

COVID-19 DOH Guidelines for Schools Dated 8/5/22

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COVID-19: Where Are We Now?

- Drop in positive cases over the past few weeks, however only about 14-15% of positive cases are being reported due to home test under-reporting to Local Health Jurisdiction.
- Omicron BA.5 makes up 90% of all infections at this time.
- Omicron BA.5 is the most transmissible variant thus far.
- Vaccination rates are rather low in the age group 5-11 years. Rates improve as you go up in age.

Required Strategies to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

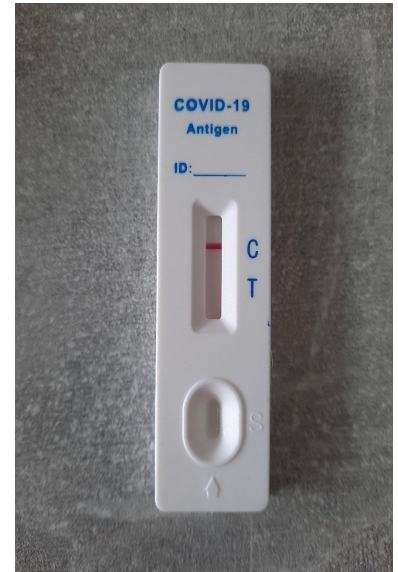
- **Employee Vaccinations-** All employees, volunteers and indoor contractors in educational settings are **REQUIRED** to be fully vaccinated or have a medical or religious exemption per Governor's proclamation 21-14.3.



- **Stay Home When Sick-** Students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 are **REQUIRED** to stay home and should get tested.
 - If symptoms develop while at school the individual will be isolated and sent home immediately.

Required Strategies to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

- **Access to Diagnostic Testing-** K-12 schools are REQUIRED to ensure access to timely diagnostic testing for students and staff with symptoms or who were potentially exposed and want to test.
- **Notifying groups or individuals of potential exposures-** Schools are REQUIRED to have a process in place to inform students, families and staff when there are cases and outbreaks in school.



Recommended Strategies to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

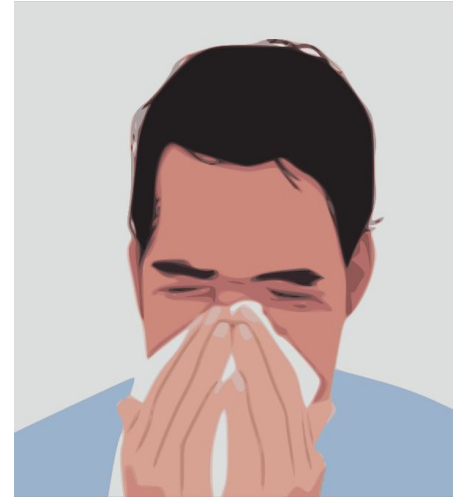
- **Promoting Vaccinations-** Vaccination is the most effective strategy to protect vaccine-eligible children and adults from severe disease, including hospitalization and death , due to COVID-19 illness.



- **Masks-** When the COVID-19 community level is high, the CDC recommends universal indoor masking in schools. The Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) will determine this as needed.

Recommended Strategies to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

- **Hand Washing and Respiratory Etiquette**
 - Encourage frequent handwashing
 - Respiratory etiquette includes: 1) covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing 2) Throwing tissues in the trash 3) Coughing and sneezing into your elbow NOT your hands when you do not have a tissue 4) WASH HANDS



Recommended Strategies to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in Schools

- **Ventilation**
- **Cleaning-** Frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces like door knobs, faucet handles, check in counters and restrooms.



Monitoring and Testing After Exposure

DOH no longer requires exposed students and staff to quarantine. To protect the school community, students and staff, regardless of vaccination status, who are potentially exposed to COVID-19 should:

- Monitor for symptoms AND
- Test as soon as possible after exposure and then repeat testing every 24-48 hours through at least the first 5 days after exposure



At Home Isolation Protocol - Returning to School

An individual, student or staff, who tests positive for COVID-19 is REQUIRED to follow these isolation guidelines:

- Isolate at home, regardless of vaccination status, for a full 5 days (Day 0 is the first day of symptoms).
- After 5 full days if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms have significantly improved AND have had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication the individual may return to school WEARING A WELL FITTED MASK on DAYS 6-10.
- All positive COVID-19 cases are REQUIRED to be reported to the Local Health Jurisdiction.

Outbreaks

All cases in schools that meet the criteria below are **required** to be reported to the Local Health Jurisdiction as a suspected outbreak of COVID-19 WAC 246-101.

- At least 3 cases within a specified group meeting criteria for a COVID-19 case from a positive viral test **OR**
- Multiple COVID-19 cases from positive viral tests comprising at least 10% of students, teachers or staff within a specific group **AND**
- Cases have a symptom onset or positive test result within 14 days of each other.
- Seating charts should be kept in all classes and in the cafeteria. If there is an outbreak, the health department will request these charts.



Our #1 goal in all of this is to prevent an outbreak and keep students in school with in-person learning.