



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Guidance for School Closures

8/13/21

- **Outbreak definition: 2 or more cases among students/staff without other identified epidemiological linkages, with onset within 14 days in a single classroom or core group (i.e. teams, band)**
  - If schools are experiencing an outbreak or a rise in cases, schools should reach out to Department of Health (DOH) or their local county/municipal health department for guidance
  - In order to preserve safe in-person learning to the greatest extent possible, DOH staff will work with schools to determine if a closure is necessary and appropriate closure length, with a maximum 14-day recommendation, for full incubation period
  - A maximum 14-day suspension of in-person learning may be recommended by DOH if the following criteria are met:
    - ⇒ 5% of students/staff confirmed cases in 14-day window:
      - \* Small school (<500 staff & students): 25 case threshold
      - \* Medium school (500-900 staff & students): 25-45 case threshold
      - \* Large school (900+ staff & students): 45+ case threshold
- OR
- ⇒ 3 simultaneous classroom and/or core group outbreaks
    - \* Transmission between 2 or more students or students/staff/teachers without other identified epidemiological links in 3 or more classrooms and/or other core groups (i.e. teams, band)
  - If either of these criteria are met, schools should reach out to DOH or their local county/municipal health department for guidance
  - Suspension of sports/extracurriculars also recommended when DOH recommends a closure due to uncontrolled transmission within the school.
  - In addition to DOH-recommended closures, schools may consider short-term closures if time is needed to determine/monitor close contacts or if staffing shortages or student quarantines become disruptive to in-person learning