

Marion City Schools COVID-19 2021-2022 Protocols

Marion City Schools will continue to follow regulations and guidance from the Marion Public Health Department and the CDC regarding COVID-19.

The ongoing health and safety of students, staff, and volunteers remains paramount. While great strides have been made in controlling the spread of COVID-19, the virus remains a health threat.

Our goal is to keep students back in school, in-person, five days a week. With the recent uptick in confirmed cases as well as the new Delta Variant we have to remain diligent. While this information is ever changing, we will continue to follow the CDC's guidance and work with Marion Public Health to monitor the levels of community transmission. We will keep families updated with any and all changes to these policies throughout the school year.

Vaccination

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving high levels of COVID-19 vaccination among eligible students as well as teachers, staff, and household members is one of the most critical strategies to help schools safely conduct in-person learning and allow safe participation in extracurricular activities and sports. People who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 are at low risk of symptomatic or severe infection. Currently, Ohioans ages 5 years and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Individuals do not need a booster shot to be considered fully vaccinated.

Masking

COVID-19 is an airborne respiratory virus. Wearing masks has been proven to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets that are created when people talk, laugh, sing, cough and sneeze. Last school year, Ohio researchers conducted an evaluation of interventions implemented in schools to help slow the spread of the virus including wearing masks and

distancing. Their research found that wearing masks combined with distancing was effective in slowing the spread of the virus. **Marion City Schools strongly recommends that staff and students K-12 wear masks in school, but it is not required. Students are however required to wear a mask when on a school bus, per the Ohio department of Health Order.**

[Mask Exemption Form](#)

Social Distancing

CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. Marion City Schools will stress social distancing wherever possible without compromising the integrity of instruction.

Isolation/Quarantine

Contact tracing will continue by reporting new diagnoses of COVID-19 to Marion Public Health as soon as they are discovered. School officials will notify, to the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible after a positive test. Identified close contacts **without symptoms** will be able to choose to quarantine for 5 days from the last contact with the person who tested positive **or** stay in school and mask at all times, **including outdoors**, for 10 days. Quarantined students can return after 5 days if there are no symptoms present and wear a mask at all times for days 6-10.

Test to Play

Asymptomatic contacts in a school environment may continue to participate in extracurricular activities if they:

- Wear a mask when able. This includes wearing a mask during transportation, such as traveling on a team bus to and from games; while in locker rooms; while sitting or standing on the sidelines; and any time the mask will not interfere with breathing, the activity in which they are participating, or create a safety hazard.
- Test on initial notification of exposure to COVID-19.
- Test again on day 5 following exposure to COVID-19. If they are negative at this time, they will test out of quarantine and can resume normal activities.

Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others.

Mask to Stay/Test to Play Option

Quarantining students at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 in a school environment has the unintended consequence of reducing in-school learning and can be an added strain on parents, schools, and local health departments (LHDs). While vaccination and mask usage are critical components to ensuring a safe school environment, we offer an in-school alternative to quarantining students and school staff at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 in a school environment to support in-school learning and reduce the strain.

This recommendation is informed by a growing body of national experience, a pilot in Warren County, and experience shared by other LHDs that points toward a low number of individuals with direct contact to a COVID-19 positive individual within a school setting who convert to positive cases. Based on this information and the success of the Warren County pilot, we recommend the following for K-12 students and staff exposed to COVID-19 in a school setting.

Please note: Eligibility to participate in mask to stay/test to play is contingent on the exposure being in the school setting or school-related activities. This does not apply to household exposures or exposures outside of the school setting or school-related activities.

Mask to Stay

Direct contacts, regardless of vaccination or masking status, may remain in the classroom environment if they do the following:

- Wear a mask for 10 days after their last date of exposure.
- Self-monitor, or parent-monitor, for [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19 (regardless of level of severity).

Direct contacts for COVID-19 are those individuals who are identified as being directly exposed to COVID-19 by the positive case. Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus and does not require physical contact to spread. It is spread through sneezing, coughing, talking, and breathing. These factors should be considered when determining level of exposure and direct contacts. Best practice for distancing is 3 ft with everyone masked, 6 ft if the individual is not masked.

Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended.

Parents and students are responsible for symptom monitoring; however, if nurses/school staff see a child exhibiting symptoms they should act [accordingly](#).

We recognize that some students are unable to wear a mask because of a medical condition or developmental disability as recognized by their medical provider. In these instances, we recommend that LHDs and schools work together to determine if there is a safe way of allowing these students to remain in the school setting. When making this determination, the level of risk and the safety and health of other students must be considered.

To assess whether an unmasked student can safely remain in the classroom setting, consider:

- *The masking policy of the school.*
 - *Universal masking policies reduce the risk of spread.*
 - *The more students who are wearing masks, the less the virus can spread. This reduces risk.*
- *The testing policy of the school.*
 - *Testing is another strategy that schools could choose to implement.*
 - *The more testing a school does, the greater the chance of identifying and isolating positive cases to reduce the risk of infecting others.*
 - *If districts are planning to allow an unmasked student to remain in the classroom setting, the student should be tested daily.*
- *The social distancing strategy of the school.*
 - *Maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more around the exposed and direct contact without a mask reduces risk.*
- *The ability of the student to follow mitigation strategies/behaviors.*
 - *Proper hand hygiene.*
 - *Proper cough etiquette.*
 - *Maintaining personal distance.*
- *Community transmission rates.*
 - *Community transmission rates should be considered.*
 - *High level of transmission rates in communities creates increased risk of transmission within the school environment and a greater chance for outbreaks.*

When used in combination, these strategies provide an increased layer of protection for the exposed direct contact and other students and staff. Layering mitigation strategies including masking, testing, social distancing and appropriate hygiene measures helps reduce the risk of virus spread.

Test to Play

Asymptomatic contacts may continue to participate in extracurricular activities if they do the following:

Wear a mask when able. (*This includes: transportation; locker rooms; sitting/standing on the sidelines; and anytime the mask will not interfere with breathing, the activity, or create a safety hazard.*)

- Test on initial notification of exposure to COVID-19.
- Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended.

Please Note: The tests referenced above are SARS-CoV-2 viral (PCR or antigen) tests. They should be proctored/observed by someone and cannot be an over the counter, at-home test that was self-administered without a proctor.

Districts should consider same day testing for athletic competitions where there is the potential of school-to-school exposure. If students involved in competitions become positive for COVID-19, contact tracing with other team does not need to occur; instead, send a general letter to notify the other team of the potential exposure.

These proposed changes incorporate mask wearing and testing to reduce the chance of spread of COVID-19 within structured school settings and provides a safe alternative to quarantine.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE COVID-19

Regardless of Symptoms or Vaccination Status

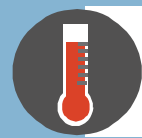


- Stay home for the next five days regardless of symptoms or vaccination status.



- Stay away from other people as much as possible (including those in your own household).

- If you can't stay away from other people, wear a three-layer (or better) mask.



- Do you have a fever or other symptoms that haven't started to get better on day six?



YES



- Stay home until your fever is gone and other symptoms are better.



- Wear a mask for the next five days.



NO



- Resume activities with a mask.
- Wear a mask for the next five days.

If you are having symptoms of COVID-19 and waiting for your test results, stay home until you get your results.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO HAS COVID-19**

And, Your COVID-19 Vaccines Are Up-to-Date

- If you received a booster dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.

or

- If you completed the primary series* of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine less than six months ago.

or

- If you completed the primary series* of Johnson & Johnson vaccine less than two months ago.



For
10
days

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days after your last exposure.
- Test on day five.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive, stay home.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 in the 90 days before your exposure.

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- If you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO HAS COVID-19**

And, You are Unvaccinated or Your Vaccines **Are Not** Up-to-Date

- If you are unvaccinated or only received one dose of Pfizer or Moderna.

or

- If you completed the primary series* of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine more than six months ago.

or

- If you completed the primary series* of Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than two months ago and no booster.



For
5
days

- Stay home for five days after your last exposure, then wear a mask around others for the next five days.
- Test on day five.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive, stay home.

*A primary series consists of one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine; or two doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine; or three doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine if you received an additional dose because you are immunocompromised.

Thank you to Clark County Combined Health District for sharing its graphic with the Ohio Department of Health.