



**Guidance for Pre K-12 School Operations for In-Person Learning:
Updated Layered Prevention Strategies and New Recommendations
January 20th, 2022**

Estill County Schools continue to work to maintain in-person instruction for our students as a priority. The purpose of this document is to provide information on prevention strategies that help protect our students, teachers, and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19 in our schools based on updated CDC guidelines and recommendations from KDPH.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

SARS-CoV-2 transmission in schools is largely influenced by disease incidence in the community and evidence from the 2020-2021 school year suggests Pre K-12 schools can safely open for in-person instruction when layered prevention strategies are implemented. Decisions around the implementation of layered prevention strategies in the school community are made collaboratively by local public health officials and school administrators. Factors that are considered include:

- Level of community transmission of COVID-19 and occurrence of outbreaks in the school or community.
- COVID-19 vaccination coverage in the community and among students, teachers, and staff.
- Ages of children served by the schools and associated social and behavioral factors that may affect the risk of transmission and feasibility of different prevention strategies.

Full implementation of all layers of protection is recommended when sustained incidence of COVID-19 in a community is substantial or high (orange or red). Continue clear communication on recommended strategies and anticipated changes in plans. The recommended layered prevention strategies include:

1. Vaccination

- Continue to promote and offer vaccination to help increase the proportion of students (5 years of age or older), teachers, staff, and family members who are vaccinated by:
- Encouraging students, teachers, staff, and family members to stay up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Providing on-site vaccination or hosting vaccination clinics at schools.
- Providing information to families about the vaccines and availability in the community as needed.

2. Masks

All persons >2 years of age should wear masks or face coverings while indoors in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including buses operated by public and private school systems, unless otherwise exempted (e.g., cannot wear a mask due to disability), regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. Masks should be required in compliance with federal, state, local, and organization regulations, including the CDC, the Kentucky Department for Education and the Kentucky Board of Education. Operators of school buses should refer to the U.S. Department of Education's COVID-19 Handbook for additional guidance. A driver does not need to wear a mask if they are the only person on the bus.

- In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors, though mask use may be considered in outdoor settings that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not up-to-date with vaccination.

3. Physical distancing

- Physical distancing of at least 3 feet is *recommended* between students in classrooms. To the greatest extent practicable, schools should turn desks to face the same direction when possible, utilize assigned seating, and remove nonessential furniture. Attempt to maximize physical distancing for unvaccinated persons who are eating meals indoors.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff.
- Utilize cohorts or pods (a stable group with fixed membership that stays together through activities) as an additional strategy that minimizes opportunities for transmission, especially when it is challenging to maintain physical distancing (e.g., young children) or when other layered prevention strategies are discontinued.

4. Ventilation

- Improve facility ventilation to the greatest extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air and increase delivery of clean air. Utilize outdoor spaces, where possible.

5. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Continue to teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Ensure adequate supplies and opportunities for hand hygiene.

6. Isolation

Definition: This means that someone has actually **tested** positive for COVID-19 and has to be isolated from others.

Ensure sick students, teachers, or staff stay home if they have fever and/or symptoms of COVID-19, including:

- Fever (>100.4°F) or feeling feverish (e.g., chills, sweating)
- New cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 must **isolate** away from school for:

- At least 5 full days from the day that their symptoms started if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. The first day of symptoms is considered day 0. The individual may return to school after 5 days when their symptoms are fully resolved (and fever free for 24hrs with no fever reducing medication) or after 10 days even if they have lingering symptoms. The individual **must** continue to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days at all times when around others indoors. If the individual is unable to wear a mask properly and consistently in indoor school settings, they should self-isolate from school for 10 full days.
- 5 full days from the date of testing if they have never developed symptoms. The day of testing is considered day 0. The individual **must** continue to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 full days at all times when around others indoors. If the individual is unable to wear a mask properly and consistently in indoor school settings, they should self-isolate from school for 10 full days. If the individual develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow the above isolation guidance for someone with symptoms.
- COVID-19 test results that involve use of an “at-home” test kit and for which the specimen collection is not monitored by a trained healthcare provider and the test is not conducted by a CLIA-certified laboratory are not reportable to public health. Staff and students will be encouraged to follow up with a test from a licensed testing facility. School and work absences will not be able to be excused by the Covid-19 guidelines.
- Direct sick persons to isolate at home away from school. Sick students, teachers, or staff who are not tested for COVID-19 may return when their symptoms resolve.

Students returning to school after their 5th day, but before their 10th, will need to visit their school nurse prior to reporting to their classroom or 1st period class.

NOTE: These updated guidelines do **not** apply to grades **Pre-K and Kindergarten**. The Estill County School District will continue to follow the previous established guidelines regarding both isolation and quarantine for these grade levels. This is due to the developmental age of these students and the concern of the ability to continuously wear a well fitted mask with adequate accuracy.

7. Quarantine

Definition: This refers to someone who has been **exposed** to COVID-19, but showing no symptoms. For schools with universal use of masking:

- Individuals do not need to quarantine following **at-school** exposures to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 if they are not experiencing symptoms, but are recommended to be tested 5-7 days after a known at-school exposure. Schools should attempt to notify families when a possible exposure to COVID-19 occurs in the classroom.
- The following individuals should quarantine following an exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 occurring **outside of school** (e.g., household member):
 - Persons of any age who have not completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series >14 days prior to the exposure.
 - Persons 18 years of age and older who are not up-to-date with their recommended COVID-19 vaccination.

NOTE: Up-to-date on COVID-19 vaccinations means children 5-17 years old who have completed their primary vaccine series >14 days prior to the exposure and adults 18 or older who have completed their primary vaccine series > 5 months prior, their J&J vaccine >2 months prior, or have received their booster.

- The following individuals should quarantine following an exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 occurring **outside of school** (e.g., household member):
 - Persons of any age who have not completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series >14 days prior to the exposure. Persons 18 years of age and older who are not up-to-date with their recommended COVID-19 vaccination
- **Quarantine may be discontinued:**
 - After day 5 if the individual is
 - 1) symptom-free and;
 - 2) receives a negative COVID-19 test on day 5 or later after the last date of exposure to the case and;
 - 3) is able to wear a well-fitting mask indoors and in public settings for 10 full days from the last exposure; or
 - After day 10 if the individual is symptom-free and does not receive COVID-19 testing. Individuals who cannot wear a well-fitting mask consistently and properly should quarantine for the full 10 days.

The last day of exposure to the case is considered day 0. If the individual is continually exposed to COVID-19 (i.e., a household member that they are unable to isolate away from) then the last day of exposure is the last day that the case is considered infectious (day 5-10, determined by the individual's last day of symptoms).

- **The following persons do not need to quarantine**

Following an exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 if they are not experiencing symptoms, but are recommended to be tested 5 days or more after an exposure and to wear a well-fitting mask indoors for 10 full days:

1. Students 5-17 years of age who have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series >14 days prior to the exposure.
2. Persons 18 years of age and older who are up-to-date with their recommended COVID-19 vaccinations.
3. Persons who have documented COVID-19 illness in the 3 months prior to their exposure (with a positive COVID-19 PCR or antigen test). Antibody testing should not be used for determining need to quarantine; per the FDA, results from currently-authorized SARS-CoV-2 antibody tests should not be used to evaluate a person's level of immunity or protection from COVID-19.

Students returning to school after their 5th day, but before their 10th, must have a negative covid test and will need to visit their school nurse prior to reporting to their classroom or 1st period class.

8. Cleaning and disinfection

- Improve facility cleaning to the greatest extent possible. In general, cleaning once a day is enough to sufficiently remove potential viruses that may be on surfaces. Consider cleaning high-touch, shared surfaces more frequently.

ADDITIONAL RECOMENDATIONS

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities with people who are not fully vaccinated should be limited, particularly when there is moderate-to-high (orange or red) COVID-19 transmission in the community.
- Layered prevention strategies for school-sponsored sports and extracurricular activities should be implemented and continued from the 2020-21 school year based on guidance from the KHSAA. Fully vaccinated persons do not need to physically distance but are recommended to wear a mask in indoor settings when community transmission is substantial or high (orange or red). Students who are not fully vaccinated and participate in indoor sports or other indoor higher-risk activities are recommended to continue wearing masks and keeping physical distance as much as possible.
- Contact tracing and quarantine guidelines will remain unchanged in sports and extracurricular activities where universal masking is not utilized at all times.
- Any updates from the KHSAA, KMA, CDC and the local health department may result in additional guidance for all extracurricular activities.