

Pathways to Safe In-Person Operations of K-12 Schools

February 17, 2021

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments



Safe Supportive Learning

Engagement | Safety | Environment

NCSSLE Website: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). At the top, there is a navigation bar with a dropdown menu for "View Resources by Topic" and a "GO" button. To the right is a search bar with a "SEARCH" button, followed by "Stay Connected" and "About" buttons, and social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Below the navigation bar is the main header area. On the left is the NCSSLE logo and the text "National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments" and "Safe Supportive Learning Engagement | Safety | Environment". To the right are several menu items with dropdown arrows: "School Climate Improvement", "Engagement Topics", "Safety Topics", "Environment Topics", "Events, Products, and TA", and "States and Grantees".

The main content area features a large video player on the left showing a 3D model of a coronavirus. Below the video is a caption: "Plan, Prepare, and Respond to the Coronavirus". To the right of the video is a blue box titled "Upcoming Event" with the text "Pathways to Safe In-Person Operations of K-12 Schools" and "February 17, 2021 - 03:00pm EST", followed by a "Learn More" button. Below this is a calendar icon and a button that says "DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?".

At the bottom of the page, there is a "Welcome!" section followed by a line of text: "The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) offers information and technical assistance to States, districts,

Logistics

Zoom Control Panel

Audio Settings ^



Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting

Technical Issues

For assistance during the webinar, please contact Shoshana Rabinovsky at srabinovsky@air.org.

This webinar is being recorded and will be archived at the following location:
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/pathways-safe-person-operations-k-12-schools>

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Agenda

- 1 Introduction and Logistics
- 2 Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation
- 3 Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools
- 4 Questions and Answers
- 5 Wrap Up & Closing

Speakers



Greta Massetti, PhD, MPH

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Co-Lead of the Community Interventions and Critical Populations (CICP) Task Force; Branch Chief and Senior Epidemiologist in the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control



Donna Harris-Aikens, JD

U.S. Department of Education: Senior Advisor for Policy and Planning in the Office of the Secretary



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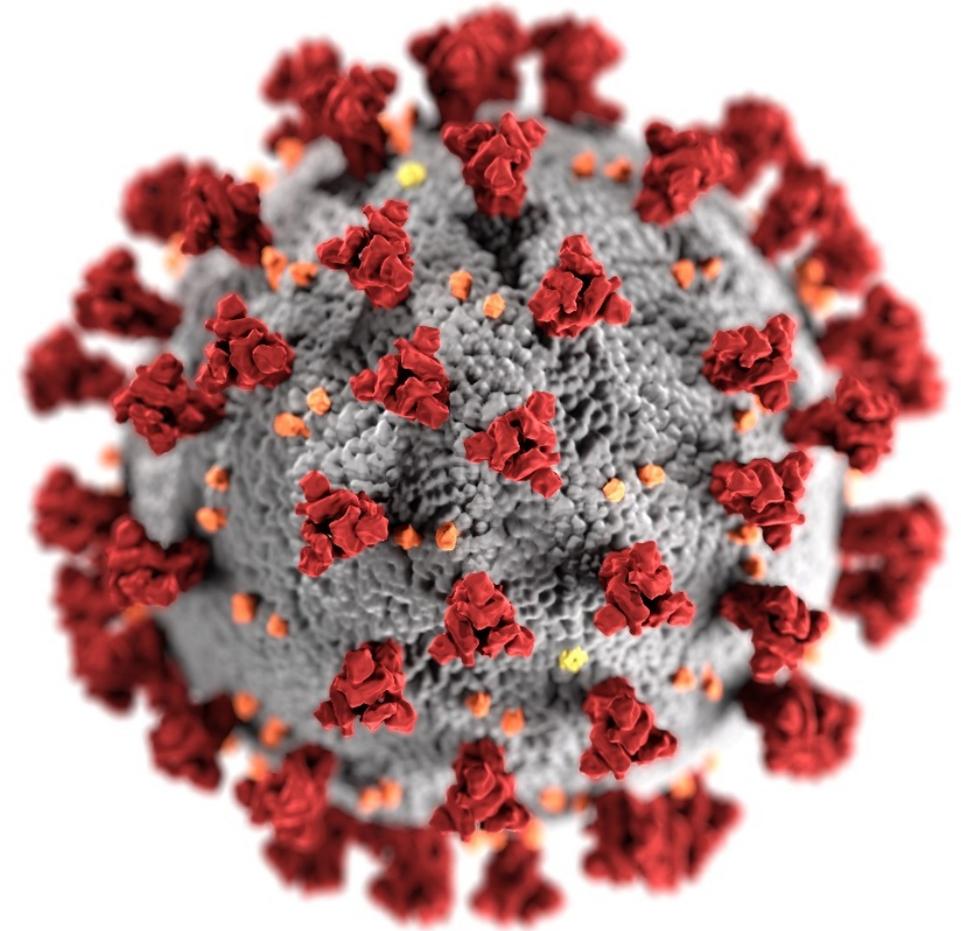
Initial Polling Questions

1. Are you a:
 1. Teacher
 2. School staff
 3. School administrator
 4. Education agency staff
 5. Public health professional
 6. Other (Please specify in the chat.)
2. In your community, is instruction being delivered:
 1. In-person
 2. Hybrid
 3. Virtually



Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation

Greta Massetti, PhD
CDC Community Interventions and Critical Populations Task Force



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Disclaimer

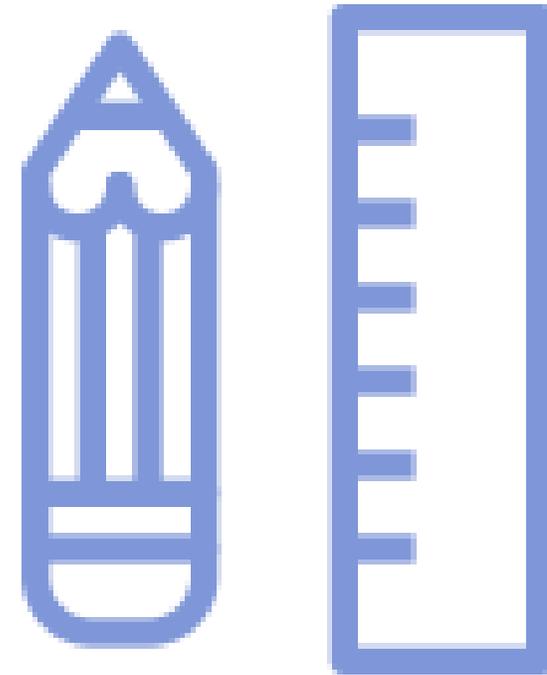
- This presentation is meant to convey critical information for K-12 administrators, school district administrators and K-12 teachers to consider when developing plans for continuing school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The information covered in this presentation is not exhaustive.
- For 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 February 16, 2021.



Overview

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

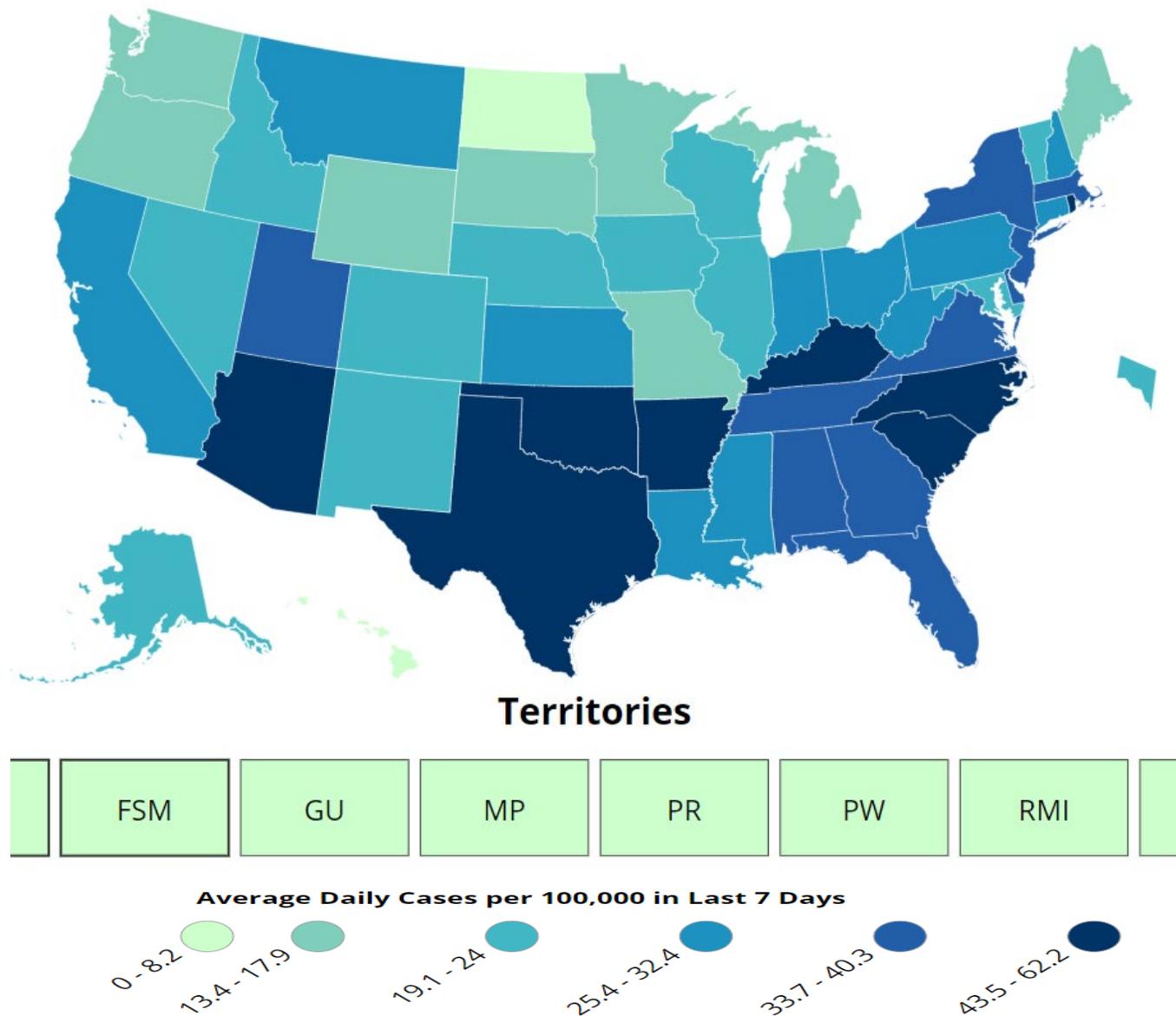


Data and Statistics



US COVID-19 cases reported to the CDC in the Last 7 Days, by State/Territory

- As of February 16, 2021
 - Cases in last 7 days
 - **602,906**
 - Deaths in the last 7 days
 - **21,411**
 - Total number of cases
 - **27,542,421**
 - Total deaths
 - **485,070**

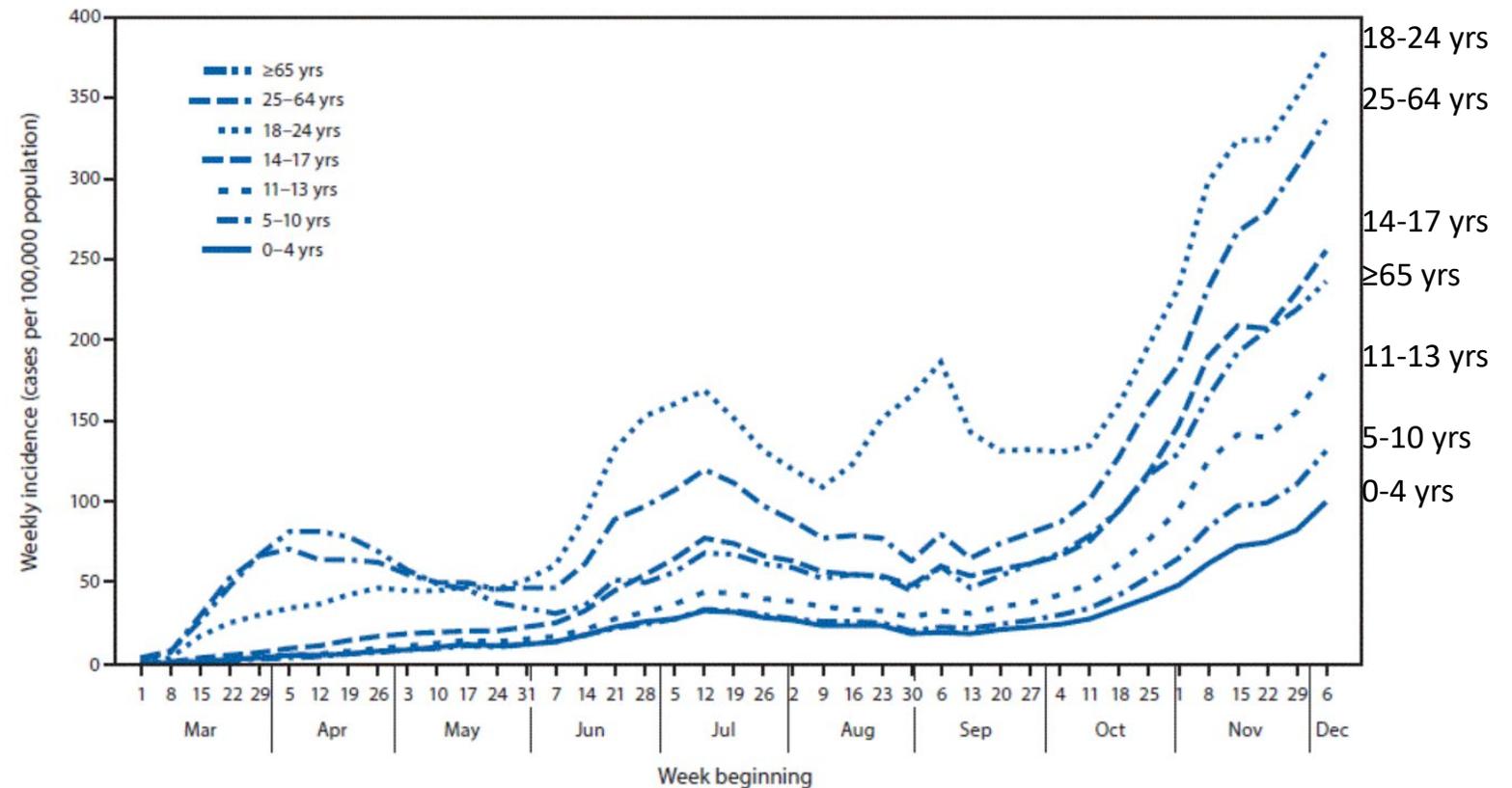


COVID-19 Trends Among Persons Aged 0–24 Years — United States, March 1–December 12, 2020

COVID-19 cases in children, adolescents, and young adults have increased since summer 2020, with weekly incidence higher in each successively increasing 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[§]



https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7003e1.htm?s_cid=mm7003e1_w

CDC Science Brief: Transmission in Schools



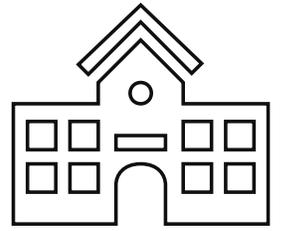
Key Question on School-Related Transmission



Which **activities** pose the greatest risk of school-related transmission?

- **Activities where participants cannot:**
 - Maintain physical distance
 - Wear face masks consistently and correctly
- **Examples**
 - Social gatherings
 - Extracurricular activities

Limited Transmission in Educational Settings



- US-based and international studies of secondary transmission in schools
- CDC investigations in Mississippi (December 2020 MMWR) and Wisconsin (January 2021 MMWR)

 **With proper mitigation strategies, K-12 schools can open for in-person learning with minimal in-school transmission of SARS-CoV-2**

- COVID-19 outbreaks associated with high school sports in Florida (January 2021 MMWR)

 **To maximize in-person education, high-contact athletic activities should be postponed during periods with high levels of SARS-CoV-2 community transmission**



https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/science-and-research/transmission_k_12_schools.html

Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools



Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools

- Guidance to inform decision making about **when** and **how** schools can provide in-person instruction.
- Contains an **integrated package of tools** to support safe in-person instruction.
- When schools implement layered mitigation strategies with strong adherence to mitigation, **transmission within schools can be limited**.
- Not a mandate for in-person instruction.



Health Equity Considerations

- The absence of in-person education may disadvantage children from low-resourced communities (including those with large representation of racial and ethnic minority groups, English learners, and students with disabilities).
- In-person instruction in K-12 schools must consider efforts to promote fair access to healthy educational environments for students and staff.
- Health equity considerations built into all aspects of K-12 Operational Strategy
 - Mitigation strategies
 - Phased mitigation
 - Testing
 - Vaccination



Essential Elements of Safe In-person Learning

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

Additional layers of COVID-19 prevention

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

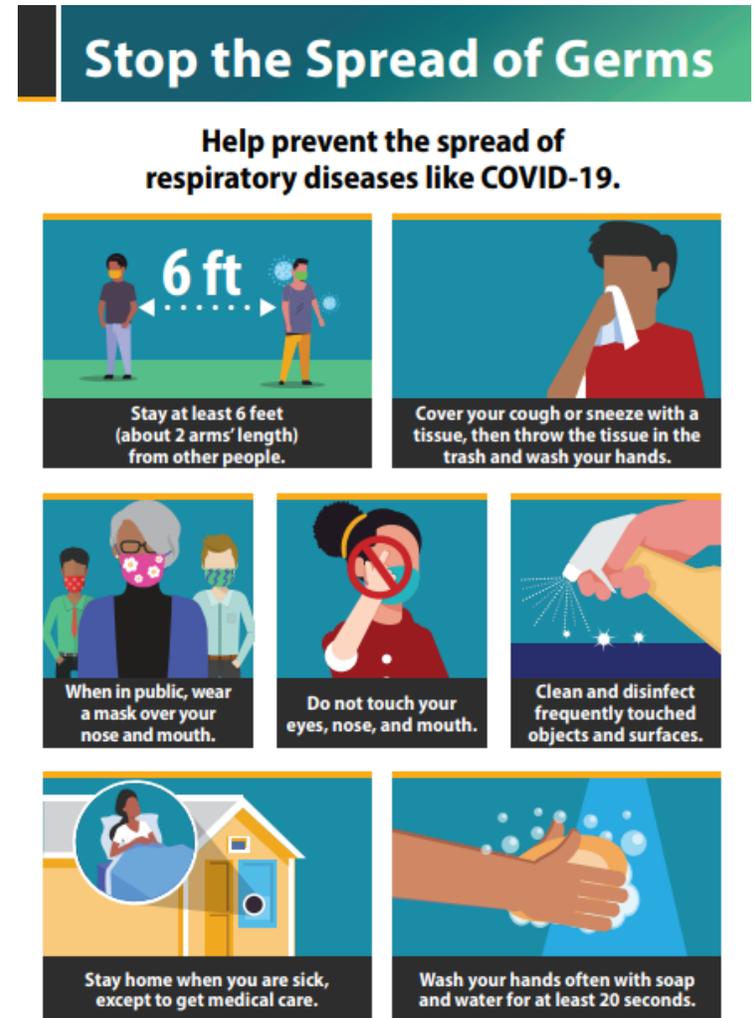


Core Concepts for Safe K-12 School Reopening

- Schools should be the **last setting to close and the first to reopen** when they can do so safely
- At all levels of community transmission, there are **options for in-person instruction**
- In-person learning for elementary school students might have less risk of in-school transmission than for middle school and high school students
- Students, teachers, and staff who are at high risk of severe illness or who live with people at high risk should be provided virtual options
- Schools are encouraged to use cohorting or podding of students, especially in moderate (yellow), substantial (orange), and high (red) levels
- In-person instruction should be prioritized over sports, extracurricular activities, and school events

Mitigation Strategies to Reduce Transmission

- All schools should use and layer 5 key [mitigation 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 mitigation priorities:
 - Universal and correct use of **masks should be required**
 - **Physical distancing** (at least 6 feet) should be maximized to the greatest extent possible



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.

Phased Mitigation by Level of Community Transmission

Low Transmission ¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<p>All schools: universal and correct use of masks required; implementing other key mitigation strategies: handwashing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and healthy facilities; contact tracing and diagnostic testing in combination with quarantine and isolation</p> <p>Diagnostic testing²: Symptomatic students, teachers, and staff and close contacts referred for diagnostic testing</p>			
<p>K-12 schools open for full in-person instruction</p> <p>Physical distancing of 6 feet or more to the greatest extent possible³</p>		<p>Elementary schools in hybrid mode⁴; physical distancing of 6 feet or more required</p>	
		<p>Middle/high schools in hybrid mode; physical distancing of 6 feet or more required</p>	<p>Middle/high schools delivering virtual instruction⁵ unless mitigation is in place and have few cases</p>
<p>Sports and extracurricular activities occur with masks required, physical distancing of 6 feet or more to the greatest extent possible⁶</p>	<p>Sports and extracurricular activities occur with masks and physical distancing of 6 feet or more required</p>	<p>Sports and extracurricular activities occur only if they can be held outdoors, with masks and physical distancing of 6 feet or more</p>	<p>Sports and extracurricular activities virtual only</p>

Additional Considerations in Phased Mitigation

- Making decisions about learning modes
 - Monitoring cases, number of people in quarantine, mitigation
 - Input of members of school community and public health
 - Assessing trends over time
- Unplanned school closures
 - Classrooms or schools experiencing an active outbreak
 - Schools in areas experiencing rapid or persistent rises in case incidence or severe burden on health care capacity

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

Low Transmission ¹ Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<p>All schools implement 5 key mitigation 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</p> <p>Diagnostic testing²: symptomatic students, teachers, and staff and close contacts referred for diagnostic testing</p>			
<p>Screening testing³</p>			
<p>Routine screening testing of teachers and staff offered at least once per week</p>			
<p>No screening testing for students</p>	<p>Routine screening testing of teachers and staff offered once per week⁴</p>		

Considerations in Implementing Screening Testing in K-12 Schools

- Priorities for testing:
 - Teachers and staff
 - High school students, then middle school students
 - Elementary school students
- Prioritize access to testing in **schools that serve populations experiencing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases or severe disease.**
 - 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

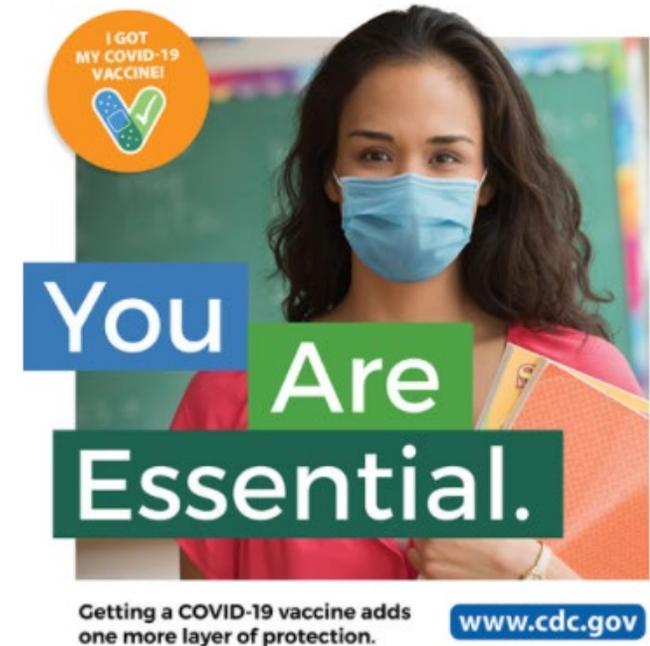


Vaccination for Teachers and School Staff Prioritized in 1b

- Added layer of mitigation and protection
- Jurisdictional officials should consider giving high priority to teachers in early phases of vaccine distribution
- 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 mitigation measures

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6949e1.htm?s_cid=mm6949e1_w

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm695152e2.htm?s_cid=mm695152e2_w



CDC COVID-19 School Resources



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

For K-12 School Administrators:

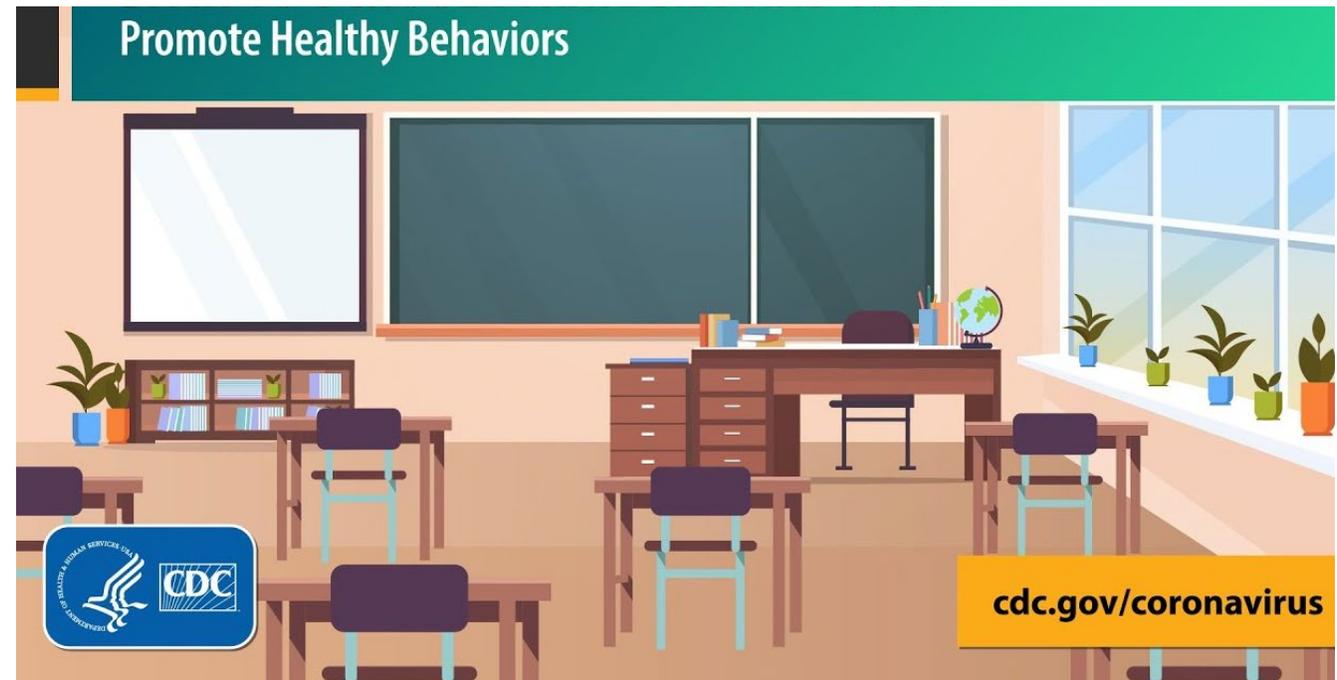
- Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- FAQ for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>
- Guidance 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>

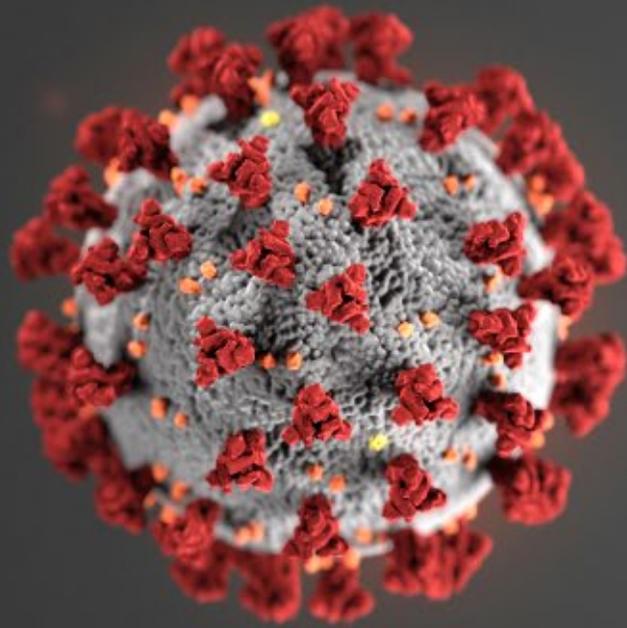
For Parents, Guardians, Caregivers:

- 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>

In Conclusion

Many K-12 schools that have implemented mitigation strategies have been able to offer for in-person instruction safely. This operational strategy presents a pathway to reopen schools and help them remain open through consistent use of mitigation strategies, especially universal and correct use of masks and physical distancing





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.





Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools

Donna Harris-Aikens

Senior Advisor for Policy and Planning in the Office of the Secretary

February 17, 2021

ED's GUIDANCE DESIGNED AS A SUPPLEMENT

- Practical Examples for Mitigation Strategies, such as:
 - Masking Practices
 - Physical Distancing
- Roadmap for Stakeholder Engagement
- Preview of Topics for the Next Volume

ED remains committed to partnering with those who are steeped in the work of safe reopening, and collaborating to find solutions that work for students, educators, families, and communities.

Closing Polling Question

3. Select the topic(s) you feel additional information is needed. (Select all that apply.)

- Consistent implementation of layered mitigation strategies to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools
- Indicators of community transmission to reflect level of community risk
- Phased mitigation and learning modes based on levels of community transmission
- Testing to identify individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection to limit transmission and outbreaks
- Vaccination for teachers and school staff, and in communities, as soon as supply allows

Questions and Answers



Feedback Form

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2021CDC2>

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Pathways to Safe Delivery of In-Person Instruction in K-12 Schools

Thank you for attending the webinar, *Pathways to Safe Delivery of In-Person Instruction in K-12 Schools: CDC's K-12 Schools Operational Strategy and the Department of Education's Handbook for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary Schools*, on February 17, 2021. To best serve you, we would greatly appreciate receiving your feedback on the webinar.

1. Prior to the webinar, how knowledgeable were you about the webinar's topic?

Not At All Knowledgeable

Somewhat Knowledgeable

Very Knowledgeable

2. Overall this webinar was a good use of my time.

Strongly Disagree

Somewhat Disagree

Somewhat Agree

Strongly Agree

Thank You!

Should you have any questions, please contact us at NCSSLE@air.org or 800-258-8413. We are happy to help!

NCSSLE website:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

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