



RECOMMENDED PREVENTION STRATEGIES TO REDUCE THE TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 IN SCHOOLS

To ensure that we pro-actively take measures to protect the population, Crawford County Public Health (CCPH) issues the following **initial recommendations** based on our current conditions as of 8/4/2021.

Initial Recommendations

<p>Promoting vaccination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals 12 years and older are currently eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. • CCPH encourages schools to consider promoting the vaccine among teachers, staff, families, and eligible students by providing information on the vaccines available. COVID vaccine providers in Ohio can be found at: https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/dashboards/covid-19-vaccine/covid-19-vaccine-provider-dashboard • CCPH is available to work with local school districts to host onsite vaccination clinics, if requested by the school board or superintendent. If this is something your district is interested in, please contact CCPH for more information. • Refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for details on available COVID-19 vaccines: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html
<p>Consistent and correct mask use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The wearing of facial coverings (masks) for students, staff, and teachers is voluntary but recommended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Per the Ohio Department of Health (ODH)'s K-12 Guidance dated 7/26/2021, masks can protect students, staff, and teachers from COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. ○ CDC's updated guidance from 7/27/2021 recommends mask wearing indoors in public spaces in areas of substantial or high transmission, <i>even for fully vaccinated individuals</i>. As of 8/2/2021, Crawford County, Ohio is listed as having "substantial" transmission. ○ Because the parents of children 11 and younger were not offered the opportunity to protect their children with vaccine, it is even more strongly recommended by CCPH that the school district implement a mask policy for these students when the level of transmission remains substantial or high. • Exceptions should be made for people who cannot wear a mask or cannot safely wear a mask because of a developmental delay or disability. School districts should discuss the possibility of reasonable accommodation with those who are unable to wear or have difficulty wearing certain types of masks. • The CDC continues to require that masks be worn on all public transportation, including school buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exceptions in the CDC's Order. Read more: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operators of school buses should refer to the Department of Education's COVID-19 Handbook for additional guidance, located here: https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening.pdf

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A driver does not need to wear a mask if they are the only person on the bus. ● Considerations for different mask types: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cloth masks – ensure there are multiple layers of breathable fabric ○ Disposable surgical masks – look for these that indicate multiple layers of non-woven material and have a nose wire ○ N95 masks – may serve as an increased level of protection ● When facial coverings are worn they should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fully cover the mouth, nose, and chin ○ Fit snugly against the side of the face so there are no gaps ○ Not create difficulty breathing while worn ● Ensure that those who choose to wear a mask may do so without being bullied and/or harassed for their decision.
Physical distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maximize distancing between students, staff, and teachers. ● Schools should follow a targeted distancing of at least 3 feet between students in classrooms. ● When it is not possible to maintain at least 3 feet, schools can follow additional prevention strategies to potentially reduce the spread of disease, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Indoor masking, screening/testing, improving ventilation, handwashing, regular cleaning, and staying home when sick.
Screening to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If your school still has access to the free BinaxNow Rapid COVID-19 test kits, the choice to use the kits for screening is at the discretion of the school officials.
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The CDC recommends the following in regards to ventilation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring in as much outdoor air as possible (open windows/doors) ○ Ensure the HVAC system is maximized for ventilation purposes (room air exchange rate and the percent of makeup air from the outside); and ○ Improve air filtration (m.e.r.v. rating of filters).
Handwashing and respiratory etiquette	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remind students, staff, and teachers to wash their hands frequently for at least 20 seconds (or disinfecting with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol) and have proper respiratory etiquette such as covering coughs and sneezes.
Staying home when sick and getting tested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If students, staff, and/or teachers experience one or more of the following symptoms, schools should develop or use a current illness policy to have them stay home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fever or chills ○ Cough ○ Shortness of breath ○ Fatigue ○ Muscle or body aches ○ Headache ○ New loss of taste or smell

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sore throat ○ Congestion or runny nose ○ Nausea or vomiting ○ Diarrhea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Per the CDC, students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious disease such as influenza, RSV, or COVID should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schools should continue to report positive COVID-19 cases of students and staff to Crawford County Public Health in a timely manner. ● Schools should continue to work with CCPH for contact tracing for COVID-19. ● Per the ODH’s K-12 guidance dated 7/26/2021: <i>“Under these modified quarantine procedures, unvaccinated students who have been exposed to COVID-19 in school settings can continue to attend school and participate in sports and extra-curricular activities if both students were wearing masks consistently and correctly, and other layered prevention strategies including appropriate distancing were in place. This quarantine procedure will continue as we begin the 2021-22 school year. Fully vaccinated students do not have to quarantine at this time.”</i>
Cleaning and disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For information on cleaning and disinfecting visit the following CDC website: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html
School drinking fountains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School water drinking fountains should only be used as water bottle filling stations.
Cafeteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During periods of high transmission, the school should consider the elimination of buffet-style dining.

School Transportation Reminder:

The CDC continues to require that masks be worn on all public transportation, including school buses. This requirement is regardless of vaccination status. All transportation services should follow applicable federal rules and regulations. Find more on this requirement here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/face-masks-public-transportation.html>

Disclaimer:

Please be advised that the information provided in this document is being provided as *recommendations* according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). At this time, Crawford County Public Health (CCPH) is not issuing this information as a mandate/order. The interpretation and/or outcome of this document is based on the discretion of the school Board of Education and/or the school Superintendent/Principal leadership. Each school board and leadership team for each school district should consult their legal counsel when setting policy regarding infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Additional Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention School Guidance

- Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- Schools and Child Care Programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

Ohio Department of Health K-12 Guidance

- COVID-19 Health and Prevention Guidance for Ohio K-12 Schools, 2021-22 School Year (Revised 7/26/21): <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>
[covid-19-fact-sheet-k-12-exposure-and-quarantine.pdf](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf) (ohio.gov)

US Department of Education

- COVID-19 Resources for Schools, Students and Families: <https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus>

American Academy of Pediatrics

- American Academy of Pediatrics Updates Recommendations for Opening Schools in Fall 2021: <https://services.aap.org/en/news-room/news-releases/aap/2021/american-academy-of-pediatrics-updates-recommendations-for-opening-schools-in-fall-2021/>