

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 Cares \(wa.gov\)](#)

What is the same?

The Reporting 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 (RCW 705.070).
- 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.

What is new?

Vaccination Requirement Ending

- Governor Inslee's COVID-19 emergency orders, including the vaccination requirements for K-12 volunteers, are due to expire 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.
- 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.

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 from others in the home in order 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.

Update 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 5 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

How can parents and staff report positive cases?

Families and staff should be encouraged to use the Microsoft Form to report positive case information. <https://forms.office.com/r/x1VYHRwsMu>. The case managers will receive the information in SharePoint and will respond with isolation and return to work/school instructions and information. Building staff can complete the forms for families if needed.

Testing

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

The expiration date on your rapid antigen test may no longer be accurate. See [DOH Rapid Antigen Test Date Expirations](#) for more information.

Is testing still available?

Yes! Please visit: <https://www.lwsd.org/covid-19/testing> for more information.

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, LHH, 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. LWSK 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?

Yes. Policies for mask use in school nurse offices should follow the Secretary of Health's Mask Order. Refer to L&I Coronavirus Facial Covering and Mask Requirements for additional details on level of respiratory protection needed for employees.

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.

Notifications**Will notifications be changing?**

Although schools are no longer required to directly notify high risk students of exposure LWSD will continue to keep families informed of cases through the data dashboard.

Although outbreak notifications can also be reported through an online dashboard, to increase safety and awareness LWSD has opted to directly notify parents/guardians when an outbreak has been identified in their student's class, team, or cohort group.