

LWSD COVID FAQ

Guidance to Prevent and Respond to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools and Childcare [Guidance to Prevent and Respond to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools and Child Care \(wa.gov\)](#)

What is the same?

The reporting of COVID-19 cases and outbreaks and working with Public Health requirement will stay the same. This requirement was in effect for all notifiable conditions before the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be in effect for schools and childcare programs.

- All COVID-19 cases, outbreaks, and suspected outbreaks in schools and childcare settings are required to be reported to the Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) in accordance with Washington State law (WAC 246-101).
- Schools, childcare providers, and the general public are required to cooperate with public health authorities in the investigation of cases and outbreaks that may be associated with the school or childcare. Local health officers may require schools or child cares to implement additional strategies or more stringent guidance to control the spread of COVID-19 (RCW 70.05.070 and WAC 246-110-020), including excluding individuals who are infectious from schools or child care.
- Childcare providers are required to send ill children home or reasonably separate them from other children if there is a risk that the child's illness will spread to other children or individuals (WAC 110-300-0205).
- Employers are required to follow L&I requirements regarding COVID-19 in the workplace.

Governor Inslee's COVID-19 emergency orders, including the vaccination requirements for K-12 volunteers expired on Monday, October 31, 2022. Although vaccination is still the most effective strategy to protect children and adults from severe disease, including hospitalization and death, due to COVID-19 illness, Lake Washington School District will stop requiring proof of vaccination for volunteers as of November 1, 2022. Visit the [DOH Vaccine Information webpage](#) for general information about COVID-19 vaccines, including the [vaccine locator tool](#), and [Vaccinating Youth](#).

Many of the K-12 and childcare COVID-19 guidance requirements have shifted to recommendations. To minimize the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses, K-12 schools and childcares should continue to use best practices and lessons learned since the beginning of the pandemic, including masking, testing, and improving ventilation, as part of everyday infectious disease prevention.

What has changed?

Updated Isolation Guidance

- Students, children, or staff who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the DOH [What to do if you test positive for COVID-19](#) guidance.
- According to this guidance:
 - Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home for at least 5 days and isolate themselves to avoid spreading COVID-19 to others.
 - Individuals can leave isolation after 5 full days if:
 - Symptoms are improving 5 days after the start of isolation, AND
 - The individual has not had a fever for 24 hours without use of fever reducing-medication.
 - Students and staff should wear a well-fitting and high-quality mask for an additional 5 days (days 6 through 10) if they return to school or childcare after the end of their 5-day isolation period.
 - If an individual is unable to wear a well-fitting and high-quality mask, they should continue to isolate for a full 10 days, or follow the test-based strategy listed at [the bottom of page 3](#) to determine when to leave isolation and remove their mask.

Updated Exposure Guidance

Regardless of vaccination status, students, children and staff who are potentially exposed to COVID-19 should take the following steps as detailed in the DOH [What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with COVID-19](#) guidance:

- Monitor for symptoms, AND
- Test 3-5 days after exposure, AND
- Wear a well-fitting and high-quality mask around others for 10 days after exposure.
 - If someone is less than two years of age or has a disability that prevents them from wearing a mask, other preventive actions (such as improving ventilation) should be used to avoid transmission during these 10 days.

If the exposed student, child or staff member develops new symptoms, they should:

- Immediately isolate at home, or where they currently reside,
- Get tested for COVID-19, and
- Follow the DOH [What to do if a Person is Symptomatic](#) flowchart.

Exposed students, children and staff who do not develop symptoms or test positive may continue to participate in all in-person instruction and care, including sports, performing arts and other extracurricular activities.

Outbreak Definition

The definition of a COVID-19 outbreak has changed to at least five COVID-19 cases within a core group or 20% of students, teachers or staff within a core group. AND the following three criteria are met:

1. Cases have a symptom onset or positive test result within 7 days of each other, AND
2. There is no evidence that transmission was more likely to have occurred in another setting (e.g., household or outside social contact) outside of the school or childcare, AND
3. Cases were epidemiologically linked in the school or childcare setting or a school or childcare sanctioned extracurricular activity.

General Questions

Why did the requirements lessen? Is this safe?

Per DOH - Schools are an important part of the infrastructure of communities as they provide safe, supportive learning environments for students and children, and enable parents and caregivers to be at work. Guidance from the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) can help K-12 school administrators support safe, in-person learning for K-12 schools, while managing the spread of COVID-19.

Positive Case Reporting

Are parents and staff required to report positive cases?

Yes, families and staff must report positive case information here: <https://forms.office.com/r/x1VYHRwsMu>. The [Isolation and Quarantine Calculator](#) should be used to determine how long isolation is required, when testing should take place and when masking can be removed. Families should additionally notify attendance to excuse the absences for their student. Staff members must submit appropriate time off in Frontline or the appropriate absence management system and notify their administrator.

Testing

The antigen tests I have at home and tests being provided by the school have expired. Can they still be used?

The expiration date on your rapid antigen test may no longer be accurate. See [DOH Expired COVID-19 Tests FAQ](#) for more information.

Is testing still available?

On-site PCR and antigen testing will no longer be available. For students or staff who develop symptoms at school a take-home rapid antigen test will be sent home with the student for the parent or guardian to administer.

Mitigation Measures

Will universal masking be required?

Not unless directed by Public Health Seattle & King County. Correct use of well-fitting masks protects the wearer as well as others which reduces the risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. While masks are no longer required universally in schools, there may be situations when a school, LHJ or DOH temporarily recommends or requires wearing well-fitting masks. People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask. LWSD will continue to monitor community transmission levels. Students and staff should wear a mask when an outbreak has been identified in their class, team or cohort group.

Are masks required in health rooms and isolation spaces? Are symptomatic individuals required to be sent home?

The Secretary of Health's Mask Order has ended. Refer to L&I Coronavirus Facial Covering and Mask Requirements for additional details on level of respiratory protection needed for employees.

Child care providers are required to send home, or isolate from children in care, ill individuals with symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea or other symptoms listed in WAC 110-300-0205.

If students, children or staff come to school or child care with a new onset of COVID-19 symptoms, or develop COVID-19 symptoms while on site, schools and child cares should do all the following:

- Immediately ask the sick person to wear a well-fitting and high-quality mask or respirator while in the building. If they cannot wear a mask, separate them from others as much as possible.
- Send them home.
- Encourage them to get tested as soon as possible. If available, on-site testing can be performed, but the sick person should go home, no matter what the test result is, to prevent others from becoming ill from exposure.

Anyone providing care or evaluation to a person with COVID-19 symptoms should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Is a Quarantine Room required?

A separate isolation space is a recommendation and is not a requirement. Students or staff who come to school or childcare with a new onset of COVID-19 symptoms, or develop COVID-19 symptoms while on site, should be immediately asked to wear a well-fitting and high-quality mask or respirator while in the building, be sent home and be encouraged to get tested for COVID-19.

Ventilation

Does LWSD follow specific parameters regarding ventilation and air exchange?

Yes. Ventilation is one of the most important COVID-19 prevention strategies for schools and child care settings. Good ventilation can reduce the number of virus particles in the air, which reduces the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses. The district ventilation plan aligns with the WA State DOH, ASHRAE and OSPI recommendations and guidance. Some of the specific mitigation measures include:

- Fresh outside air is being maximized per DOH recommendations
- A typical classroom provides between 4-7 ACH (Air Changes per Hour)
- Opening exterior windows will augment outside air ventilation
- All LWSD mechanical systems have central filtration
- All filters are changed 3x per year and have minimum rating of MERV-10
- All buildings flush the air before/after occupancy

Notifications

Will notifications be changing?

All COVID-19 cases, outbreaks and suspected outbreaks in schools and childcare settings are required to be reported to the Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) in accordance with Washington State law (WAC 246-101). However, LWSD will no longer report individual cases on the data dashboard.

To increase safety and awareness LWSD has opted to continue directly notifying parents/guardians and staff members when an outbreak has been identified in their student's class, team or cohort group where individuals may have been exposed.