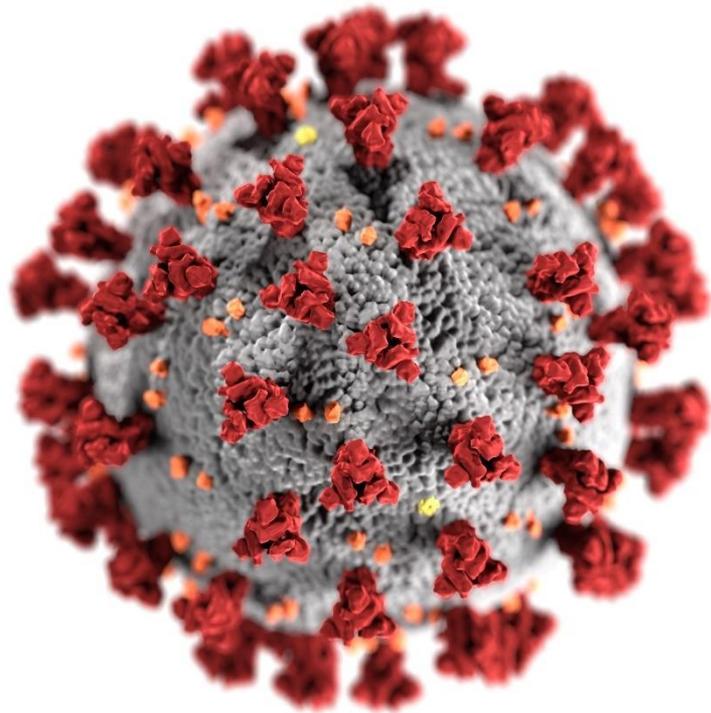


Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation

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**CDC Community Interventions and
Critical Populations Task Force**



Disclaimer

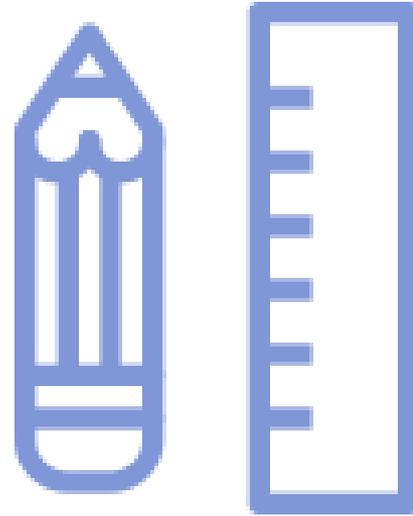
- This presentation is meant to convey critical information for K-12 administrators, school district administrators, and K-12 teachers to consider when developing plans for continuing school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The information covered in this presentation is not exhaustive.
- For access to CDC's full suite of materials and resources for K-12 settings, please see Schools and Child Care Programs:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

The information in this presentation is current as of **March 4, 2021**.



Overview

- Data and Statistics
- Science Brief: Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in Schools
- Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation



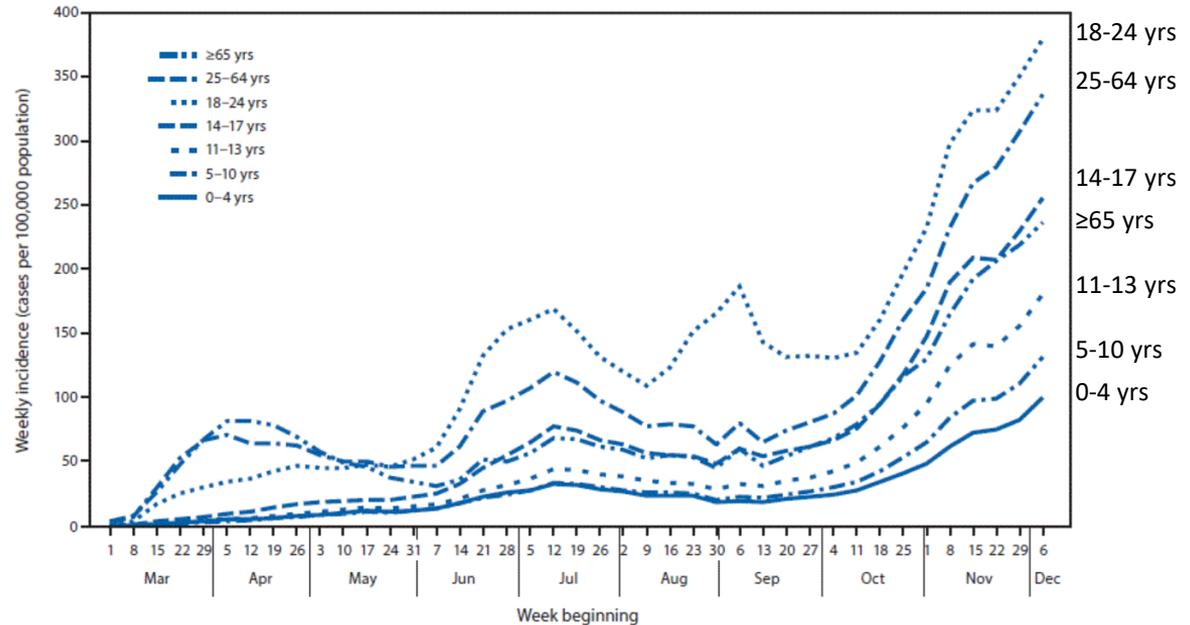
Data and Statistics



COVID-19 Trends Among Persons Aged 0–24 Years — United States, March 1–December 12, 2020

- COVID-19 cases in children, adolescents, and young adults have increased since summer 2020, with weekly incidence higher in each successive age group.
- Trends among children and adolescents aged 0–17 years paralleled those among adults.

FIGURE 1. COVID-19 weekly incidence,*,† by age group — United States, March 1–December 12, 2020§



CDC Science Brief: Transmission in Schools



Schools and SARS-CoV-2 Transmission

- Children are less likely to become infected and get sick from SARS-CoV-2
- Introduction and spread in schools reflects community transmission
- Students are not the primary sources of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 among adults in schools
- Spread of COVID-19 in middle schools and high schools is more common than spread in elementary schools
- Consistently implementing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 limits the spread within schools



School In-person Learning and Prevention

- When prevention strategies – especially mask use and physical distancing – are used, the risk of transmission in schools is decreased
- Studies of COVID-19 transmission in schools with consistent use of multiple prevention strategies have shown success in limiting spread
- Participation in sports and extracurricular activities may increase risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in schools
- **Evidence suggests that when schools strictly implement prevention strategies, transmission within schools can be limited**



Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools



Essential Elements of Safe In-person Learning

- Consistent implementation of **layered prevention strategies** to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools
- **Indicators of community transmission** to reflect level of risk
- **Phased prevention** and learning modes based on levels of community transmission

Additional layers of COVID-19 prevention

- **Testing** to identify people with SARS-CoV-2 infection
- **Vaccination for teachers and school staff**

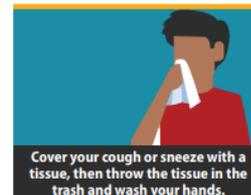
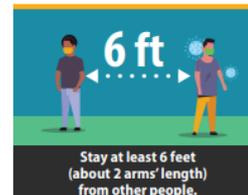


Prevention Strategies to Reduce Transmission

- All schools should use and layer 5 key [prevention strategies](#)
 - Universal and correct use of [masks](#)
 - [Physical distancing](#) (6 feet or more)
 - [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
 - [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities
 - [Contact tracing](#) in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Two prevention priorities
 - Universal and correct use of **masks should be required for all**
 - **Physical distancing** (at least 6 feet) should be maximized to the greatest extent possible

Stop the Spread of Germs

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.



Levels of Community Transmission

Indicator ¹	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days ²	0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive during the past 7 days ³	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

¹If the two indicators suggest different levels, the actions corresponding to the higher threshold should be chosen. County-level data on total new cases in the past 7 days and test percent positivity are available on the County View tab in [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#).

²Total number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 7 days is calculated by adding the number of new cases in the county/community in the last 7 days divided by the population in the county and multiplying by 100,000.

³Percentage of positive diagnostic and screening nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) during the last 7 days is calculated by dividing the number of positive tests in the county during the last 7 days by the total number of tests resulted over the last 7 days. Additional information can be found on the [Calculating Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Laboratory Test Percent Positivity: CDC Methods and Considerations for Comparisons and Interpretation](#) webpage.

Testing to Identify Individuals with SARS-CoV-2 Infection and Limit Outbreaks

- Diagnostic testing: **all schools** should offer referrals to any student, teacher, staff member who has symptoms at school and those who were exposed.
- Screening testing: **some schools** may elect to use screening testing as a strategy to identify cases and prevent secondary transmission



Screening Testing by Level of Community Transmission

Low Transmission¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
All schools implement 5 key prevention strategies: universal and correct use of masks required; physical distancing; handwashing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation Diagnostic testing²: symptomatic students, teachers, and staff and close contacts referred for diagnostic testing			
Screening testing³			
Routine screening testing of teachers and staff offered at least once per week			
No screening testing for students	Routine screening testing of teachers and staff offered once per week ⁴		

¹Levels of community transmission defined as total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days (low, 0-9; moderate, 10-49; substantial, 50-99; high, ≥100) and percentage of positive tests in the past 7 days (low, <5%; moderate, 5-7.9%; substantial, 8-9.9%; high, ≥10%).

²Diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2 is intended to identify occurrence of SARS-CoV-2 infection at the individual level and is performed when there is a reason to suspect that an individual may be infected, such as having symptoms or suspected recent exposure.

³Screening testing is intended to identify infected asymptomatic individuals who may be contagious so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission.

⁴Schools may consider testing a random sample of at least 10% of students or may conduct pooled testing of cohorts/pods for screening testing in areas of moderate and substantial community transmission.

⁵If physical distancing of at least 6 feet among all students, teachers, and staff within a class, cohort, or pod is not possible at all times, schools should ensure physical distancing between classes, cohorts, and pods.

Considerations in Implementing Screening Testing in K-12 Schools

- Priorities for testing when applicable
 - Teachers and staff
 - High school students, then middle school students
 - Elementary school students
- Prioritize access to testing in **schools that serve populations who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19**
 - Communities with moderate or large proportions of groups that experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19
 - Geographic areas with limited access to testing



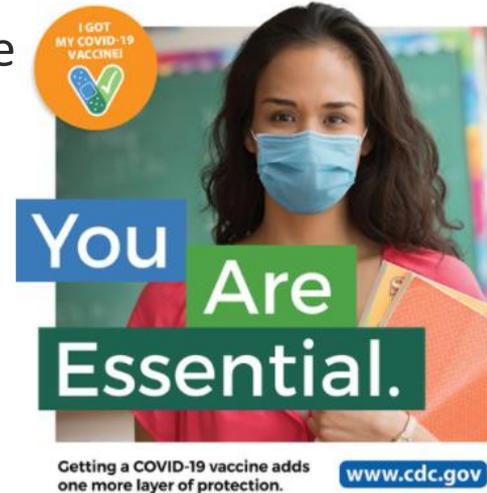
Elements Needed for Screening Testing in K-12 Schools

- Dedicated infrastructure, staffing, and resources to support school-based testing
- CLIA certificate of waiver
- Mechanism to report all testing results
- Timely reporting of results (<24 hours) is key
- Ways to obtain parental consent for minors and informed consent for adults
- Physical space to conduct testing safely and privately, protocols to maintain confidentiality of results
- Plans to confirm result of screening testing, if applicable need to be established



Vaccination for Teachers and School Staff Prioritized in 1b

- Added layers of prevention and protection
- More than 30 states have already taken steps to vaccinate educators— on March 2nd , the President directed all states, territories, and the District of Columbia to do the same.
- Minimizing barriers to accessing vaccination for teachers and other frontline essential workers is critical. Vaccine clinics at or close to the place of work are optimal
- Access to vaccination should not be a precondition for reopening schools for in-person instruction
- Even after teachers and staff are vaccinated, schools need to continue prevention measures



CDC COVID-19 School Resources



Landing page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

For K-12 School Administrators:

- Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- FAQ for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>
- Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>
- Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>
- Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for SARS-CoV-2 Testing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html>

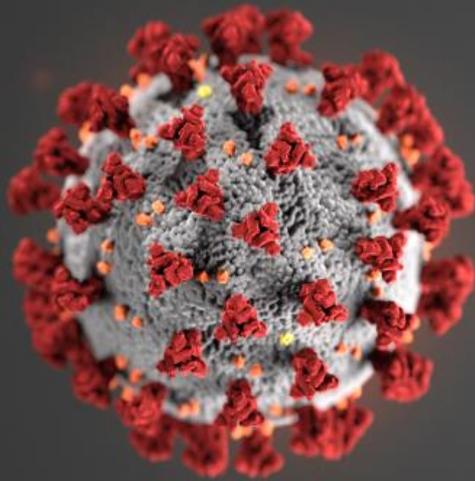
CDC COVID-19 School Resources



Landing page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

For Parents, Guardians, Caregivers:

- Making Decisions about Children Attending In-person School During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>
- Back to In-Person Learning: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/back-to-school-decision-checklist.pdf>



For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

