

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Schools and Childcare Facilities

This document provides guidance for COVID-19 prevention in DC Schools and Childcare Facilities. For additional information, including current District COVID-19-related public health data, please visit coronavirus.dc.gov. DC Health is issuing this guidance to compile the current guidelines in one document and to remind schools and child care facilities of the strategies that they should be implementing to continue promoting healthy practices.

PREVENTION OF COVID-19

COVID-19 prevention strategies for Schools and Childcare Facilities are divided into 2 categories: Everyday prevention measures that should be kept in place during all COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels¹ (including **Low**), and enhanced prevention measures that can be implemented during **High** COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels OR as needed. These are summarized below for easy reference. For full details, see *Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Educational Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning* at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-childcare-guidance.html. Schools and Childcare Facilities should also follow *Community COVID-19 Guidance* at <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance>.

- **Everyday prevention recommendations (regardless of COVID-19 Hospital Admission Level):**
 - COVID-19 vaccination
 - Staying home when sick.
 - Precautions² (for people exposed to COVID-19).
 - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
 - Optimizing indoor ventilation and air quality.
 - Cleaning and disinfection.

- **Enhanced prevention measures for High COVID-19 Hospital Admission Levels or as needed:**
 - Masks/respirators
 - Avoiding crowding in the facility.
 - Consider COVID-19 screening testing for students and staff (vaccinated or unvaccinated) for high-risk activities (e.g., close contact sports, band, choir, theater); at key times in the year such as before/after large events (e.g., prom, tournaments, group travel); and when returning from breaks (e.g., holidays, spring break, at the beginning of the school year).
 - Prioritizing outdoor activities.

- **Regardless of COVID-19 Hospital Admission level, encourage everyone to respect the choice of others who wish to wear a mask.**

¹ **COVID-19 Hospital Admission level**- a tool created by the CDC to help communities and individuals decide what prevention steps to take based on the COVID-19 level in their area. There are 3 levels: **LOW**, **MEDIUM**, and **HIGH**. When COVID-19 Hospital Admission levels are **LOW**, the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19 is lower for everyone. To look up current COVID-19 Hospital Admission levels for DC and other areas of the U.S., see cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html.

² For more information on precautions after exposure, see *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions and Testing* available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

ADDITIONAL FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Isolation requirements (for symptomatic or COVID-19 positive people)**
 - Schools and childcare facilities must remove and exclude individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who have symptoms of COVID-19 pursuant to [22B DCMR §§ 209.1 — 209.8](#) for schools and [5A DCMR §§ 100 et. seq.](#) for childcare facilities.
 - For detailed information on return-to-school and return-to-care after symptoms of or testing positive for COVID-19, view the Return to School Matrix and Return to Care Matrix on osse.dc.gov/page/policy-and-guidance-resources.
- **Exposure identification and communication recommendations**
 - Facilities should consider having a process in place for notifying individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19 at the facility (e.g., a letter, an email, a phone call) to inform them to monitor for symptoms.
 - Schools and childcare facilities should make the following available to potentially exposed staff and parents/guardians of potentially exposed students:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Referral to *Guidance After Exposure to a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19: Precautions and Testing*, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at testinglocator.cdc.gov/.
 - The privacy of the staff or student must be maintained.
- **Reporting requirements:**
 - Schools and childcare facilities **must** notify DC Health if they have 25 or more confirmed COVID-19 cases tied to a single event that occurred at or was hosted/sponsored by the facility.
 - Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website: dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements.
 - Submit a Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form at dccovid.force.com/NonHealthcareConsultRequestForm/s/.
 - DC Health must be notified on the same day the outbreak was reported to the facility, as soon as possible after the facility was notified.
 - **Note:** Childcare facilities licensed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) must report any instance of communicable disease, including COVID-19, to OSSE by submitting an unusual incident report, as required by OSSE licensing regulations.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as necessary. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.