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Rock County Public Health Department
COVID-19 School Guidance
2021-2022 School Year

In light of recent changes made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on July 9, 2021, and July 27, 2021, the Rock County Public Health Department (RCPHD) wants to share current COVID-19 recommendations for schools in Rock County. Full details for the updated CDC *Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools* are available here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>.

The goal of the CDC guidance is to make in-person education a priority for the 2021-2022 academic year. In-person education is supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and local health departments. This goal is now easier to attain compared to a year ago due to several factors including a better understanding of COVID-19, increasing community vaccination rates, and the anticipation of COVID-19 vaccine for children under 12 years of age.

The CDC recognizes that each community may have different COVID-19 vaccination rates and community transmission trends. This year will be important to continue to utilize strategies for the prevention of COVID-19 infection, however, one strategy may not be best for all.

School district administrators and school boards will be able to monitor in their buildings:

- Community transmission
- Vaccination rates
- Communicability of variants
- Illness and absenteeism tracking data

Monitoring these systems and choosing prevention layers that reflect a community's current COVID-19 trends will allow school leaders and school boards to create flexible policies that support in-person learning in a manner that keeps students and staff safe during an ongoing pandemic.

The most notable CDC guidance updates are listed below along with a list of prevention strategies.

- **The AAP and the CDC recommend masks to be worn indoors by all vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in a school setting.**
 - Masks continue to provide reduced viral transmission and provide protection to the wearer and those around them. This strategy will remain important when highly contagious variants are present in the community.

- **Physical distance of at least three (3) feet is recommended in schools.** When it is difficult to maintain physical distance of at least three feet, it is especially important to layer other prevention strategies (as outlined below).

- **The definition of a close contact in the school setting has been updated to include someone who has been within three (3) feet of an infected person for more than 15 minutes.**
 - **Close contact definition:** Someone who was within six (6) feet of an infected person (lab-confirmed or clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. *This definition has not changed outside of a school setting.*
 - **Exception in K-12 indoor classroom setting.** The close contact definition excludes students who were within three to six (3-6) feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) wore well-fitting masks the entire time. ***Exception does not apply to teachers, staff, and other adults in the indoor classroom setting.***
 - **Quarantine of close contacts is a necessary and important public health prevention strategy to control disease.** Quarantine is routinely employed for other vaccine-preventable diseases (i.e., measles, mumps, and tuberculosis).
 - Individuals identified as close contacts (see definition above) who are not fully vaccinated will be expected to quarantine for 7 days (with testing & no symptoms) or 10 days (without testing & no symptoms); quarantined individuals must be excluded from in-person classes and activities.
 - **Asymptomatic close contacts who are fully vaccinated** will not need to quarantine.
 - Fully vaccinated people with a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 should be tested 3 -5 days after exposure and should wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after last exposure or until receiving a negative test result.
 - Quarantine of close contacts is an expectation ([WI Statute 252](#)) and not a recommendation. Schools should continue to collaborate with the RCPHD, to the extent allowed by privacy laws, to assist in this process.

This includes:

- Notifying the RCPHD of any identified staff, students, and teachers that have tested positive with COVID-19 as soon as it is known.
- Notifying the RCPHD of any staff, students, and teachers that have been identified as or may be a close contact to a positive case at a school or school event within the same day or as soon as possible.

- Ensuring staff, students, and teachers are properly excluded as expected by the RCPHD and [WI Statute 252](#).
- **Multiple “layers of protection” are still recommended in school settings.**
 - Multiple layers of protection should be implemented together in school settings including surveillance, testing, ventilation, handwashing and hygiene, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing with isolation and quarantine, and cleaning and disinfection. Multiple layers will provide greater protection in breaking transmission chains than implementing a single strategy. When considering to remove any layers of protection, remove them one at a time and monitor for changes in infection rates or illness activity.
 - When community transmission is moderate to high, using fewer layers of prevention will result in a higher risk of spread of COVID-19. A community with high vaccination rates and low community transmission may be able to utilize fewer layers of prevention and have less risk of person-to-person transmission within a school building.
- **Strategies for Sports and Extracurricular Activities**
 - Close contact sports and indoor sports or activities including band, choir, theater, and school clubs are particularly risky.
 - If symptomatic, refrain from all activities and get tested.
 - Continue to wear masks, especially indoors or with close contact.
 - Consider using screening testing for student-athletes and students involved in other risky activities.

Layers of Prevention: [To find current transmission levels see CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#)

Strategies	Low Community Transmission/ Moderate to High Vaccination Rates	Moderate Community Transmission/ Low to Moderate Vaccination Rates	Substantial Community Transmission/ Low to Moderate Vaccination Rates	High Community Transmission/ Low to Moderate Vaccination Rates
Vaccine Promotion Continue to promote COVID-19 vaccine as the most effective prevention strategy.	Consider using some layers of prevention to prevent transmission.	Consider using multiple layers of prevention.	Use as many layers of prevention as possible to minimize transmission.	
Mask Use	CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.			
Contact Tracing, Quarantine & Isolation	Expected per State Statute (WI Statute 252). Follow new guidelines for close contacts in a school setting.			
Distance Don't exclude people from in-person learning to maximize distance.	Continue monitoring systems for increase in COVID-19 activity or other communicable diseases and add layers of prevention as needed.	CDC recommends schools maintain at least three (3) feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing to reduce transmission risk. In the absence of space, consider equitably cohorting and adding as many layers of prevention as possible.		
Testing	Test when symptomatic.	Follow CDC screening testing recommendations.		
Ventilation High quality ventilation will be helpful for prevention of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases	Follow CDC recommendations. Use ventilation systems to the fullest capabilities. If ventilation system is not up to recommended standards, risk of person-to-person transmission could increase.			
Cleaning and/or Disinfection	In general, cleaning once a day is usually enough to sufficiently remove potential virus that may be on surfaces. If a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, clean AND disinfect the space. For further guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, see CDC guidance: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html			
Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette	Recommended for control of many communicable diseases.	Increase reminders for hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.		
Illness Policy	Teachers, staff, and students will be monitored daily for symptoms of illness by parent or self. Those exhibiting symptoms of illness are expected to stay home, get tested for COVID-19 and follow appropriate steps before returning to school.			

Updated 8/3/21

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