**Public Health Guidance 2022-2023**

*Please* ***read and follow*** *the guidance provided in “*[*Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools*](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder2/Folder88/Folder1/Folder188/Managing_CD_in_Schools_FINAL.PDF?rev=e7997871809e4caabd00a2e9775de82f&hash=3D9B05511FA7F3AF2A4AA31849C233F0)*” by the Michigan Board of Education (MBE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).*

*Another EXCELLENT resource which includes education sheets, sample forms, and letters is Aronson, S., Shope, T.* [*Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*](https://www.amazon.com/Managing-Infectious-Diseases-Child-Schools/dp/161002348X)*. Vol 5th edition. American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020*

At this time, it is recommended the management of COVID-19 transition from a pandemic emergency response model toward a more standard approach used in the management and control of other respiratory viral diseases, such as influenza. Seasonal variations in COVID-19, as well as the appearance of more virulent or contagious variants may cause modification in this approach. However, for the time being, in the preK-12 school setting, the focus should be on basic illness prevention and detecting and responding to in-school clusters of cases, ongoing transmission in the school, and outbreaks. Management will rely less on things like case investigation, contact tracing, and quarantining of students or staff following school exposures.

Important strategies for COVID-19 and other illness prevention should include:

* Recommending COVID-19 vaccination, including staying up to date on all recommended booster doses when appropriate, to all eligible students and staff.
* Recommending seasonal influenza vaccination and other routine vaccinations.
	+ Free school-based curricula are available for all grade levels to educate about the immune system and how it works, diseases and their causes, and vaccines and the science behind them. Go to <https://vaccinemakers.org/lessons>.
* Supporting students, staff, and families who choose to continue to wear a mask even if not required or specifically recommended.
* Following isolation guidance for students and staff who have been diagnosed with or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

**Request Information from Parents and Staff Regarding Illnesses**

Keep some form of line list of all students and staff that are ill, documenting either the diagnosis given by a healthcare provider or their symptoms. Watch for patterns that might suggest a cluster or outbreak. Refer to the document *School Line List* Excel file or create your own tool.

To better assist with your reporting, supply guidance to parents/guardians about illness reporting. Put a message on your absentee line voice message asking parents/guardians to please include the illness (if known) and who diagnosed it OR a detailed description of symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, fever, rash, or sore throat when reporting their child’s absence.

**Require Sick Students and Staff to Stay Home**

Share resources with the school community to help staff and families understand when to stay home. The [*When to Keep Your Child Home*](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-and-child-care/Pages/when-to-keep-your-child-home-from-child-care.aspx) guidance from the American Academy of Pediatrics can be helpful.

See Appendix 1 for exclusion times for some of the more common illnesses.

A handout for parents is available (see *Parent Illness Guide*)

* When a student or staff return to school after COVID-19 isolation, they should mask for days 6-10 and socially distance as much as possible.
* Continue to recommend that parents and staff report any cases of illness to the school, then report illnesses to the local health department as required by the public health code.

**Report Appropriate Information to the Local Health Department (LHD)**

Michigan Law requires schools and childcare centers to report [specific diseases](https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder2/Folder97/Folder1/Folder197/Reportable_Diseases_Michigan_by_Condition.pdf?rev=5fafabad0e4d49779e4fa8edb398a7ba) according to Act No. 368 of the Public Acts of 1978. Any [reportable disease](https://www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mdhhs/Folder2/Folder97/Folder1/Folder197/Reportable_Diseases_Michigan_by_Condition.pdf?rev=5fafabad0e4d49779e4fa8edb398a7ba) that is suspected or known to have occurred in the school or a school-sanctioned activity, including chicken pox, COVID-19, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, *Haemophilus influenzae* Type B, meningitis, encephalitis, hepatitis, tuberculosis, or any other serious or unusual communicable disease must be reported within 24 hours.Any unusual occurrence, outbreak or epidemic of *any* disease or condition must also be reported within 24 hours. The following information needs to be reported:

* + Name of the disease.
	+ Student demographic information including full name, date of birth, grade, classroom, street address along with zip code, name of parent/guardian, and phone number(s).
	+ The date the student was first absent.
	+ The individual who identified the disease (e.g., healthcare provider, parent/guardian, etc.).

**Watch Closely for Signs of Illness Clusters or Outbreaks**

* An outbreak of an illness happens in a school, early childhood education center (ECE), or daycare center when more students and staff are out sick than expected.
* An influenza-like illness outbreak is when a school or ECE building is experiencing influenza-like illnesses among students and staff that are above a level at which would be expected at that time of year.
* A gastrointestinal illness outbreaks is when a school or ECE building is experiencing gastrointestinal illnesses among students and staff that are above a level at which would be expected at that time of year. The sudden onset of vomiting and/or diarrhea in several students or staff may also suggest an outbreak is occurring.
* A COVID-19 outbreak should be suspected when a school building is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases among students and staff that are above a level at which would be expected.
* Consult with the health department if you suspect a developing illness cluster or outbreak.
* Monitoring for increases in absenteeism, patterns in cases, or other signs of clusters, in-school spread, or outbreaks. (Refer to *School Line List* document to monitor illnesses)

**Be prepared to support students, families, and educators during illness and closures**

* Consider plans for continued learning for students (remote instruction) during times of isolation or quarantine.

**Have a communication plan**

* Supply timely and accurate notification to parents, guardians, and school staff when an exposure from a communicable disease has taken place in a school setting.
* See the *Communication Tools* for assistance