

## Milwaukee Health Department K-12 Reopening Guidance 2021-2022 School Year *Frequently Asked Questions*

### Do schools need to submit safety plans before reopening?

- No, schools are not required to submit safety plans to MHD at this time.

### What can schools do to safely reopen?

- Prevention of COVID-19 includes a combination of multiple mitigation strategies, including **universal masking, regardless of vaccination status**, to provide the safest environment possible for students and staff.
- **Schools should encourage all eligible individuals to get the COVID-19 vaccine.** The MHD is available to assist with vaccination clinics.
- The CDC recommends schools maintain at least **3 feet of physical distance between students** within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people regardless of vaccination status, to reduce transmission risk.
- The MHD **recommends all schools have screening and testing strategies in place** to quickly identify infectious individuals.

### Is there a masking mandate in the City of Milwaukee?

- No, there is not a masking mandate at this time.

### Are there any health orders that schools should be aware of?

- No, there are no standing health orders issued by MHD at this time.

### Can schools mandate masking for students and staff?

- Yes, it is up to each school to determine what policy and safety measures to have in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### Where can individuals get tested?

- For information regarding school testing, visit: [COVID-19: K-12 School Testing Program](#). For testing sites, visit: [Free Community Testing Sites](#).

### Where can individuals get vaccinated?

- For vaccination, visit: [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (mobile vaccination clinic schedule)

### When would schools be required to move to virtual or hybrid teaching models?

- The CDC guidance states that regardless of community transmission, in-person learning should be prioritized. Schools would not be required to move to virtual or hybrid teaching models unless it is the recommendation of the CDC or the WI Department of Health Services (DHS). It is possible (though not probable) that school closures would be recommended by MHD if large outbreaks or isolation/quarantine numbers that prohibit the school's ability to provide in-person instruction.

### Will there be a time when the data indicates that masking is no longer required?

- Children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated at this time. Until all children can be vaccinated, the MHD will continue to recommend universal indoor masking regardless of vaccination status.

### Does the MHD have testing results for all students and staff?

- Given the increased availability and usage of at-home testing, MHD may not have access to every student and staff's testing results. In addition, pooled testing that cannot identify a specific infected person will not be reported. Any individual test that is performed through a laboratory or health center will be reported to public health. All tests performed through Wisconsin DHS Testing Program will also be available to public health departments.

### Do fully vaccinated students and staff need to quarantine after an exposure?

- No. If the student or staff is fully vaccinated and is exposed to a positive COVID-19 case and remains asymptomatic, they may return to school as long as they continue to wear a mask. The CDC recommends that fully vaccinated individuals get tested 3-5 days after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and continue to wear a mask in public indoor settings regardless of vaccination status. If testing is positive (even without symptoms), that individual needs to isolate for 10 days in accordance with public health guidance.

### When do I need to quarantine or isolate?

#### Fully Vaccinated Individuals

- The CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people who have come into close contact with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 be tested 3-5 days after exposure, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative result. Continue to wear a mask in public indoors settings in areas of substantial or high transmission.
- If the exposure is a household member, and contact with the positive case is ongoing, the exposed person should be tested 3-5 days after the date of LAST exposure. If a parent is unable to separate from a child who is positive, their testing date is based on the final day of their child's home isolation, which is 10 days.
- Fully vaccinated people do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19, unless they have symptoms.
- Although the risk that fully vaccinated people could become infected with COVID-19 is low, any fully vaccinated person who experiences [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#) should [isolate themselves from others](#), be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2 if indicated. The symptomatic fully vaccinated person should inform their healthcare provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care. If positive for COVID-19, a fully vaccinated person should isolate at home for 10 days.

#### Unvaccinated Individuals

- Quarantine if you have been in [close contact](#) (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19.
  - o Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
  - o Watch for symptoms.

- If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- If you develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate.
- You may end quarantine on day 10 if you haven't been tested, as long as you have no symptoms.
- You may end quarantine on day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later).
- Isolate if you have symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 for 10 days.
  - Monitor your symptoms.
  - Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
  - Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
  - Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
  - Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
  - Wear a mask when around other people if able.

### References and Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics – [Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021](#)
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
  - [Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs](#)
  - [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
  - [When to Quarantine](#)
- Milwaukee Health Department
  - [Free Community Testing Sites](#)
  - [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) (mobile vaccination clinic schedule)
- WI Department of Health Services
  - [COVID-19: K-12 Schools](#)
  - [COVID-19: K-12 School Testing Program](#)
  - [Guidelines for Prevention, Investigation, and Control of COVID-19 Outbreaks in K-12 Schools in WI](#)
- Wisconsin Immunization Program – [Requirements for Schools](#)