

Administrative Procedure - COVID-19 Prevention

This Procedure is intended to outline the District's health and safety prevention efforts in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic consistent with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's ("CDC") Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools and [Presidential Policy Directive 8](#), which defines preparedness around five mission areas: Prevention, Protection, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery.

Prevention Strategies

Promoting Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination among all eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and their respective household members is the most critical strategy to help schools safely maintain in-person learning.

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. A growing body of evidence suggests that people who have completed the primary series (and a booster when eligible) are at substantially reduced risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 compared with unvaccinated people.

When infections occur among vaccinated people, they tend to be milder than among those who are unvaccinated. Even vaccinated people who are infected can be infectious and can spread the virus to others. To reduce the risk of becoming infected with SARS-CoV-2 and spreading the virus to others, students, teachers, and school staff should continue to use layered prevention strategies.

Consistent and Correct Mask Use

When teachers, staff, and students consistently and correctly wear a mask, they protect others as well as themselves. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important and strongly recommended indoors and in crowded settings, when there is a high community level and physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Indoors: The Board adopts the CDC Guidance and strongly recommends indoor masking for all¹ individuals ages 2 years and older, including students, teachers, staff, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, when there is a high community level.

Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. It is recommended that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people when there is a high community level. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings, especially if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.

¹ Exceptions can be made for the following categories of people:

- A person who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with workers who are unable to wear or have difficulty wearing certain types of masks because of a disability.
- A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Physical Distancing

Because of the importance of in-person learning, physical distancing should be implemented to the extent possible within schools but should not exclude students from in-person learning to keep a minimum distance requirement. It is recommended schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, multiple other layered prevention strategies will be used, such as voluntary screening testing for students, cohorting, improved ventilation, handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness including COVID-19, and regular cleaning to help reduce transmission risk. A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated. Correct and consistent mask use by all students, teachers, staff, and visitors is strongly recommended when physical distance cannot be maintained and the community level is high.

Cohorting: Cohorting means keeping students together in a small group and having each group stay together throughout an entire day. Cohorting can be used to limit the number of students, teachers, and staff who come in contact with each other, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing, such as among young children, and particularly in areas of moderate-to-high transmission levels. The use of cohorting can limit the spread of COVID-19 between cohorts but should not replace other prevention measures within each group. Cohorting people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated into separate cohorts is not recommended. It is a school's responsibility to ensure that cohorting is done in an equitable manner that does not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking.

Symptom Screening

Self-screening for symptoms of COVID-19 and other common respiratory viruses and ailments, prior to arriving on school grounds or boarding school transportation, continues to be recommended.

Individuals who have the following symptoms may not attend school:

- a temperature greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit within the last 24 hours
- vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- A frequent or disruptive cough or other signs of an acute respiratory infection
- Pronounced lethargy or fatigue that interferes with participation in learning activities

Individuals who exhibit symptoms after arriving at school will be isolated, and parents/guardians will be contacted for prompt pick up. PCR and BinaxNOW rapid antigen testing is available at schools for symptomatic students in the school nurse office, provided there is adequate staffing. Parents will need to sign a consent form.

Individuals who have other known symptoms of COVID-19, such as new cough, shortness of breath, fatigue from unknown cause, muscle and body aches from unknown cause, new onset of moderate to severe headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell are recommended to stay home.

Individuals who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms may be referred to a medical provider at their own expense for evaluation and treatment.

Screening Testing

Screening testing identifies infected people, including those with or without symptoms (or before development of symptoms) who may be contagious, so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission. In K-12 schools, screening testing can help promptly identify and isolate cases, initiate quarantine, and identify clusters to help reduce the risk to in-person education. The District will continue to offer voluntary SHIELD testing, as available, to students and staff.

Ventilation

Improving ventilation is an important COVID-19 prevention strategy that can reduce the number of virus particles in the air. The District has upgraded its HVAC systems to include needlepoint bipolar ionization prior to the start of the 2021-22 school year.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

One of the ways to help prevent exposure to COVID-19 is through frequent and proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette (covering coughs and sneezes). Handwashing posters are posted throughout schools including bathrooms, hallways, classrooms, and other areas, as appropriate.

Hands should be washed often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Handwashing with soap and water is always the first recommended line of defense. If soap and water are not readily available, a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used under adult supervision and with proper safety precautions. All surfaces of hands should be completely covered while rubbing hands together until they feel dry.

It is recommended that hand hygiene is performed upon arrival to and departure from school; after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing; following restroom use; before food preparation or before and after eating; before/after routine care for another person, such as a child; after contact with a person who is sick; upon return from the playground/physical education; and following glove removal.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should be stored out of reach of young children to reduce unintended, adverse consequences and away from high temperatures or flames – in accordance with National Fire Protection Agency recommendations.

Staff and students will be encouraged to avoid touching the face (eye, nose, mouth) to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The District has implemented sanitation procedures per recommendations of the CDC, IDPH, and the local health department. More frequent cleaning and disinfection is necessary to reduce exposure. High touch areas (door knobs, light switches, desks/tabletops, etc.) will be cleaned routinely during the day. Each classroom will have disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, and/or a safe disinfectant spray that may be used to clean desks/tables/surfaces. The District has purchased additional clearing materials to help maintain a safe and clean learning environment. The District will follow the infection control procedures for specific areas as outlined in its Return to School plan (as updated).

Isolation or Quarantine Referral

The District will refer confirmed cases due to a positive COVID-19 test, probable cases where symptoms of COVID-19 have been reported, and close contacts/potential exposure to the McLean County Health Department for isolation or quarantine.