

Best Practices for COVID-19 Outbreaks in School or Child Care Settings

Current “Outbreak” definition: At least **three** probable or confirmed COVID-19 Cases (who are epidemiologically linked) within a 14-day period.

When you become aware of an outbreak in a group (class, cohort, sports team) this is a sign that current mitigation strategies might need to be re-examined and/or increased.

The following best practices are recommendations, not requirements or health orders.

MASKS

Masks remain one of the most effective and simplest safety mitigation layers to prevent transmission of COVID-19 infections. High quality masks, particularly those with good fit and filtration, offer protection to the wearer and optimal source control to reduce transmission to others.

- During an outbreak, this would be an appropriate time to temporarily pivot from “strongly recommended” to “required” indoor masking for the exposed group, until there are no new positives in the exposed group
- Look for ways to decrease indoor, unmasked exposure, ie: eating meals/snacks outdoors

TESTING

Current guidance recommends that exposed students, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, should get **tested** with at least one diagnostic test obtained within 3-5 days after last exposure (unless they had COVID-19 within the last 90 days and are asymptomatic).

- During an outbreak, consider increasing to **weekly testing** until there are no new positives in the exposed group
- In the event of wide-scale and/or repeated exposures, consider **broader testing (grade-wide or campus-wide)** and **more frequent testing (twice weekly)** until number of new positive cases declines