

School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance Brief for School Staff

On August 5, 2022, the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) released an updated version of the [Requirements and Guidance to Mitigate COVID-19 Transmission in K-12 Schools and Child Cares](#). This COVID-19 guidance is important for school staff and administrators making critical decisions around COVID-19. The requirements and recommendations in the guidance mitigate risk around the spread of COVID-19.

Key points and changes to the school & childcare guidance are summarized below:

- Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home and isolate for 5 days. Repeating initial tests does not change this requirement. See the [What to do if a person is symptomatic flowchart](#) for more information. See page 2.
- Students or staff returning from 5 days of isolation should wear a well-fitted mask from days 6 to 10. Students and staff are also encouraged to test before returning to school. See page 6.
- If students or staff continue to test positive for COVID-19 after day 5, they must isolate for the full 10 days. See page 6.
- Schools are no longer required to directly notify high risk students and staff of exposure but must continue to have a process in place to inform students, staff, and families when there are cases or outbreaks in school. See page 3.
- The “test to stay” program is no longer a part of the recommendation section; however, testing protocols remain an important tool to ensure safe in-person learning. See page 10.
- Schools are required to respond to outbreaks. All suspected outbreaks (3 or more cases within a specified core group) must be reported to your local health jurisdiction. See page 4.

DOH continues to encourage schools to work with their local health jurisdictions to support COVID-19 mitigation strategies. DOH recognizes the great effort of staff and students to follow COVID-19 guidance and keep our school community safe for in-person learning.

Families are encouraged to vaccinate their children who are eligible in consultation with their health care provider. COVID-19 vaccination is now available to children 6 months and older. All employees and volunteers in educational settings are required to be fully vaccinated or have obtained a medical or religious exemption per [Governor’s proclamation 21-14.3](#).

You can access the updated [COVID-19 school and childcare guidance](#) on the DOH website located on the [Resources and Recommendations page](#) in the School and Childcare section.

If you have any questions, please contact the COVID-19 information hotline by dialing 1-800-525-0127, then press # or email your questions to DOH.Information@DOH.WA.GOV.