

Updated COVID-19 Protocols



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2021-2022**

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KEY MITIGATIONS FOR SCHOOLS *(including extracurricular activities)*

These practices are important to not only guard against COVID-19, but also the spread of other infections such as the flu and the common cold.

The most effective mitigation strategy is the vaccination for those eligible to receive it.



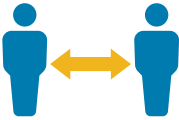
Cleaning and disinfecting



Hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette



Evaluate large gatherings outside of classroom/core groups



Social distancing



Face coverings at county board discretion



Contact tracing dependent on mask requirements

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH.

West Virginia Bureau for Public Health Legislative Rule 64 CSR7-3: Reportable Diseases, Events, Conditions



The ultimate goal is to protect our students and staff and prioritize in-person learning. Given the quick spread of the Omicron variant and its rapid clinical course, it has made contact tracing in schools impractical when combined with the newly reduced timelines for quarantine and isolation set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- » Vaccination and universal mask usage are critical components to ensuring a safe school environment. A universal mask policy requires masks during all indoor activities.
- » Staff members are considered fully vaccinated if their primary series is within the last 6 months or they have received the booster. To allow time for students to catch up with the latest recommendations and to minimize disruption to in-person learning, students ages 5-17 are considered fully vaccinated if they have had the primary series meaning booster is not required.
- » CDC recommends a universal indoor mask policy for all students (ages 2 years and older), teachers, staff, and visitors regardless of vaccination status.
- » At a minimum, universal mask policy should apply when community transmission is high or substantial as defined by CDC: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>.
- » Recent studies have shown that schools without a universal indoor mask policy were 3.5 times more likely to have COVID-19 outbreaks and pediatric cases rates were smaller in US counties when a universal mask policy was in place.
- » Rapid tests and home testing are options for meeting testing requirements.
- » Local health departments will no longer provide return-to-school letters.

When student or staff tests positive for COVID-19

- » Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19, should stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others.
- » Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or positive test if asymptomatic.
- » Students and staff may return to school if they:
 - Stayed home and isolated for at least 5 full days
 - Fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications)
 - Symptoms are improving
 - Individuals who were severely ill or immunocompromised should stay home and isolate for 10 days.

- » Students and staff should take precautions when returning to school after completing their 5-day isolation. This includes wearing a well fitted mask for 10 full days (days 6-10) inside the school. If a mask is unable to be worn, they should continue to isolate and remain at home for 10 days.
- » Youth should not be allowed to participate in unmasked extracurricular activities while in isolation and potentially infectious. Schools may consider allowing youth to participate in unmasked extracurricular activities during days 6-10 if they obtain a negative antigen test on day 5 or later.

When student or staff is exposed to COVID-19 in a county/school with a universal mask policy

- » Schools may **discontinue contact tracing** when layered prevention strategies are in place, which includes a **universal mask policy**.
 - Close contacts regardless of vaccination status may continue in-person learning if they remain asymptomatic.
 - With a universal mask policy, contact tracing would no longer be required for times when students are not wearing masking such as during lunch, gym, or during extracurricular activities.
 - Parents and guardians should be notified when a positive case is reported in the classroom/ school so they may monitor their child for signs and symptoms.
 - Students and staff should stay home and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19.
 - It is recommended that schools not conducting contact tracing consider implementing a screening program for unmasked extracurricular activities that prioritizes safe play. Weekly screening testing is recommended for participating youth when community transmission is high or substantial as defined by CDC.

When student or staff is exposed to COVID-19 in a county/school without a universal mask policy

- » Schools **continuing universal contact tracing** may implement a **test-to-stay strategy**.
 - Recommends testing the unvaccinated student or staff on the date the student or staff has been identified as a close contact and again 5 days after exposure.
 - After testing negative individual may continue in-person learning if the student or staff remains asymptomatic and continue the testing recommendation.
 - A well fitted mask should be worn always following an exposure to someone with COVID-19 through day 10 in the school.
 - The test to stay strategy allows for youth to continue to participate in unmasked extracurricular activities (days 0-10).

Case Reporting and Considerations for School Closure

Starting January 24, 2022, schools will report in aggregate the number of positive staff and students for the prior week (Sunday to Saturday) to an online portal: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/EpiInfoWebSurvey/Home/3fe5c197-32b3-4057-99d5-30e7426ccd0c>. This will allow for a more robust tracking of COVID-19 cases and will measure the true burden COVID-19 has on our school system by measuring the percent positivity.

Schools may consider closing for a five-day period to slow transmission, in consultation with the local health department, based on one of the thresholds:

- School is unable to maintain a safe school environment due to the number of staff out with COVID.
- School COVID-19 percent positivity exceeds 20% on the weekly report.

Five-day closures do require all extra-curricular events to be cancelled/postponed. However, schools needing to close for a day or two due to staffing, may conduct extra-curricular events based on their county-level policies.

VACCINATION INFORMATION

Health officials are administering the Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines in West Virginia to help protect against COVID-19. Vaccines are important to:

- » Protect population against virus spread and additional variants;
- » Reduce deaths and hospitalizations; and
- » Maintain critical services and acute care.

Both Moderna and Pfizer require two rounds of vaccinations while the Johnson & Johnson is a single dose.

Vaccinated adults (18 and older) must be within 6 months of the primary series or had a booster to be considered fully vaccinated.

Vaccine Second Dose Administration:



21 days



28 days



2nd dose not required

For complete vaccine information provided by the DHHR, visit <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Vaccine.aspx> or contact the COVID-19 Vaccine Info Line at 1-833-734-0965 with questions. If a school or county wishes to host vaccine clinics, please contact Michele Blatt at mlblatt@k12.wv.us.



W. Clayton Burch
West Virginia Superintendent of Schools

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