



Richland Public Health

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As the State of Ohio COVID-19 public health orders ended on June 2, 2021, Ohio schools are now responsible for implementing measures and restrictions deemed necessary to address the impact and spread of COVID-19 in their buildings, on their grounds, and during transportation. Richland Public Health is providing information to assist Richland County, Ohio K-12 schools in their planning, based on guidance currently available from the Ohio Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Below is a summary of this guidance:

Masks are required on a bus or any public transit, per the Centers for Disease Control, regardless of vaccination status. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

CDC states that masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older), who are not fully vaccinated.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that all students (age 2 and older), along with staff, should wear masks in school, whether they have been vaccinated or not for COVID-19.

The Ohio Department of Health has issued their full K-12 School Guidance document and it is available at: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>. Key highlights are:

- Strongly recommends COVID-19 vaccinations for staff and eligible students.
- Layering prevention measures that include good ventilation, regular cleaning, hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick.
- Strongly recommends those who are not fully vaccinated to consistently wear masks, which have proven a very effective tool for reducing the spread of the virus.

At this time, Richland Public Health recommends that those who are unvaccinated wear masks while in school (except when eating); that all schools adhere to social distancing of at least 3 feet if all students are facing forward in the classroom; social distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals in all other areas of the school. As stated above, per current federal transportation requirement, masks are required by all on school buses.

Quarantine requirements for exposed staff and students will depend on whether they are vaccinated or not. Consequently, if a school is presented with a situation in which contact tracing indicates that vaccinated and/or unvaccinated students are found to have been exposed, local or state health orders may require that an unvaccinated student remain home from school during the quarantine period and allow a vaccinated student to remain in school and not quarantine. Although HB 244, effective date of October 11, 2021, prohibits all public educational institutions in Ohio from requiring vaccines that are currently only Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) or creating different requirements for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, this does not apply to the Public Health mandate for Reporting, nor Isolation and Quarantine measures as outlined in the ODH-IDCM.

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/docs/COVID-19-Quarantine-FAQs.pdf>

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/docs/covid-19-guidance-quarantine.pdf>

Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic as well as many other vaccine preventable diseases. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports. COVID-19 vaccinations for ages 18 and older are available at all Richland Public Health Immunization Sites and can be found at richlandhealth.org. CDC recommends everyone 12 years and older should get a COVID-19 vaccination as widespread vaccination is a critical tool to help stop the pandemic. To find a COVID-19 vaccination site for children ages 12 through 17 years of age visit gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov or book by phone at 1-833-4-ASK-ODH (1-833-427-5634).

As a final note, it is important to recognize that the pandemic response continues to evolve and therefore, this guidance is subject to change.

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