LENAWEE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

COVID-19 School and Childcare Guidance 2023-2024

Tools Schools Can Use

In general, reducing COVID transmission in schools includes five strategies.

- Staying home while sick
- COVID vaccination
- Masking
- Increasing ventilation
- Cleaning
- Testing

Staying home while sick: Students and staff who feel sick should stay home and away from others as much as possible. **For COVID cases, exclude from school for 5 days after symptom onset AND until symptoms have improved and individual is fever-free for at least 24 hours.** Mask use is strongly recommended for days 6-10. The CDC isolation and exposure calculator can help determine dates for isolation and masking. (For other illnesses, follow Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) guidance, particularly the table on pp. 10-14).

Vaccinations: Stay up-to-date on all recommended COVID and other vaccinations. Please visit the CDC website for information about when you are due for a vaccine. A new COVID vaccine booster is expected to come out in September 2023, and we will be recommending that everyone who is eligible get that booster along with an annual flu vaccine.

Masking: For those who are able (e.g., excluding children under 2 and certain children with conditions that make it difficult to mask), masking is strongly recommended when:
1. Days 6-10 after COVID infection
2. Student or staff is a household or personal/social contact of a positive case,
3. During outbreaks/clusters, and
4. During periods of high hospital admission levels. COVID hospital admission levels (low, moderate, high) are defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and are updated late in the day on Thursdays.

Choose a multilayer surgical, KN95, or N95 mask rather than a cloth mask.

Universal masking is strongly recommended when hospital admission levels are high. Schools should support anyone who wants to mask for any reason even when levels are low or moderate.

Policies for use of masks in school nurse offices should follow recommendations outlined in the Infection Control: Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) guidance. Recommendations for masking in nurses' offices may depend on factors such as COVID hospital admission level, outbreak status, and patient access.

In-school ventilation: Good ventilation, including the use of windows but also improved building ventilation systems, can decrease transmission. Read more here. And here is a one-page summary. MDHHS has a free program for schools to improve ventilation.

Cleaning: Thorough cleaning at least once a day, with higher-risk areas and surfaces cleaned and disinfected can enhance mitigation strategies if local COVID or other illness transmission is worsening. (See Table One)

Table One: Difference Between Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting	
Task	**Purpose**
Clean	To remove dirt and debris by scrubbing and washing with a detergent solution and rinsing with water. The friction of cleaning removes most germs and exposes any remaining germs to the effects of a sanitizer or disinfectant used later.
Sanitize	To reduce germs on inanimate surfaces.
Disinfect	To destroy or inactivate most germs on any inanimate object.

Testing: Lenawee County has issued a Standing Order to allow schools to continue to test on location using rapid antigen tests. Schools can also use "backpack" testing to send tests home. Use of home and in-school testing can quickly identify cases and reduce spread to keep students and staff safer. Schools can order tests through the MDHHS School District Antigen Test Ordering Form. This form can be used by public school districts, and private/parochial schools.

Positive school-administered antigen test results must be reported to MDHHS via the antigen testing results portal. Results from backpack or home tests are not required to be reported.

The FDA recommends repeat, or serial, testing following a negative antigen test result. The best practice is to use multiple tests over a certain time period, such as 2-3 days. If performing serial antigen testing, wait 24-48 hours between tests. If it is only possible to test once, that is preferable to not testing at all.

Support from the Health Department

The Lenawee County Health Department (LCHD) is available to help you with decision-making in complicated situations and in outbreak situations and, as needed, to navigate access to testing resources from MDHHS.

Expectations from Schools

Schools are expected to:
- Exclude student and staff COVID cases from school per state guidance. For COVID, exclude students and staff from school for 5 days after symptom onset AND until symptoms have improved and individual is fever-free for at least 24 hours. Mask use is recommended for days 6-10.
- Report outbreaks/clusters to LCHD.
- Report positive school administered antigen test results to MDHHS via the antigen testing results portal.
- Keep a list of absences for ALL illnesses, whether they are COVID, influenza, norovirus, strep throat, or other illnesses. LCHD may ask for information from it for outbreaks or other specific illnesses (e.g., pertussis). Primarily, this is a tool for the school to use to help identify outbreaks and when additional steps should be taken to contain illness. See below for what items the line list should include.
- Have a clearly defined policy of when masking is recommended or required.
- Have clear guidance on when families and staff will be notified about cases.
  - Families should understand that there will be occasional cases in the schools. Notification is not required for individual positive cases if there is no outbreak.

- o Schools should notify smaller groups (e.g., a sports team or a classroom) when there is an outbreak/cluster. Further notification is not necessary if additional cases are identified as part of the outbreak/cluster.
- For other communicable diseases:
    - o Exclude students and staff with other communicable diseases in accordance with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) guidance, particularly the table on p. 10-14.
    - o Report cases of other reportable communicable diseases (e.g. measles, pertussis) to LCHD using this secure online reporting form. These require immediate reporting by calling (517)264-5243 in addition to completing the communicable disease form. For a list of other reportable diseases, see the table on pp. 10-14 of the Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools guidance.

If we need information from your line list, we would expect you to have these items, at a minimum:
- Student or staff name
- Class/grade information
- Illness, if known; symptoms, if illness is not known (e.g., strep throat OR sore throat)
- Symptom onset date
- Who is reporting it (name/relationship, e.g., parent)
- Space for additional comments/notes (e.g., on football team)

Reporting Forms

- **Communicable disease reporting form**: This form should be used anytime you have a single case of any other communicable disease where reporting is required with even a single case (e.g., measles, pertussis). These require immediate reporting by calling (517)264-5243 in addition to completing the communicable disease form. For a list of reportable diseases, see the table on pp. 10-14 of the Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools guidance.

- **NEW THIS SCHOOL YEAR:** Daily aggregate counts (rather than individual cases) of COVID-19 are to be reported by schools and childcares to the Lenawee County Health Department using the online Communicable Disease Reporting site.

- **MDHHS** antigen testing results portal. This form should be used to report *positive school administered* antigen test results.

COVID-19 Outbreak Guidance: K-12 Settings

20%: If 20% of a group (classroom, sports team, etc.) is sick with COVID-19 symptoms within a seven-day period, whether or not the cases are known to be connected, report this to LCHD as an outbreak/cluster as soon as the school becomes aware of it via the Outbreak Reporting Form. Continue or begin masking if not already masked, especially indoors. Continue or begin testing. If not done at 10%, notification of the group is required at 20% (you do not need to keep re-notifying the group, once is enough).

30%: If 30% of a group (classroom, sports team, etc.) is sick with COVID-19 symptoms within a seven-day period, consider closing the classroom or group, or moving remote for three to five days. Consider asking students and staff to do three at-home rapid antigen tests during the closure period and at any time if symptoms develop. Testing can also be done at the school if the school has the capacity.

Outbreak Example:
- Over the weekend, 3 kids on a 20-person indoor sports team test positive (15%).

- Keep track of names on the school line list.
- Notify the sports team.
- Hand out "backpack tests and request the rest of the student-athletes, and coaches, do a home test the next morning.
- Consider masking.
- One more student tests positive (20%), so you report an outbreak to LCHD.
- Ask for another round of testing 1-2 days later.
- If nobody else tests positive, testing can stop five days after the last positive test; masking should go for 10 days.

COVID-19 Outbreak Guidance: Preschools and Childcares

20%: If 20% of a group (classroom or the whole school) is sick with COVID-19 symptoms within a seven-day period, report this to LCHD as an outbreak/cluster as soon as the school becomes aware this is an outbreak. Continue or begin masking if not already masked for ages 2+, especially indoors. Continue or begin testing.

30%: If 30% of the classroom tests positive within a seven-day period, consider closing the classroom for three days and then test for two more days (or, alternatively, close the classroom for five days).

Please reach out to LCHD staff for complicated situations or with questions.

Links and Resources
- CDC K-12 schools and childcare guidance
- MDHHS communicable disease guidance (see especially the table on pp. 10-14)
- LCHD COVID-19 webpage
- Communicable disease reporting form
- MDHHS antigen testing results portal