

STAY SAFE DUPAGE



RETURN TO SCHOOL FRAMEWORK



Interim Guidelines for DuPage County Schools (Issued 8/28/2020, Subject to Change)

The DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) has been working closely with the DuPage Regional Office of Education (ROE) and school district administrators in DuPage County to help inform decisions about school reopening plans this fall. This framework should be used in conjunction with other epidemiological factors and within a localized, even a per school, context, and will provide School Superintendents with an additional tool in assessing the challenges facing return to school in a COVID-19 era.

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise locally, the DuPage County Health Department supports school officials in their efforts as they develop school reopening plans that help protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, teachers, school staff, families, and communities and prepare for educating students this fall.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) encourage school administrators to make decisions about school reopening in collaboration with local health officials. The health and safety measures recommended for schools by IDPH and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) are important tools to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in a school setting. The success of these measures, however, is also dependent on the level of COVID-19 activity in the communities where our students, teachers, staff, and families live, learn, work, pray, and play.

Reopening schools is complicated, as is providing guidance for a virus we are still learning about. According to the CDC, "evidence from schools internationally suggests that school reopenings are safe in communities with low SARS-CoV-2 transmission rates."

Based on this evidence, DCHD is recommending review and consideration of disease activity levels in the community as school officials make decisions about if and when to shift between learning models this school year. During the course of the year, school officials are encouraged to use their discretion and expertise to determine which populations of students should receive in-person instruction whose needs are less likely to be met by virtual instruction.

The unique and critical role that schools play makes them a priority for opening and remaining open for in-person learning, enabling students to receive academic instruction, critical support services including nutrition as well as social and emotional skills development and resources, and physical activity. In order to prioritize opening schools safely and helping them to remain open, we should all be doing our part to reduce community transmission by wearing a mask, keeping our physical distance, keeping gatherings to a small number of people, and washing our hands frequently.

In addition to county-level metrics and COVID-19 surveillance data, school-level considerations are important as well, such as case and outbreak activity, specific trends and distribution of cases, absenteeism among students and staff within a school, and alternate remote learning site options and safety protocols. **In every learning model, school districts are also advised to follow the health and safety protocols set forth by IDPH, and DCHD.**

As we learn more about COVID-19, including about transmission and health outcomes related to school reopening, this framework may be updated based on that new information.



WEAR
A MASK



WATCH
YOUR DISTANCE



WASH
YOUR HANDS

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In the table below, different learning models have been incorporated under the three corresponding IDPH-defined community transmission levels, as outlined in IDPH Adaptive Pause guidance and County Level COVID-19 Risk Metrics.

1. Additionally, DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) will be working closely with schools to monitor absenteeism, disease activity, and other indicators and trends to further inform learning model considerations.
2. For current DuPage County-level metrics on COVID-19 community transmission and the current level of Community Transmission see the DCHD COVID-19 dashboard at: www.dupagehealth.org/covid19data. This dashboard will be updated each Friday.
3. DuPage County's Level of COVID-19 Community Transmission is determined by the highest category in which a single metric is met or exceeded. For example, if one metric is met or exceeded in the "Substantial Community Transmission" category, DuPage County will be at that level.
4. When considering a shift to more in-person learning, all metrics should be under the identified thresholds for a given level for at least 2 consecutive weeks. For example, all metrics in the "Minimal Community Transmission" category should be below the identified thresholds for at least 2 consecutive weeks before DuPage County will be listed in the "Minimal Community Transmission" level.

DuPage County COVID-19 School Metrics Guidance

Minimal Community Transmission	Moderate Community Transmission	Substantial Community Transmission
Encourage in-person learning with at least six feet of physical distancing between students and faculty/staff* Consider opt-in remote option for students * All IDPH/ISBE health & safety precautions in place, including universal use of face coverings	Encourage learning models that maintain at least six feet of physical distancing* Some-to-no mixing of groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days Some students participate in virtual and some participate in-person School officials should use their discretion and expertise to determine which populations of students should receive in-person instruction whose needs are less likely to be met by virtual instruction; maintain essential services in-person and/or with remote access. * All IDPH/ISBE health & safety precautions in place, including universal use of face coverings	Encourage 100% remote learning* School officials should use their discretion and expertise to determine which populations of students should receive in-person instruction whose needs are less likely to be met by virtual instruction. * All IDPH/ISBE health and safety precautions in place, including universal use of face coverings and at least six feet of physical distancing
Alert for one metric but remained BLUE (IDPH-defined) at any point in the last 4 weeks Weekly county case rates ≤ 50 per 100,000 Weekly county overall case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $>5\%$ to $\leq 10\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly county youth case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $>5\%$ to $\leq 10\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly test positivity $\leq 5\%$ Neighboring county in orange once in the last 4 weeks	Transitioned to ORANGE (IDPH-defined) once in last 4 weeks Weekly county case rates >50 to ≤ 100 per 100,000 Weekly county overall case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $>10\%$ or $\leq 20\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly county youth case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $>10\%$ or $\leq 20\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly test positivity $>5\%$ but $\leq 8\%$	Remained in ORANGE (IDPH defined) for >2 consecutive weeks Weekly county case rates above > 100 per 100,000 Weekly county overall case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $> 20\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly county youth case numbers increase for two consecutive weeks with a $>20\%$ increase occurring each week Weekly test positivity $>8\%$ Region moved to Tier 1 mitigation
Return to full in-person learning as before COVID-19 will be based on broad access and uptake of a safe, effective vaccine to prevent additional spread of COVID-19 and/or when there are no new cases over a sustained period. This corresponds to Phase 5 of Restore Illinois Plan.		

DuPage County Health Department's "Return to School" Framework is informed by guidance and recommendations from public health and healthcare organizations across the country including [Arizona Department of Health Services](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy](#), [Harris County Public Health](#), [Harvard Global Health Institute](#), [Illinois Department of Public Health](#), [University of Nebraska Medical Center](#), and the [White House Coronavirus Taskforce](#).