



K-12 COVID-19 Infection Prevention Guidance

Updated: August 16, 2021

LIVINGSTON COUNTY 
Health Department

Introduction

The intended audience for this guidance document is Livingston County public and private K-12 school superintendents, leaders, and administrators in order to supplement their in-person learning infection prevention protocol for the 2021-2022 school year. The overall goal of this document is to provide information for how to create and maintain a safe environment for in-person learning. This guidance may change throughout the school year based on the continually evolving SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. **This guidance document will be reviewed on a continual basis and updated as new information becomes available.**

Risk Assessment

In order for schools to make informed decisions about in-person learning, the Livingston County Health Department (LCHD) is responsible for informing K-12 public and private superintendents, leaders, and administrators about the following:

- The level of community transmission of COVID-19
- COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the community
- COVID-19 outbreaks or increasing trends in the school or surrounding community

Educational Setting Infection Prevention Recommendations

In order to prioritize safe in-person learning, LCHD recommends infection prevention strategies in line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidance for Educational Settings in K-12 schools (<https://bit.ly/3kqYibG>) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Recommendations for Safer School Operations during COVID-19 (<https://bit.ly/3xxTrIY>). LCHD emphasizes the importance of a layered infection prevention approach in order to best mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in the educational setting. LCHD recommends the following infection prevention strategies.

Vaccination

Achieving high rates of vaccination in the school community, including eligible teachers, staff, students, parents/guardians, and household members, is the most effective public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Individuals aged 12 years and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Eligible household members are additionally encouraged to be vaccinated in order to limit household transmission to students. Exposure data from the winter 2021 semester for K-12 public schools in Livingston County shows that a majority of middle and elementary students were exposed to COVID-19 at home from a household member, 32% and 27%, respectively. It is well known that the secondary attack rate of SARS-CoV-2 among household members is higher than that of other exposure settings ([Madewell et al., 2020](#)). It is therefore pertinent that all eligible individuals get vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to best protect students and the greater school community.

Vaccination coverage in Livingston County can be found on the LCHD Vaccine Dashboard (Coming soon!). Vaccination opportunities can be found on the LCHD COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling page (<https://bit.ly/2UXa7Mm>) or through VaccineFinder (vaccinefinder.org).

Mask Use

Consistent with MDHHS guidance (<https://bit.ly/3m26Y9s>), schools are recommended to adopt protocols to require universal masking for students, staff, and visitors, regardless of community



transmission rate or vaccination status. Additionally, based on CDC guidance (<https://bit.ly/3A8U79d>), consistent and correct mask use is recommended for all unvaccinated and vaccinated students, teachers, staff, and visitors when indoors. When an individual wears a mask consistently and correctly, they are protected and protect others from COVID-19. Masks remain one of the most effective and safe prevention measures against the spread of COVID-19, especially in settings with low vaccination rates and where there are individuals not yet eligible for vaccination ([Brooks and Butler 2021](#)). Per CDC Guidance (<https://bit.ly/3xBaERD>), schools are able to establish their own recommended and/or required guidance regarding infection prevention measures, including mask wearing.

CDC Order: Face Masks on Public Transportation

Pursuant to the CDC order issued on January 29, 2021 (<https://bit.ly/3g9VH2W>), all individuals on public transportation conveyances or on the premises of transportation hubs, including school buses, are required to wear a mask. This order applies to all individuals, regardless of vaccination status. This order does not apply to outdoor conveyances or transportation hubs; however, the CDC continues to recommend mask wearing for unvaccinated individuals in these outdoor settings. This order is not meant to cover people with disabilities for who, because of their disability cannot wear a mask or cannot safely wear a mask, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 42 U.S.C. 1210 *et seq.*) (<https://bit.ly/3yTDdeg>).

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing of at least 3 feet between students in classroom and bus settings is recommended. Because of the importance of in-person learning, schools where not everyone is fully vaccinated should implement physical distancing to the extent possible within their structures. Increasing distancing should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement.

When possible, students should be cohorted in order to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact with each other. This strategy is especially important when physical distancing is not able to be maintained in the school setting. Cohorting should not replace the use of other infection prevention measures. Per the U.S. Department of Education, cohorting should be performed in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking within the school.

Ventilation

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. Schools should continue to operate their current building ventilation systems and open windows and use child-safe fans in classrooms and on buses whenever safe and practicable. If schools are able, LCHD recommends that schools upgrade their ventilation systems.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Individuals should continue to practice handwashing and respiratory etiquette to keep from getting and spreading infectious illness including COVID-19. Schools should provide access to hygiene supplies including soap and water for handwashing and hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable.

Staying Home when Ill and Getting Tested

Staying home when ill with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent transmission to others. If a student, teacher, or staff member is ill with symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school or work and be referred to their primary care physician or trusted healthcare provider for diagnosis and treatment. Students, teachers, and staff who have pending results of a

COVID-19 test should self-isolate at home and not attend school or work. If a student becomes sick while at school, the school should follow the CDC Guidance (<https://bit.ly/36Kr2nR>) for managing the situation. COVID-19 testing resources for staff and students can be found on the LCHD COVID-19 homepage (<https://bit.ly/3kykgK3>).

Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine

Based on information in the MDHHS Managing Communicable Diseases in School guidance (<https://bit.ly/377Xctl>), COVID-19 is considered a reportable disease to the health department. Schools have an obligation to cooperate with public health investigations of cases and contacts identified within the student population per [R. 325.174\(2\)](#). LCHD expects all schools to cooperate with contact tracing to limit the spread of communicable disease in the school community. Schools are expected to create an internal process for contact tracing in consultation with LCHD school liaisons. Continued isolation and quarantine measures are required for staff and students. Isolation, quarantine, and contact tracing remain public health functions independent of epidemic or executive orders. LCHD will work with schools to ensure isolation and quarantine are maintained through similar contact tracing processes used for the 2020-2021 school year. The contact tracing process is subject to modification over the course of the school year in order to improve efficiency and decrease school and health department staff burden. LCHD is considering alternative strategies to quarantine at this time; additional information may follow regarding these strategies.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The risk of transmission of COVID-19 through fomites (surfaces) is low. Using a product identified on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency List N: Disinfectants for COVID-19 list (<https://bit.ly/3BcPPif>) to clean once daily is sufficient to remove potential virus on surfaces. When an infectious student is identified in the school building, school staff should clean and disinfect areas that the ill student occupied following the CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting (<https://bit.ly/36IFGfm>). Ensure safe and correct usage and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.

References

1. Madewell Z, Yang Y, et al., Household Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. JAMA [Internet] 2020; Available from: <http://doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.31756>
2. Brooks J and Butler J. Effectiveness of Mask Wearing to Control Community Spread of SARS-CoV-2. JAMA [Internet] 2021; Available from: <https://doi:10.1001/jama.2021.1505>