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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
June 25, 2021

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## **MDHHS issues COVID-19 school guidance to help keep kids and teachers healthy**

**LANSING, Mich.** – Today, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued [recommendations for schools to help prevent transmission of COVID-19](#) within school buildings in an effort to reduce disruptions to in-person learning and help protect those who are not fully vaccinated.

“I am pleased with the progress of our vaccination efforts in Michigan, with 56% of Michiganders age 12 and older having received at least their first dose of the safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine,” said Dr. Joneigh Khaldun, chief medical executive and chief deputy for health at MDHHS. “These vaccines are the reason transmission of the virus in Michigan is at the lowest point in a year. However, as the school environment brings together large groups of individuals who may not yet be vaccinated, MDHHS is issuing this guidance to help protect Michiganders of all ages.”

To help schools prepare for the return of people to indoor settings in the fall, the guidance outlines mitigation measures designed to protect students, teachers and staff, and maintain in-person learning. Schools can layer multiple [prevention](#) strategies developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce transmission of the virus within school buildings.

This will help minimize disruptions to in-person learning and help protect the people who are not fully vaccinated, which currently includes all children under the age of 12 years. All prevention strategies provide some level of protection, and layered strategies implemented at the same time provide the greatest level of protection.

Key prevention strategies in schools include:

1. ***Promoting*** COVID-19 ***vaccination*** for eligible staff and students.
2. Correctly and consistently using ***well-fitted masks*** that cover the nose and mouth. CDC recommendations for [when to wear a mask in school settings](#).
3. ***Social Distancing***: Physical distancing, including cohorting children together to reduce potential exposures.
4. ***COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing***
  - a) Encouraging students and staff to stay home if sick or having [COVID-19 symptoms](#).

- b) Encouraging students and staff to get tested for COVID-19 if having [symptoms](#) or if they are not fully vaccinated and are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19.
- c) Conducting [screening](#) testing.
- d) Implementing [contact tracing](#) and quarantine, collaborating with the local health department.

5. **Maintaining Healthy Environments**

- a) Promoting [handwashing and covering coughs and sneezes](#).
- b) Routine [cleaning](#) to help maintain healthy facilities.
- c) Avoiding crowded and/or poorly ventilated indoor activities (e.g., engaging in outdoor activities when possible and increasing [ventilation](#) for indoor activities).

Michigan residents seeking more information about the COVID-19 vaccine can visit [Michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine](https://www.michigan.gov/COVIDvaccine). The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus).

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