

Interim Recommendations for Operating Schools Safely When There Is COVID-19 Community Transmission

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

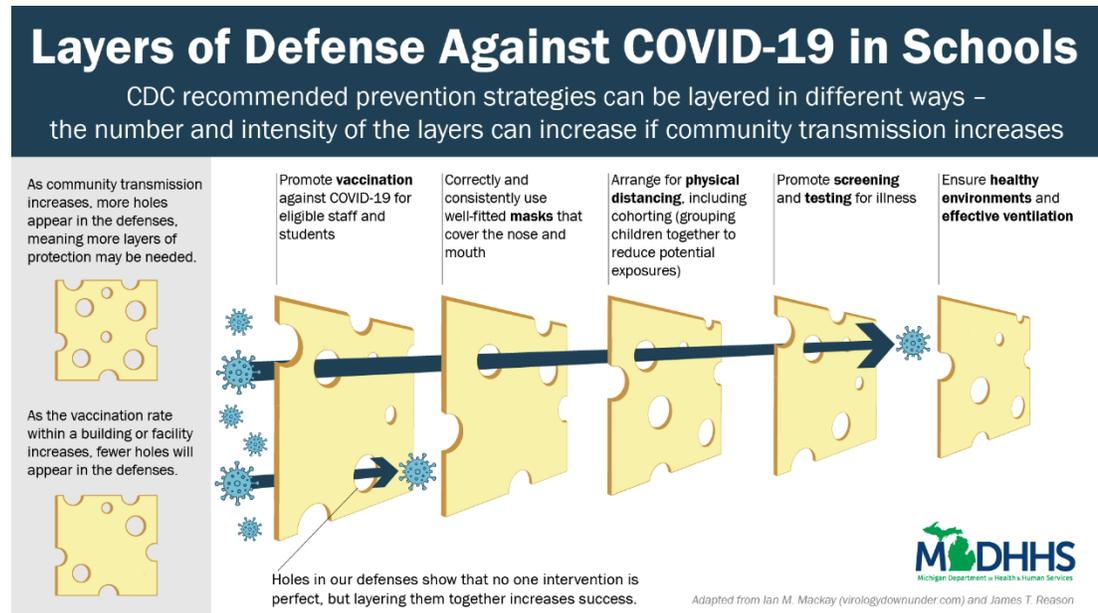
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Schools provide safe, supportive learning environments for students and employ teachers and other staff. Schools also provide critical services including school meal programs and social, physical, behavioral, and mental health services.

Vaccination has proven incredibly effective and, as of June 22, COVID-19 transmission in Michigan is at the lowest point in a year. However, the school environment brings together large groups of individuals who may not yet be fully vaccinated. Schools should consider mitigation measures now to serve children in summer programming and be prepared for the return of people to indoor settings in the fall. The main goal of mitigation measures is to protect students, teachers, and staff, and maintain in-person learning.

While these recommendations are specific to schools, they are relevant for other sites that serve children—including child care and after school providers.

Schools can layer multiple [prevention](#) strategies developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (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.



View [Layers of Defense Against COVID-19 in Schools](#) online

CDC PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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. CDC recommendations for [when to wear a mask in school settings](#).
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)

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).

Local health departments will work with schools for additional guidance on mitigation strategies if there is an [outbreak](#) in a facility. Some communities may have additional public health requirements as directed by the local health department.