



**COVID-19 Guidance for Licking County
K-12 Schools
August 13, 2022**

Introduction:

The Licking County Health Department (LCHD) has worked with school superintendents and administrators in Licking County to provide guidance and recommendations regarding COVID-19 within their school buildings. The goal of this effort is to manage and reduce COVID-19 cases in schools throughout the county. This document will be updated as additional information becomes available.

Vaccination:

LCHD urges all individuals that are eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to receive the vaccine as soon as possible. Our department operates walk in clinics at our office, located at 675 Price Road in Newark, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00AM to 12:00PM and 2:00PM to 4:00PM. To view a full list of approved COVID-19 vaccine providers please visit <https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov/>

Isolation:

Students and Staff that test positive for COVID-19 will need to stay home from school for 5 days after the date their symptoms started. They can return to school, and other normal activities, after 5 days if they have not had a fever for 24 hours without medication and their symptoms are improving. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 and is asymptomatic, they can return to school, and normal activities, 5 days after their positive test. The CDC recommends anyone that tests positive for COVID-19 wear a mask for 10 days after their symptoms started.

If a student or staff member becomes symptomatic while at school, they should be isolated as quickly as possible and sent home.

Students and staff that are experiencing symptoms should not attend school. These individuals should speak with their medical provider and be tested for COVID-19 prior to returning to school.

Quarantine:

Quarantine is no longer necessary for individuals exposed to COVID-19 outside of a high-risk congregate setting. K-12 schools are not considered a high-risk congregate setting, which eliminates the need for students and staff to quarantine if they are exposed to COVID-19. High-risk settings include but are not limited to correctional facilities, long term care facilities, and homeless shelters. The CDC recommends individuals exposed to COVID-19 wear a mask for 10 days after their exposure.

Social Distancing:

Schools should attempt to provide social distancing whenever possible. Desks should be spaced at least 3 feet apart in areas that will accommodate this amount of spacing. Efforts should also be taken to provide spacing during lunch periods. Additionally, distancing should be implemented to the extent possible in other settings such as, locker rooms, extracurricular activities, etc.

Masks:

There are no requirements for students or staff to wear masks in K-12 schools. LCHD does not have the authority to implement any type of indoor mask mandate, and our department does not have any intention of doing so. Individuals that are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 and experiencing complications from the disease should wear a mask.

Hand Hygiene:

LCHD also continues to recommend frequent and proper hand washing for all individuals. Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds can help reduce the spread of many diseases including COVID-19.

Enhanced Cleaning:

Schools should continue to implement the enhanced cleaning activities that were implemented during last school year. This should include high touch surfaces and other areas where COVID-19 can be spread.

Ventilation:

Schools should continue to work to optimize ventilation within school buildings. All work done to optimize ventilation should be done based on the specific manufacturer's recommendations.

Data Tracking:

LCHD intends to continue to track student and staff COVID-19 cases at the school building level. Additionally, LCHD is requesting that schools notify our staff if 3 individuals in one classroom report having COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms. Doing so will allow LCHD to investigate possible outbreaks of COVID-19 quickly and assist with implementing mitigation strategies should they be necessary to slow the spread of COVID-19. To notify LCHD of an increase in cases at a school building, please email us at health@lickingcohealth.org

The CDC recommends masks be worn indoors if the COVID-19 Community Level reaches the High level in a county. Over the past two school years, LCHD has worked with all schools in the county to collect and analyze COVID-19 data at a school building level. LCHD plans to continue analyzing data COVID-19 and absenteeism data at the school building level. This approach has been successful and allows for a more detailed review of data, rather than relying on countywide metrics to make decisions at a school building level.

At Home COVID-19 Testing

Many individuals are choosing to conduct COVID-19 testing at home and not report the results. This process will impact the number of COVID-19 cases reported to LCHD and affect the overall number of cases reported by LCHD. LCHD recommends individuals testing positive using at home COVID-19 tests report the positive test results through the LCHD website. Positive at home COVID-19 test results can be reported by clicking [HERE](#) LCHD will enter the results in the state's disease reporting system and the individual that tests positive will receive a letter from LCHD in the mail.

Conclusion:

LCHE understands the importance of in person learning for students and staff members across our county. Our staff has worked to assist schools with holding in person classes since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we are committed to continuing this effort. Our hope is to continue our partnership with school administrators, staff, parents, and our community to keep our schools open and in person. We will continue to monitor the data and communicate with school leaders to make the school year as safe as possible.