



Madison County Public Health Madison County K-12 Schools Operating Guidelines COVID-19 Protective Actions & Focus Areas 2020-2021 School Year

Protective actions are individual or environmental conditions and behaviors that reduce risk. Layering multiple protective actions reduces the risk of COVID-19 spreading in both our schools and in our community and increases the likelihood that our schools will remain open as much as possible. Some protective actions for schools will allow for very little variance in how those actions will be applied. Some protective actions will have quite a bit of implementation variance and will allow the school some flexibility to develop plans to meet the requirements. While the protective actions apply to all areas of the school, several focus areas are included with specific guidance.

- All protective actions are required to be implemented unless otherwise explained.
- The Ohio Public Health Advisory System should be used as a guide to select a method of instruction including in-person, remote, or hybrid/blended plans. Work to maintain options for remote instruction (for teachers) and learning (for students).
- Encourage parents to talk with their children and practice hand hygiene, physical distancing, and using facial coverings. Continuously encourage teachers to educate students on 1) the behaviors associated with the protective actions, and 2) how to effectively use remote learning should it be needed throughout your entire school district at some point during the year.

Schools should use and follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools. This strategy represents the best available evidence for safely operating schools in the context of whole-community health during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To enable schools to remain open, it is important to adopt and consistently implement actions to slow the spread of COVID-19 both in schools and in the community.

COVID-19 transmission in schools is associated with community transmission. Transmission spread within schools can be limited with strict implementation of layered mitigation strategies. When community rates of COVID-19 are high, there is an increased likelihood that COVID-19 will be introduced to, and potentially transmitted within, a school setting. Evidence to date suggests that when schools implement all CDC mitigation strategies with fidelity, transmission within schools can be limited.

The association between COVID-19 incidence and transmission in school settings and levels of community transmission underscores the importance of controlling disease spread in the community to protect teachers, staff, and students in schools. Success in preventing the introduction and subsequent transmission of COVID-19 in schools is connected to and facilitated by preventing transmission in communities. Communities and schools should utilize a “classroom-first” approach; in-person instruction should be prioritized over extracurricular activities including sports and school events, a common source of school transmission, to minimize risk of transmission in schools and protect in-person learning.



Protective Actions – Requirements and Considerations	
High Risk Populations	Encourage high risk students (those of <i>any age</i> with <u>chronic underlying conditions</u>) to use remote learning. Work to offer remote working options to high risk staff if their job duties permit.
Environments & Air Flow	Conduct any school activity or instruction outside when possible. Being outside is not a substitute for any other protective action. Within the scope of and compliance with existing school safety plans, make every effort to mix as much outside air into buildings (ie, open doors and windows) while working to maintain a reasonably comfortable indoor environment. Within system design capabilities, set HVAC systems to bring in the maximum amount of outside air and improve central air filtration by increasing air filtration to as high as possible (MERV 13 or 14 recommended). Operate ventilation systems and exhaust fans continuously 24 hours a day, 7 days a week whenever possible. Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
Symptom Checks	Require staff and students check themselves for all COVID-19 <u>symptoms</u> each day before coming to school. Whenever possible use on-site symptom and exposure screenings. Staff or students may not enter school if they 1) have symptoms, 2) have a household member with symptoms, 3) have a household member that is a confirmed case, or 4) are themselves quarantined as a contact of a confirmed case. Consider a daily online symptom check form that parents must complete. Require students who develop a fever or symptoms at school to wear a surgical mask, be separated from other students, and be picked up within 1 hour of notification to the parent or guardian. A fever is considered a temperature above 100°F.
Physical Distancing	Schools should follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines for physical distancing. The CDC defines acceptable physical distancing in schools as a minimum of 6 feet between people. According to the AAP, desks or student-stations in school should be placed ideally 6 feet apart and at a minimum 3 feet apart. Schools that cannot meet these guidelines must make every attempt to maximize the distance between all students and staff. For the purpose of identifying exposures that will not meet the “break” of quarantine guidelines (see MCPH CCIQ guidelines), maintain a list of rooms with desks or student-stations spaced less than 3 feet apart. Wherever possible use physical barriers, tape, lines, cones, or other methods to guide and protect students and staff. Barriers are not a substitute for facial coverings, distancing, or any other protective action. Physical distancing is not a substitute for facial coverings or any other protective action. During instruction, staff may briefly be close to students if necessary; this time must be minimal (ideally less than 5 minutes) and facial coverings must be worn. Close unnecessary areas where you believe people may gather in groups. This section does not apply to transportation.



Protective Actions – Requirements and Considerations

<p>Facial Coverings</p>	<p>All staff, students, and visitors (including outside contractors) must wear a cloth face covering while at school. Coverings must be worn over the nose, mouth, and chin. Students who may be exempted from a cloth facial covering are those who 1) have a significant behavioral/psychological issue undergoing treatment that is exacerbated specifically by the use of a facial covering (ie, severe anxiety or a tactile aversion), 2) are living with severe autism or with extreme developmental delay who may become agitated or anxious wearing a mask, and 3) have a facial deformity that causes airway obstruction. When possible, students who are exempted from a cloth facial covering should wear a clear face shield. Students who refuse to wear a cloth facial covering (or a clear face shield if they meet an aforementioned exemption) may not be in the school. Facial coverings may be removed for eating during school-designated breakfast and lunch times (or snack time for elementary students) and <i>briefly</i> to get a drink of water. Facial coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing or any other protective action. Mask breaks occurring in the classroom or on a bus will nullify “Breaking Quarantine” guidelines outlined by the Ohio Department of Health. Reference the Madison County CCIQ guidance document for additional information on current quarantine guidelines. Provide education to staff and students on 1) how to properly wear coverings, 2) not touch coverings while they are on, 3) how to clean or sanitize your hands after touching the covering, 4) how to properly remove a facial covering, and 5) how to properly put a facial covering back on. (<i>consider explaining to elementary students to remove their face covering if they have to vomit</i>)</p> <p>*Intervention specialists, title teachers, speech teachers, pre-k through third grade teachers, teachers with a documented medical hearing issue, and all of their associated students must use cloth face coverings; however, a clear face shield may be used in lieu of a cloth face covering only during times of instruction when the observation of mouth features and movement are needed provided that the physical distancing protective action can be maintained. OT/PT/MD teachers, who work with students who cannot wear any type of facial covering, must wear a cloth face covering and a clear face shield.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p>Communicate plans to staff, students, and families about protective actions, rules, and expectations ahead of time. Establish and maintain clear expectations of behavior including consequences for not following the rules. Develop and maintain a plan for enforcing rules and guidelines ahead of time including who will enforce the rules and the process for warnings and corresponding actions.</p>
<p>Signs</p>	<p>Post signs listing all <u>symptoms of COVID-19</u>. Signs should instruct individuals with symptoms OR individuals with a household member at home with symptoms to stay home (they are not permitted in the school). <u>Post signs</u> encouraging good hygienic practices, cleaning, face coverings, and distancing.</p>



Protective Actions – Requirements and Considerations	
Time & Flow Control	Staff and students should spend the minimum amount of time in the building as possible. Set daily times for the building to be open and closed to students and staff (except for custodial or similar staff). Stagger arrival and departure times. Make additional entrances and exits available to students to avoid clustering. Monitor flow of traffic into and out of buildings. Consider shortened school days combined with remote learning or alternating in-person and remote days.
Surfaces, Objects, & Cleaning	Remove any objects and surfaces that are not necessary. Remove common or shared items and displays that people are likely to touch. Clean frequently touched common areas, objects, and equipment between classes and at least every 2 hours while school is in session. Clean objects, surfaces, equipment, and shared items between uses. Use <u>cleaning products</u> that are effective against coronavirus.
Hand Hygiene	Provide handwashing areas and make sure soap/paper towels are filled. Provide hand sanitizer in all rooms and in high-touch and high-flow areas. Encourage staff and students to bring their own personal hand sanitizer.
Contact Tracing	Provide names and phone numbers of all staff and students to Madison County Public Health who may have been in close contact with a positive case two days before 1) the onset of symptoms, or, 2) the date of testing. (<i>refer to the Case, Contact, Isolation, and Quarantine Guidance document for additional details on contact tracing and return-to-school procedures</i>)



Focus Areas – Requirements and Considerations	
Transportation	Encourage parents to individually transport their children/household to school and avoid carpooling. Make all reasonable attempts to maintain physical distancing of at least 3 to 6 feet between members of different households. When distancing is not practical, no more than 2 students per seat on a school bus. Cloth facial coverings are required for staff and students on a bus. Make every effort to mix as much outside air into the bus while working to maintain a reasonably comfortable interior environment. Open bus windows as much as possible while transporting students. Allow buses to air-out between morning and afternoon pickup/dropoff.
Open House & Conferences	Make all reasonable attempts to conduct virtually. Conduct in-person by appointment only. Stagger arrival and departure times. Require facial coverings for staff and all family members. Maintain physical distancing and all other protective actions.
Visitors	Cancel all social visits that are not essential. Limit visitors permitted inside the school to those who are critically necessary for the staff or students.
Homerooms & Switching Classes	When practical for the subject being taught, move teachers from room to room (not students). Use live-streaming services to broadcast lessons to rooms.
Restrooms	Implement scheduled restroom times similar to what is used during state testing. The maximum number of people permitted in restrooms is equal to the number of stalls plus ½ the number of urinals.
Water Fountains	Ask students to provide their own water. Limit the use of water fountains to refilling bottles. Monitor water fountains and clean frequently.
Food	Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet while eating. Breakfast and lunch must be eaten in individual homerooms whenever possible to ensure cohorting. Common areas or cafeterias can be used as a second option. The same guidelines apply to staff lunch areas. Encourage people to bring their own food and drinks when possible. School-provided meals should be individually packaged whenever possible. Discourage snacks between meals unless they are needed for medical reasons or for elementary students. Provide handwashing or hand sanitizer before meals and snacks.
Assemblies & Gatherings	Do not conduct assemblies, pep rallies, gatherings, or other activities that put large numbers of people together outside the classroom setting.
Clubs, Committees, & Staff Meetings	Conduct activities remotely to reduce the overall time spent in the school building. If activities cannot be conducted remotely, ensure all required protective actions in this document are implemented and that, whenever possible, activities are conducted outside.



Focus Areas – Requirements and Considerations	
Field Trips	Cancel all field trips. Consider coordinating virtual field trips.
Latchkey	Consider cancelling latchkey and after-school childcare to reduce the overall time spent in the school building. If latchkey is not cancelled, ensure all required protective actions are implemented and that, when possible, latchkey is outside.
Recess	Conduct recess outside and with a single homeroom. Instruct students to maintain physical distancing outside and monitor. If physical distancing can be reasonably maintained, facial coverings are not required outside during recess. Require students to wash their hands with soap and water when returning from outside recess. Clean equipment as often as practical. Use alternative activities for inside recess that maintain physical distancing and facial coverings.
Music	Conduct choir and band outdoors whenever weather permits. Indoor music activities must follow both mandatory and recommended best practices outlined in ODH state guidelines for band and choir and must also adhere to the following: 1) use the largest room possible for activities, 2) make every effort to mix outside air into music rooms, 3) multi-layer facial coverings must be worn at all times (no medical exemptions honored), 4) use bell covers or instrument socks, 5) social distancing of at least 6 feet between members of different households must be maintained at all times, 6) participants must be in rows facing the same direction, 7) singing/playing activities may not exceed 30 minutes, and 8) allow for one complete air exchange between different groups of students (if the HVAC air exchange time is undocumented, allow for 60 minutes between groups/activities).
Sports	Adhere to all state orders and safety guidelines for school sports practices, training, competitions, games, and activities.
Physical Education	Conduct activities outdoors. Instruct students to maintain physical distancing outside and monitor. If physical distancing can be reasonably maintained, facial coverings are not required during outside physical education class. Indoor instruction is limited to activities that are not strenuous (those that do not generally cause heavy breathing or coughing). Follow requirements for cleaning equipment between uses and classes.
Special Area Subjects (i.e., library, art, music)	Conduct in homerooms when possible using strategies such as “art on a cart.” Limit shared equipment and supplies. Follow requirements for cleaning equipment between uses and classes.
Science & Computer Labs	Limit shared equipment and supplies. Follow requirements for cleaning equipment between uses and classes.