



Waukesha County

Department of Health and Human Services

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Thursday, May 06, 2021

WAUKESHA COUNTY TO AMEND K-12 QUARANTINE GUIDELINES

(Waukesha, WI)– Waukesha County, in partnership with area school districts, will immediately amend quarantine guidelines for K-12 schools that continue to commit to other COVID-19 mitigation efforts, including mask-wearing. The guidelines are designed to protect the overall health and well-being of students, teachers, and staff by balancing the lower risk of transmission in schools with the burden of quarantine.

Waukesha County school districts are among the largest in Wisconsin to conduct in-person learning throughout the 2020/2021 school year. Observations from local in-person learning have found very few cases of transmission after COVID-19 exposures in schools. Studies conducted in other US school districts in [Wisconsin](#), [Mississippi](#), [North Carolina](#), and others have observed similar trends. The conclusion reached is that the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school settings is low when preventative measures, primarily mask usage and distancing, are utilized in a monitored environment. Additionally, public health agencies [acknowledge](#) that when schools have layered mitigation measures in place COVID-19 transmission can be limited.

“We are utilizing information collected in our schools and others across the country to make informed decisions,” said Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow. “These efforts were never meant to be in place forever, and now the data is showing that it’s time to gradually peel back these layers to so we can begin to safely return to normal.”

Amended Quarantine Guidance

Quarantine guidelines will relax to allow students and adults possibly exposed to COVID-19 in school settings to continue in-person learning, if the following conditions are met:

- The school has committed to COVID-19 prevention policies, which include the following: mask wearing, implementing strategies to maximize distance between students, handwashing, ventilation, and management of students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
- Close contacts remain symptom-free and agree to self-monitor for symptoms a full 14 days following exposure. Close contacts will immediately remove themselves from the school environment if symptoms develop.
- Close contacts strongly consider getting tested on day 6 or 7 after exposure to help identify asymptomatic spread.

The above guidelines only apply to exposures occurring in school settings when mitigation efforts are in place. Unvaccinated students should not attend in-person school or participate in organized sports or extracurriculars if their COVID-19 exposure occurred outside of a school setting. Fully vaccinated students who are 14 days past their last dose of the vaccine are not required to quarantine due to any exposure if they remain symptom free.

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Waukesha County Public Health will evaluate the impact of relaxed guidelines on transmission in local schools throughout the summer and with consideration of the 2021/22 school year. Additional amendments to quarantine and other COVID-19 guidance may be adopted based on observations, in partnership with Waukesha County school districts.

“The trends we have observed, and what we have seen from districts across the country, show that we can provide children safe in-person education by reducing how much school they’re missing due to low-risk exposures,” said Arrowhead Union High School District Superintendent Laura Myrah. “By taking a measured approach we can ease into relaxing some measures without sacrificing safety, academics or extracurricular programs.”

Teenagers and Families Should Get Vaccinated to Keep Schools Safe and Healthy

Vaccination is key to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in the community. The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is currently approved for teens 16 and older and could be approved for children 12 and older in the near future. Parents should help children of those ages get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect their families and to allow schools to resume normal activities.

Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine after any exposure that occurs 14 days after their final dose of vaccine. Right now, 32.9% of 16- and 17-year-olds in Waukesha County have at least one dose of vaccine. However, higher numbers need to be achieved to prevent breakouts in this age group. Parents can find where to schedule Pfizer/BioNTech vaccination appointments at www.vaccinefinder.org.

Waukesha County will continue to work with schools, community organizations and local businesses to encourage everyone to take preventative actions and mitigate the spread of the virus. More information about vaccination and other resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic is available at www.waukeshacounty.gov/covid19.

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