

Washtenaw County Health Department K-12 School Recommendations

Updated August 23, 2021*

*Updated slide 16 on quarantine option #2 in classroom/bus setting to recommend testing 3x per week and to clarify extracurricular activities during quarantine (not recommended). Added additional information about when/if this option is appropriate (slide 17).

Goals

- Goal 1: Keep schools open and in-person in the least disruptive manner, while keeping kids and staff as safe as possible.
- Goal 2: Set baseline standards.
- Goal 3: Use the **best** information available to guide decisions. This may mean recommendations change as more is learned or local conditions change.

A Caveat

- COVID-19 is still a new illness, and we are still learning more.
- The variants mean that the illness itself may change.
- During the course of the year, we may learn things that cause us to change our guidance for schools.
- This is our guidance as of August 9, 2021 (and updated Aug 18 with minor edits and clarifications).

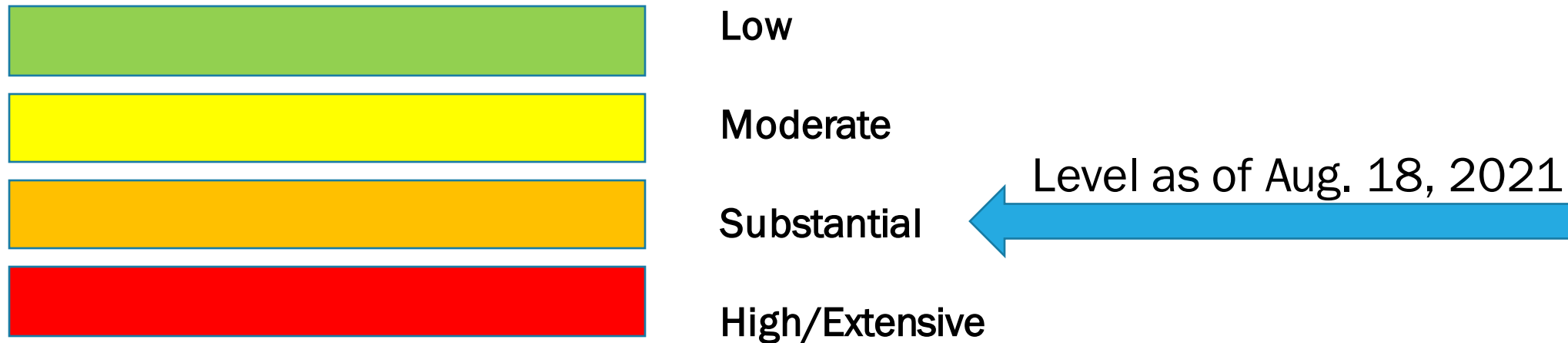
COVID-19 & Delta Variant

- Vaccination protects people from severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Vaccinated people may still become ill (breakthrough cases), especially as more contagious variants circulate.
- Vaccinated individuals who are infected with the delta variant may have almost as high of a viral load as unvaccinated individuals and may also spread illness.
- Vaccination is still the best protection we have.
- COVID-19 is still a new illness, and we learn more every day.

Keeping An Eye On Community Spread

When two levels don't match, for example the test positivity rate is lower but the case rate is higher, we use the higher rate. These are federal levels.

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>



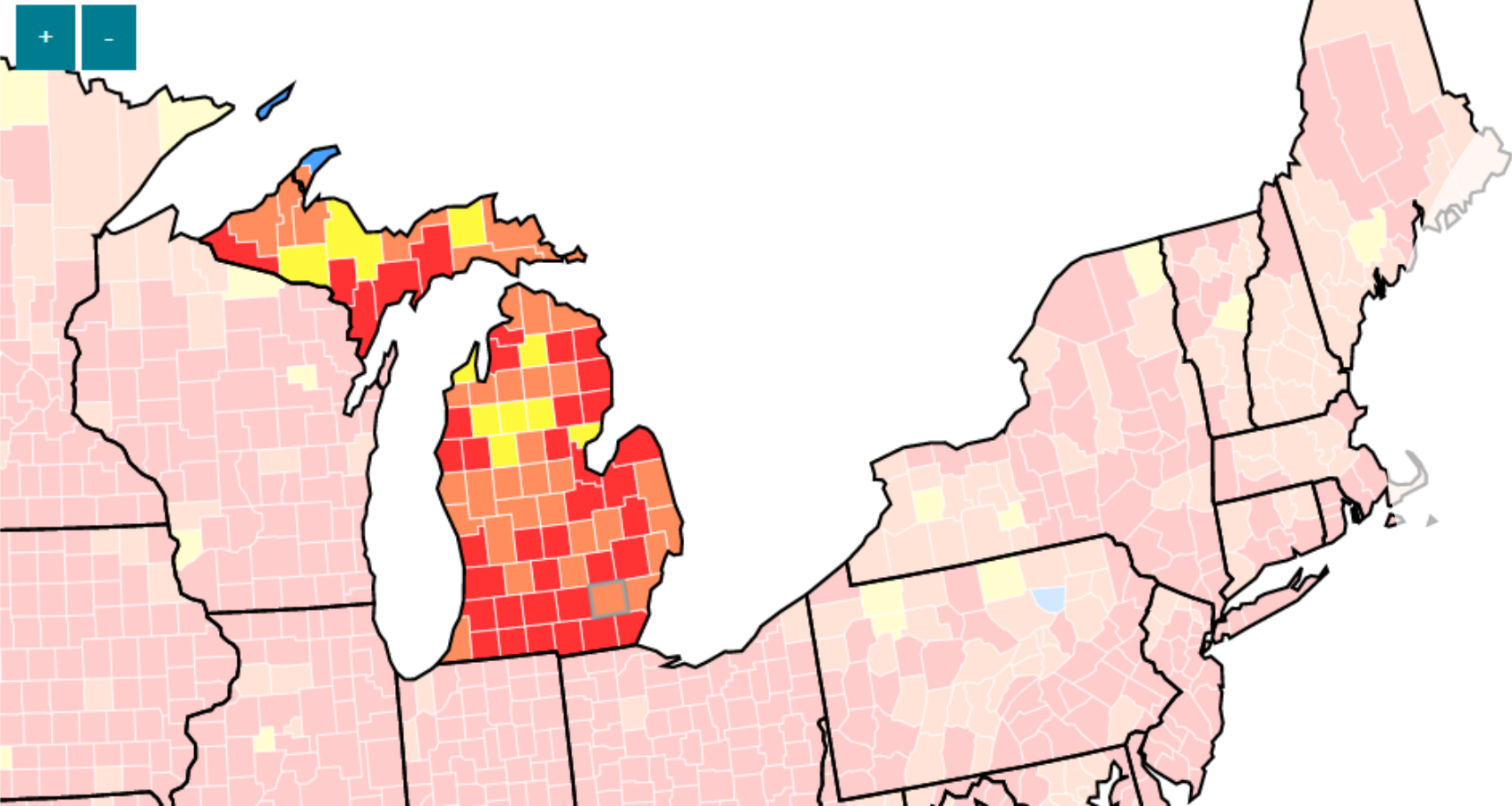
Level of Community Transmission in Washtenaw County, Michigan



Map Data:

Time Period: Mon Aug 09 2021 - Sun Aug 15 2021

[Back to U.S. Map](#)



August 8, 2021

Masking and Community Spread

CDC Recommendation: Universal masking in K-12 schools.

The Health Department recommends that all schools adopt a policy to require universal masking.

Masking is required on school buses at all times, per federal mandate.



Low—Masking Recommended Indoors



Moderate—Masking Recommended Indoors



Substantial—Masking **Strongly Recommended** Indoors



High/Extensive—Masking **Required*** for all Indoors

*The Health Department will consider a local health order

Screening

The goal is that people who feel sick stay home.

- Screening for symptoms at home is recommended for both staff and students regardless of vaccine status.
- People can self-screen at home without a form. Taking temperatures is not necessary.
- If someone does not feel well, COVID testing and screenings for other illnesses (e.g., strep throat, mono) are appropriate.

Student Illness Decision-Making

A: Does student have ANY of the following symptoms (new/different/worse from baseline of chronic illness):

- Temperature 100.4 or signs of fever (chills/sweating)
- Sore throat
- New onset of cough
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- New onset of headache
- Loss of taste or loss of smell

B: Has student had ANY close contact or potential exposure risk in the past 14 days:

- Had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19
 - Had close contact with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19
 - Attended large events (e.g., wedding, concert), especially indoors
 - Travel history
-
- **IF A is YES and B is NO**, student needs COVID test and/or medical evaluation; can return with symptom improvement per usual communicable disease guidelines.
 - **If A is YES and B is YES**, must have COVID test. Exclude from school for 10 days even if COVID test is negative, unless a different diagnosis is available.
 - **If A is NO and student is a close contact**, follow close contact guidance.
 - **If both are NO or student is not a close contact**, student goes to school.

Staff/Faculty Illness Decision-Making

Staff/adults working in school with any of the following symptoms (new/different/worse from baseline of any chronic illness) should be **excluded from work** and should get a PCR test:

- Feverish
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches without another explanation
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell

If the PCR is positive, they should isolate per isolation guidelines. If the PCR is negative, they may want to consult with a healthcare provider to be assessed for other contagious illnesses such as strep or mononucleosis. If the PCR is negative and symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours, they can return to work.

Isolation and Identifying Close Contacts

- Any individuals diagnosed with COVID-19, whether unvaccinated or vaccinated, must isolate for a minimum of 10 days (longer for severe cases).
- Notification is still necessary for all close contacts.
- School reporting is still required under the [state epidemic order](#).
- Guidance is different for students in classrooms and school buses. This is because last year student-to-student transmission in these specific settings was very low. The Health Department will be closely monitoring to see if this changes with the delta variant and current school year.
 - Households, social events, and indoor sports had much higher transmission.
 - Settings with additional risks are also treated differently than traditional classrooms or the bus. These include the cafeteria, recess, band/choir, and physical education settings.

Quarantining and Testing

- Quarantining in classroom and sports settings will look different this year from last year, as we know more about COVID-19 transmission
- We are differentiating between:
 - Traditional classroom and bus settings vs. other school settings*
 - Outdoor sports vs. indoor sports
 - Vaccinated vs. unvaccinated individuals

*Cafeteria, recess, band/choir or physical education

Household Contacts and Quarantining

- Household contacts will still need to quarantine for 10 days unless fully vaccinated.
- Vaccinated household contacts can continue regular activities so long as they are without symptoms. They will need to mask up in public indoor spaces during the quarantine period.
 - Household contact quarantine is based on administrative rules in the public health code.
 - This is similar to what happens to household contacts who are not vaccinated with outbreaks of pertussis or chickenpox.

Identifying Close Contacts

- **If Masking Is Optional:**

- Classroom contacts are identified if they are **within 6 feet** for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours and notice is required.

- **If Masking Is Universal:**

- Classroom and school bus contacts are identified if they are **within 3 feet*** for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours and notice is required.
- Masking is required on school buses even in a school with optional masking.

- **School should be prepared with two notification letters:**

- One for an entire classroom or sports team (e.g., be aware)
- One for close contacts giving the option of quarantining or masking/testing 2x per week

*6ft is used in cafeteria/lunch and other school settings with increased risk

Quarantining, Isolating & Testing **VACCINATED** Students and Staff: Classroom or bus*

- **No symptoms, fully vaccinated:**
 - Close contacts who are vaccinated and do not have symptoms do not need to quarantine, but they still need to be notified
 - Vaccinated individuals without symptoms can go about regular activities. Masking is required and PCR testing is recommended on days 3-5.
- **With symptoms, fully vaccinated:**
 - **ANY CLOSE CONTACTS WHO ARE SYMPTOMATIC, even if vaccinated, should isolate.**
 - With symptoms, positive rapid antigen test will be considered a positive case and must be reported.
 - If they have a negative rapid antigen test or no rapid antigen test, they should isolate until they get a negative PCR.
 - If a close contact does not have COVID but is still sick, they should visit their provider and/or stay home until symptoms resolve.

*Only includes traditional classroom and bus settings. Excludes cafeteria, band/choir or physical education. Also excludes sports and social events.

Quarantining, Isolating & Testing

UNVACCINATED Students: Classroom or bus*

Option 1: Traditional quarantine, at least 10 days from last exposure. (Household contacts who are not vaccinated, e.g., siblings, do not have Option 2.)

OR

Option 2: Masking and rapid antigen testing **three times per week**** during the quarantine period required, while the students continue to attend school.***

- **SYMPTOMATIC CLOSE CONTACTS should isolate:**

- With symptoms, a positive rapid antigen test will be considered a positive case and must be reported. No PCR confirmatory testing is necessary.
- If they have a negative rapid antigen test or no rapid antigen test, they should isolate until they get a negative PCR.
- If a close contact does not have COVID but is still sick, they should visit their provider and/or stay home until symptoms resolve.

- **NON-SYMPTOMATIC CLOSE CONTACTS with a positive rapid antigen test:**

- If a non-symptomatic close contact has a positive rapid antigen test, they can choose to get a PCR to confirm. If the PCR is done (and is negative) within 48 hours, the PCR result overrules. If it is more than 48 hours, the rapid antigen test will stand.

*Only includes traditional classroom and bus settings. Excludes cafeteria, band/choir or physical education. Also excludes sports and social events.

**Updated from 2x per week 8/23/2021.

***Students using option 2 should only attend school/ride bus. They should not participate in childcare programs or extracurricular activities, sports, clubs, etc.

Additional Information on using Quarantine Option #2

- Option applies only to traditional classroom settings or bus. Excludes cafeteria, band/choir or physical education. Also excludes sports and social events.
- There must be capacity to carry out the testing, including available staffing and test kits. Currently there is limited availability of school test kits locally (8/23).
- Each situation is reviewed. Situation-specific recommendations may be different from general guidance.
- Use of this option in schools/districts may vary or be delayed as testing resources are identified and implemented.
- This strategy is contingent on continued evidence of a low infection rate among close contacts exposed in classroom/bus settings. If the infection rate increases, this quarantine option may be removed.

Rationale

- Evidence of low transmission rates within the classroom setting, especially with universal masking
- Home quarantine has led to loss of in-person educational opportunities
- Studies have shown that testing through the quarantine period can be used as an alternative to home quarantine
- Modified quarantine has been adopted in other states (CA & IL) with test frequency ranging from 2x/week to every other day

Vaccinated Staff/Teacher Close Contacts

Fully vaccinated staff/teachers who are close contacts and do not have symptoms can continue to come to work.

- Must mask up during the quarantine period.
- Recommended testing on days 3-5 with a PCR.

Unvaccinated Staff/Teacher Close Contacts

Staff and faculty who are not vaccinated and are identified as close contacts need to quarantine for at least 10 days.

Quarantining in Sports

Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms. Unvaccinated individuals will have to do home quarantine if they are identified as close contacts.

- For outdoor sports, quarantining may not be required for other teammates, coaches, or the opposing team, if there is no other exposure. Identification of close contacts will be more narrowly defined than last year.
- For certain indoor sports, e.g., hockey, basketball, wrestling*, **all unvaccinated individuals on the team** will be identified as close contacts and will need to do home quarantine.*Wrestling = match opponent.

Close Contacts Who Had COVID Before

This exemption still works for any close contacts, but only for 90 days.

- If someone had COVID in early August, and they were exposed in September, they would be exempt from quarantining until the end of October and will not be treated as a close contact.
- If they had COVID last April (>90 days) and are not vaccinated, they will need to quarantine.
- People who had COVID can get vaccinated any time after their isolation is complete. In most cases, they do not need to wait 90 days.

Cafeteria

- Improve ventilation as much as possible.
- We will use **6'** for close contacts in the cafeteria because you cannot mask while you are eating.
- If a student is a close contact and is coming to school, masking in class and getting tested 2x/week, **they can still eat in the regular cafeteria with their friends and classmates.**

Decision-Making: Exposed Individuals

Examples:

1. **Teacher, vaccinated, no symptoms.** Wears a mask, continues to come to school, gets tested with a PCR on days 3-5
2. **Positive student or staff member:** Stays home and isolates.
3. **Classmate, sits next to positive student:** Wears a mask, gets rapid antigen tests 2x/week, keeps coming to school.
4. **Sibling of positive student:** Must quarantine at home.

Understanding Rapid Antigen Tests

- If symptomatic, whether or not vaccinated:
 - A positive rapid antigen test is considered positive, and does not need to be followed by a PCR.
 - A negative rapid antigen test should be followed by a PCR.
- If there are no symptoms:
 - A positive rapid antigen test is considered positive, even if the person is vaccinated.
 - If a PCR is done within 48 hours, and the PCR is negative, it “overrules.”
 - If >48 hours or PCR not done, rapid antigen stands.
- Rapid antigen tests catch at least 80% of symptomatic cases. Fewer than 2% of positive tests are false positives.

Additional Measures

- In the case of outbreaks in a particular school, **our advice will be tailored to the situation in that class/school**. A high secondary attack rate may involve using traditional quarantine (at least 10 days) even for masked/vaccinated individuals.
- CDC is recommending universal masking in all K-12 school settings, indoors. We may mandate this, but only at the highest level of community spread. We hope our high vaccination rates can prevent this.
- MDHHS is recommending, not requiring, rapid antigen testing for student athletes.

Additional Measures

- Rental of school buildings
 - Currently no capacity limits.
 - Should use same requirements as you do for schools (e.g., if universal masking, those using the building need to mask).
- Opt for better ventilation where possible.
- Continue to encourage vaccination for those who are eligible.

Homecoming Dances and Other Events

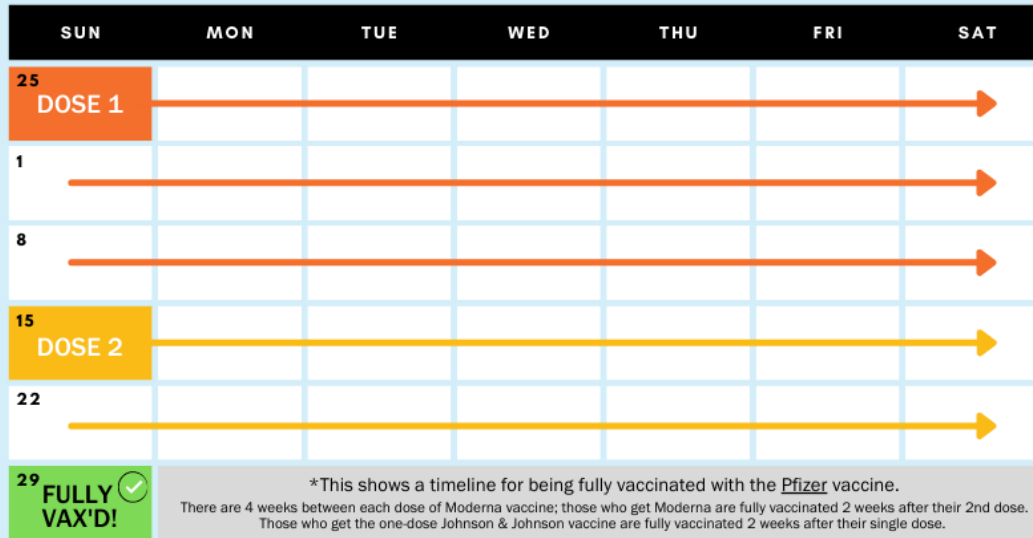
- Evaluate these events based on three things:
 - the level of community transmission,
 - whether you have any, a few, or many in-school outbreaks &
 - the vaccination rates of your students.
- Events outside are always preferable.
- If you use a tent, the sides should remain open. If the sides are down, it is considered indoors.

Benefits of Vaccination

- **For sports and theater:** The show, or the game, will be able to go on even if several students or faculty are identified as close contacts.
- **Faculty/staff/students:** Even if they have been identified as close contacts, they will be able to come to school and participate in regular activities so long as they have no symptoms and are masked.
- **For everyone:**
 - Protects people who are not able to get vaccinated.
 - If you do get sick, symptoms are much more likely to be mild.

Want your kids to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before school starts?

Now is the time to get their vaccine!



The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for everyone 12+.
It's a two-dose vaccine that takes about 5 weeks for protection to build.
You are "fully vaccinated" 2 weeks after the 2nd dose!



Vaccines are the most important tool available!

Remember that full vaccination requires two weeks past the second dose.

Continue promoting the benefits of vaccines.

If you would like a vaccine outreach table staffed at a back-to-school event, let us know.

How to get vaccinated or tested for COVID-19

- **Vaccines:**

- Find a vaccine clinic near you by visiting <http://bit.ly/vaxwchd> or by calling us at 734-544-6700.
- See even more Washtenaw County COVID-19 vaccine options by visiting <http://bit.ly/vaxlocations>.
- Local pharmacies and the Regional Alliance for Health Schools clinics are also offering vaccinations.

- **Find a Testing Site:**

- www.washtenaw.org/covid19test

Resources

- **CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
- **CDC Data Tracker:** <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- **MDHHS Guidance:** https://www.michigan.gov/documents/coronavirus/COVID-19_Guidance_for_Operating_Schools_Safely_728838_7.pdf (updated Aug 13)
- **Washtenaw County Data:** <https://www.washtenaw.org/3108/Cases>
- **MI Safe Start Map:** <https://www.mistartmap.info/>
- **Michigan Vaccine Dashboard:** https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-98178_103214-547150--,00.html