed to COVID-19 in bus or classroom where cases and contacts were wearing masks:

3-6 Feet Distance from Case for 15 or more minutes:



- School notifies parents/guardians of the student meeting the close contact definition.
- Schools report these close contacts to BEDHD
- Parents/Guardians monitor the student for symptoms.
- BEDHD monitors these students for 14 days after the exposure.
- These students may continue to attend school.
- Students continue to follow social distancing requirements and wear face masks.
- If symptoms of COVID-19 develop, they should isolate at home.

3 feet or less distance from Case for 15 or more minutes:



- Students should quarantine for 10 days from their exposure to COVID-19. Students in quarantine should not attend in-person school or other in-person activities in order to protect others.
- A 7 day quarantine plus a negative COVID-19 test option can be utilized for students exposed in the classroom or on the bus.
- The COVID-19 test option must be a PCR Test, collected no sooner than 5 days after exposure date.

If the close contact is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, they do not need to quarantine but should be tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after exposure, with or without symptoms.

Students who were exposed to COVID-19 when cases or contacts were NOT wearing masks covering nose and mouth:

Close contacts within 6 feet of case for 15 or more minutes:



- Students should quarantine for 10 days from their exposure to COVID-19. Students in quarantine should not attend in-person school or other in-person activities in order to protect others.
- School notifies parents/guardians of the student meeting the close contact definition.
- Schools reports these close contacts to BEDHD.
- Parents/Guardians monitor the student for symptoms.
- BEDHD monitors these students for 14 days after the exposure.

If the close contact is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, they do not need to quarantine but should be tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after exposure, with or without symptoms.



What can families do to minimize the risk of COVID-19 in 2021-2022 for their children?

1. Get everyone aged 12 and older in your family vaccinated. Vaccination is the safest way to build immunity to COVID-19, and it's more long-lasting than immunity through infection¹. Children aged 11 and under who cannot yet be vaccinated whose parents and older siblings are vaccinated are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 at home.
2. When vaccines are authorized for children ages 11 and younger, get them vaccinated.
3. While at school, children, teens, and adults ages 2 and older should wear a mask. Masks are required for those riding school buses, both public and private. While some schools may make masks optional in the classroom, BEDHD recommends that all individuals use a mask indoors at school to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 transmission. This is particularly important with the more transmissible Delta variant present in our communities, which is likely to be on the rise when school begins. This is regardless of vaccination status.
4. Teach and reinforce handwashing with your children. Discuss the importance of respecting other people's mask-wearing decisions with your children, and discourage bullying or teasing others.
5. Keep your children home from in-person instruction if they have symptoms of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19. Get children tested for COVID-19 if they have symptoms or were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Individuals exposed to COVID-19 should be tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after exposure, regardless of vaccination status. If your child is exposed to someone with COVID-19, and the health department recommends that they quarantine, keep them home as much as possible.
6. Answer the phone or text when contacted by the health department. It's critical that we gather information from you about your child's exposure or exposures to help protect others.
7. Know that mask use as well as being vaccinated will reduce the likelihood that your child will be determined to be a close contact and need to quarantine. When everyone is wearing a mask, quarantine is only needed for those within 3 feet of the other students; otherwise a 6-foot rule applies. If your student is vaccinated, they do not need to quarantine.
8. If community transmission of COVID-19 is substantial to high², consider reducing the number of public places and events with large, indoor crowds that children attend outside of school hours. This would be things like movie theaters, concerts, etc. Wear masks when indoors, regardless of vaccination status, when community transmission of COVID-19 is substantial to high.
9. Support and participate in the preventive measures enacted by local schools, such as disease screening forms, routine testing (if offered), cleaning, and cohorting.

Resources:

[CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker](#)

[Michigan MI Safe Start Map](#)

¹ <https://directorsblog.nih.gov/2021/06/22/how-immunity-generated-from-covid-19-vaccines-differs-from-an-infection/>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html#footnote-1a>