Schools play an integral role in any community. In addition to educating our future leaders, schools provide social-emotional benefits, nutritious meals, and a safe and secure place for thousands of Jackson County's youngest residents most of the year. The return to school will require schools to make changes so that students, staff, and families can be assured that the health and safety of their community is ensured. Quality education cannot happen if students and staff are not safe.

This document provides the minimum actions school districts and schools must take to reduce the risk of COVID-19, and the steps schools should take to limit the spread of exposure when students or staff test positive.
STATUS – We strongly recommend schools follow the Gating Criteria when determining in-person learning and extracurricular activities.

REQUIREMENTS

Each school facility, regardless of their reopening status (in-person vs. virtual) must complete and post a plan (accessible to parents, staff, and students) that contains the following, at minimum, before the first day of school:

- Clearly stated cleaning and disinfection protocols, where all staff, students, and parents can access.
- Considerations for maintaining social distancing throughout the school day.
- Considerations for accommodations made for vulnerable staff and students.
- Considerations for modification measures for staff duties that require close contact.
- An absenteeism plan for staff and students who do not feel comfortable returning their student to school and for students who show symptoms of COVID-19.
- A communications plan for informing parents and staff about response plans, protocols, and policies to manage the impact of COVID-19.
- A point of contact for all school districts, private, and parochial schools for effective communication and collaboration with public health officials.

Additionally, a number of regional, state, and federal organizations, including Children’s Mercy Hospital, Missouri School Board Association, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS), the Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the American Academy of Pediatrics have published guidance around social distancing, classroom set-up, transition periods, curriculum adjustments, and templates. It must be reiterated that these resources, as well as the Jackson County Health Department’s guidance, are expressly for when community transmission is considered to be in the yellow or green zone. When in the red zone, all learning should be remote.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Maintain 6 feet of distancing from others. This includes student desks, cafeteria seating, gymnasium activities, and theater seating. Students and staff that are closer than 6 feet for more than 15 cumulative minutes are at risk of being exposed to COVID-19.
- Students should be kept in stable cohorts throughout the school day whenever possible. If multiple classes are in a shared space, such as a cafeteria, gymnasium, or at recess, there should be defined spaces for each individual group.
- Classrooms and cafeterias, as well as school activities, should maintain attendance and seating charts.
- Adult staff must maintain 6 feet of social distancing throughout the day in any shared spaces. Professional development, meetings, and planning periods should be held virtually if socially distancing cannot be guaranteed for all attendees.
- Social distancing should be practiced throughout the school, including common spaces such as hallways, cafeteria, classrooms, gymnasiums, and auditoriums. Schools should consider clearly defining one-way
hallways and entrances and exits, limiting the number of classes in the cafeteria at a given time, eating meals in classrooms, and limiting the number of students in gymnasiums or at recess at one time.

- School districts must implement the use of signage and floor markers throughout school buildings to help remind students of social distancing practices.
- School-wide assemblies and events should not be held.

**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Face coverings play an important role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. Face covering should be worn by all students and staff at all times throughout the school day. Requiring only staff to wear masks is less effective because the fabric face coverings recommended by the CDC do not fully protect the wearer from droplets. Face shields alone are not considered effective* because the shields allow droplets of aerosols to escape into the surrounding air. Those staff that must wear face shields should wear them for short, necessary instances only.

- Masks that cover the nose and mouth must be worn by all staff. In instances where staff must wear face shields only, the shields should wrap around the side of the wearer’s face and extend below the chin.
- Students over age 5 must wear masks at all times throughout the day unless they are eating lunch, during nap time, or participating in excessive physical activity in outdoor physical education classes, or at recess AND at least six feet of social distancing is maintained the entire time.
- Families that state students are medically exempt from wearing face masks must provide a medical exemption from their primary care provider to the school to be kept on file.
- Visitors should be discouraged from entering the building, but all visitors that do enter must wear a mask.

* In some instances face shields may be needed when communicating with deaf and hard of hearing students or working with young children, where facial expressions and mouth movements are key to convey messaging or lessons.

**HYGIENE**

- Students and staff should wash and sanitize hands throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizer and/or handwashing stations should be made readily available to all students and staff, and staff should encourage students to hand wash by specifically allowing time for handwashing/sanitizing throughout the day.
- Students must wash or sanitize hands before and after meals, after recesses, and if they transition to different classrooms.

**CLEANING**

- Sanitize high-touch surfaces throughout the day.
- Regular classroom and school cleaning and disinfecting should occur throughout the school day. Include toys and equipment that are available for student use in the classrooms and throughout the school.
  - Focus cleaning/disinfecting efforts on common areas (classrooms, music room, gym, etc.) and those...
surfaces and items that are touched routinely and frequently throughout the day.

- Items that are shared among students should be disinfected between each use.
- Outdoor equipment can be cleaned daily.
- If students are tasked with cleaning procedures, ensure student safety.

- If students are engaging in a hybrid in-person and virtual school model, all high touch surfaces should be deep-cleaned and sanitized between cohorts.
- Perform enhanced cleanings of all high-touch surfaces at least once a day.
  - Thorough cleaning should follow the top-down cleaning methodology, which essentially allows gravity to settle dust and other contaminants down to the floor, with vacuuming or damp sweeping being the last step to take place.
  - Surfaces should always be cleaned of dirt, oils, and other contaminants prior to using any disinfectants or sanitizers.
- All cleaners and disinfectants must be EPA approved disinfectants

**SYMPTOM SCREENING**

- Staff must screen themselves daily for fevers and any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, chills, aches, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, nausea/vomiting, or diarrhea within the last 48 hours) before coming to work.
- If possible, staff should answer a questionnaire regarding COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival to school daily.
- All students must be screened by parents or guardians prior to coming to school daily for any symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, chills, aches, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, nausea/vomiting, or diarrhea within the last 48 hours).
- Upon arrival to school students should be visually screened by a staff member or teacher. All students presenting with symptoms should be isolated and evaluated by a school nurse.
- Students with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above should be isolated from students and staff until a parent or guardian can pick them up. Parents or guardians should be encouraged to pick students up within 30 minutes of notification.
- Staff should monitor students throughout the day, and a student that begins to exhibit symptoms should be sent to the school nurse immediately.
- Visitors should be discouraged from coming into the building, and any visitor should be screened with a questionnaire before entry for any symptom of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, chills, aches, fatigue, loss of smell or taste, nausea/vomiting, or diarrhea within the last 48 hours).

**ISOLATION ROOM**

- Schools must establish isolation rooms for students presenting with symptoms of COVID-19.
- The room can be a modified classroom, staff workroom, or other unused space.
• School nurses or staff entering the room, must wear masks, eye coverings, and gloves. While students should be monitored according to school policies, staff should spend minimal time in the room, and remain 6 feet away as much as possible.

• Isolation rooms must
  o Provide space for individuals to remain socially distant.
  o Have an entrance and exit that are distant from the rest of the school population.
  o Have minimal surfaces and furniture, and all should be cleaned and disinfected between student usage.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

It must be reiterated that the above mentioned resources as well as the Jackson County Health Department's guidance is expressly for when community transmission is considered in the yellow or green zone. When community transmission is in the red zone it is recommended that schools offer remote learning only, and that extracurricular and cocurricular activities do not happen.

• Assemblies, back to school nights, ceremonies, or any other school wide events MUST follow the current Jackson County Executive Order gathering limits and considerations for social distancing by household, and follow current mask mandates.

• Spectators at any sporting events MUST follow the current Jackson County Executive Order around gathering limits and considerations for social distancing by household, and follow current mask mandates

• Refer to the Missouri School Board Association guidance and templates regarding templates and planning around extracurricular activities.

• The National Federation of State High School Associations categorizes sports based on their potential infection risks as higher, moderate or lower risk. The full list can be found at Guidance for Opening up High School Sports and Activities.

• Review the Missouri State High School Activities Associations to find specific information and guidance.

RESOURCES for SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Jackson County Safety Signage
Missouri School Reopening Guidance FAQs
Children's Mercy Consideration and Management in Schools
Children's Mercy Guidance for School Re-opening During the COVID-19 Pandemic
National Federation of State High School Associations
Missouri State High School Activities Association
DEFINITIONS

Case – An individual who has a laboratory confirmed positive test for COVID-19.

Close Contact – An individual who has been within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes while they were infectious (48 hours prior to symptom onset for a symptomatic case and 48 hours prior to positive test for an asymptomatic case).

Isolate – The act of separating people who are infected with a virus away from people who are not infected. An individual that tests positive for COVID-19 must separate from other people to stop the spread of the contagious disease. The individual should isolate from members of their household by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom if possible. An individual is released from isolation when:
  • At least 10 days since symptoms have first appeared (or 10 days after testing positive for asymptomatic individuals) and
  • At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and
  • Symptoms have improved

Quarantine – The act of keeping people who might have been exposed to a virus away from others. An individual that has been exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID-19 must separate and restrict their movement in the timeframe they could become ill. The individual should stay home from work, or school and not attend any other outings or events. They should limit their interactions with other members of their household as much as possible. COVID-19 has an incubation cycle of 14 days, so exposed individuals must quarantine for 14 days based on their last date of exposure to the positive COVID-19 individual, regardless if the exposed individual receives a negative COVID-19 test in that 14 day period.

Exposure – Coming in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. An individual is considered exposed to COVID-19 if they have been within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive COVID-19 for more than 15 cumulative minutes while they were infectious (48 hours prior to symptom onset for a symptomatic case and 48 hours prior to positive test for an asymptomatic case).

In a school setting, seating charts, cohorts, and strict adherence to social distancing are imperative to limiting the spread of COVID-19. All students and staff will be considered exposed if it is found that they were within 6 feet for more than 15 cumulative minutes with the infected individual during their infectious period. Additionally, if a school cannot determine that all students remained socially distant, all students and staff in a shared classroom space will be assumed exposed.

EXCLUSION AND QUARANTINE IN SCHOOLS

Student or Staff Cases with No Known COVID-19 Exposure

Students or staff that are presenting with ANY symptoms of illness should not attend school. If a student or staff has 1 moderate-risk symptom (see Symptom Guidance Table) they may not return to school and should not attend extracurricular activities until the following conditions are met:
  • Fever-free for 24 hours or symptom improvement.
  • Provider believes that alternative diagnosis is cause of signs and symptoms.

In accordance with CDC guidelines a student or staff with 2+ moderate-risk symptoms or at least 1 high-risk
symptom (see Symptom Guidance Table) is suspected of having COVID-19 and must be excluded from school and other activities for 10 calendar days and should seek COVID-19 testing*.

A positive or suspected positive** student or staff member must be excluded from school and other activities. The student or staff is allowed back to school if the following conditions are all met:

- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- No fever has been presented in the final 24 hours of the 10-day period (and no fever reducing medicines have been used).
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved).

For persons who are severely immunocompromised, a test-based strategy could be considered in consultation with infectious diseases experts to discontinue isolation measures. For all others, a test-based strategy to discontinue isolation or precautions is no longer recommended.

*if a student or staff member receives a negative test, they may return to school once they are fever free for 24 hours, and have symptom improvement, or their provider believes that alternative diagnosis is cause of signs and symptoms.

** A student or staff member experiencing at least two moderate-risk symptoms or at least one high-risk symptom that does not receive a COVID-19 test will be treated as though he/she is positive.

** Student or Staff Cases with Known COVID-19 Exposure**

In accordance with CDC guidelines, if a student or staff is known to have been exposed to COVID-19, they must be excluded from schools and other activities for 14 days based on their last date of exposure. If symptoms do not develop and/or a COVID-19 test returns Negative, students or staff MUST Remain in quarantine for the 14 Day Period (see Symptom Guidance Table: Scenario 3).

The student or staff is allowed back to school if the following conditions are all met:

- At least 14 calendar days have passed since their last date exposure to the positive case.
- No symptoms have developed during that 14 day quarantine.
  - If symptom do develop the individual must be evaluated for COVID-19.

**Student and/or Staff Contacts**

A student or staff is considered a close contact if they are within 6 feet of a positive individual for 15 or more minutes, regardless of mask usage. In classrooms with young students, students that work closely in groups, or where students move to different stations, ensuring strict adherence to social distancing may be difficult to do. It may be that all students and staff will need to quarantine for 14 days based on the last date of exposure. Other individuals may be required to quarantine if it is determined that they were within 6 feet for 15 or more minutes with the positive student or staff. Siblings of students that test positive are considered close contacts regardless if they share a classroom or cohort, and must quarantine for 14 days based on last date of exposure. Please see family contacts section below for specific information regarding sibling exclusion. Siblings of students that are considered close contacts do not have to quarantine if they did not share a classroom or cohort. The health department is available to help determine or provide support as you determine close contacts.
A student or staff who has been considered a close contact must quarantine for 14 days from last date of exposure regardless of a negative COVID-19 test.

**Schools and Case Investigation**

Quarantine is an imperative step to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Due to the volume of cases at the community level, school administration may become aware of a confirmed case in the school before the Health Department and often can begin quarantine in a more timely and preventative manner than the Health Department.

When a student or staff member tests positive at a school, the Health Department will rely on the school nurse, or a designated school contact to initiate quarantine for the exposed students and staff. Please notify the Health Department with the list of exposed students and staff who will need to quarantine, and reach out to Health Department staff for any assistance regarding quarantine and isolation recommendations.

**COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES**

**School Exposure Notice**

If a child is exposed, schools should provide parents or guardians with a letter providing them information on whether or not their child was exposed, exposure date, required quarantine and exclusion timeline, and steps for symptom screening. In accordance with HIPAA, individuals in isolation for COVID-19 infection WILL NOT be identified.

Communication is key to ensuring the health and safety of students, staff, and families in your school. Parents may have many questions around your school’s protocols and procedures when a COVID-19 case develops in your school. Remaining as transparent as possible, while still protecting the health privacy of all individuals, is key to ensuring parents that your school is taking correct and swift actions.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created tools to best illustrate quarantine time periods specific to the situation. Parents and school staff can utilize these tools as a resource to illustrate quarantine periods for individuals who were found to be in contact with an individual who either tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected to be infected based on symptoms.

**Student Absences**

Parents or guardians should notify schools if their child will be absent. If a parent or guardian is reporting a student’s illness, school staff should inquire as to the symptoms, symptom onset, and the last day of the student’s attendance at school.

If the student tests positive for COVID-19, OR presents with one high-risk or two or more moderate-risk symptoms indicating COVID-19 infection, and was at school within the 48 hours prior to symptom onset, case investigation must begin. See Schools and Case Investigation and contact the Health Department for guidance or assistance if needed.

If a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19 and they were not found to be at school during their infectious period, the school likely will not be notified of the infection due to a HIPAA. It is imperative that families communicate with schools on student absences, illnesses, and student exposures to COVID-19 outside of school.

Schools should communicate to parents that, if their child(ren) are exposed to COVID-19 outside of school, that it is
important to work with the Health Department, and keep their child(ren) home, and monitor for signs and symptoms for the full quarantine timeline. This will help slow the spread of COVID-19 and help ensure that schools do not have to close due to widespread student and staff exposure.

**Family Contacts**

If a student or staff is exposed to COVID-19 outside of school, the Health Department will notify the student or staff member directly and provide them information regarding quarantine. Schools will NOT be notified by Health Departments if a student or staff is under quarantine.

If a household member of a student or staff member (such as a parent, sibling, child or spouse) tests positive or is presenting with symptoms of a suspected COVID-19 infection, the student or staff member must quarantine for 14 days after the last date of exposure to the positive (or suspected positive) household member. If the positive household member cannot isolate the student or staff member will quarantine for the duration of the positive case's isolation period as well as 14 additional days.

**PERIODIC CLOSURES**

**School Closure**

It is recommended that if there are over 5% of the student body in a building or district either test positive or present with symptoms resulting in COVID-19 exclusion on any given day, 4% that either test positive or present with symptoms resulting in COVID-19 exclusion over 2 days in a row, or over 3% for 3 days in a row that the building or district close for 14 calendar days to ensure that all students, and staff quarantine (these percentages may change as better scientific data becomes available).
## Symptom Guidance Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPOSURE</th>
<th>HIGH – RISK SYMPTOMS</th>
<th>MODERATE-RISK SYMPTOMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a person with COVID-19</td>
<td>• New Cough</td>
<td>• Fever (≥100.4) or chills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Difficulty Breathing</td>
<td>• Congestion/runny nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Loss of taste/smell</td>
<td>• Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sore throat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Headache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Muscle or body aches</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Scenario 1: What to do if a student has symptoms of COVID-19?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCREENING RESULTS</th>
<th>DOES THE CHILD REQUIRE A COVID-19 TEST?</th>
<th>WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 moderate-risk symptom AND No COVID-19 exposure</td>
<td>Monitor symptoms – if none progress testing is not needed</td>
<td>Return to school 24 hours after fever resolution and symptom improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>OR</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provider determined a laboratory confirmed alternative diagnosis is the cause of symptoms, return precautions should be specific to diagnosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Scenario 2: What to do if a student has symptoms of COVID-19?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCREENING RESULTS</th>
<th>WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 high-risk symptom  
**OR**  
≥2 moderate-risk symptoms AND  
No COVID-19 exposure | **Negative COVID-19 Test:** Return to school 24 hours after fever resolution and symptom improvement  
**OR**  
Provider determined a laboratory confirmed alternative diagnosis is the cause of symptoms, return precautions should be specific to diagnosis |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOES THE CHILD REQUIRE A COVID-19 TEST?</th>
<th>WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| YES* | **Positive COVID-19 Test or NO* Test:** Return to school at least 24 hours since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in symptoms  
**AND**  
At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared |

### Scenario 3: What to do if a student has a COVID-19 exposure?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCREENING RESULTS</th>
<th>WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Exposure to a person with COVID-19 | Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, regardless if the individual receives a negative COVID-19 test result in the 14 day period. This could be >14 days depending on the last point of contact.  
If child develops high-risk or moderate-risk symptoms during quarantine, they need to be evaluated for COVID-19.  
If the child develops symptoms within the 14 day quarantine they must isolate an additional 10 days from symptom onset. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOES THE CHILD REQUIRE A COVID-19 TEST?</th>
<th>WHEN CAN THE CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Monitor symptoms – if none develop testing is not needed.  
If symptoms do develop within 14 days, testing is required* |  
* In cases where COVID-19 testing cannot be performed it is presumed that an individual is positive for COVID-19 and must be excluded for 10 calendar days from school from symptom onset. |
Risk Assessments & Recommendations for School Athletics & Activities

With cooler temperatures and schools returning to in-person learning, the Jackson County Health Department offers the following considerations of risk factors for athletic competition and spectators, along with recommended mitigation strategies to reduce risk.

The Jackson County Health Department strongly recommends to school districts that indoor sports or activities are not allowed where mitigation techniques are not possible, due to an elevated level of community transmission and the risks involved. It may be significantly more difficult to implement risk mitigation measures, such as masking and distancing, in sports such as basketball and wrestling and activities like choir, band, and theater performances. The chance of widespread transmission and/or exposure in schools is higher if these activities are performed, especially when spectators are allowed.

Please see the full list of risk factors and mitigation strategies below to inform decision-making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RISK FACTORS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor vs Outdoor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate ventilation and air movement can reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, outdoor activities can reduce the overall risk of transmission for both spectators and participants as long as proper social distancing is maintained.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Physical Closeness (Proximity)             |
| With any athletic activity, physical exertion or aerobic activity is highly likely to generate respiratory droplets that carry the virus for those actively infected. The risk of exposure greatly increases the closer athletes are to each other. Sports or activities where appropriate social distancing is not possible are at an increased risk of transmission. |

| Length of Time in Close Proximity          |
| Longer exposure times will likely increase the exposure risk. In spaces that are indoors, with reduced air movement/ventilation, six feet may not be an adequate distance to limit exposure for activities lasting a prolonged amount of time without other mitigation techniques. |

| Reducing Expression of Respiratory Aerosols |
| Activities that generate respiratory aerosols may include coughing, singing, shouting, heavy breathing, or other similar physiological responses due to heavy exertion or athletic movement. Expression of these aerosols can be reduced with a face covering or mask. Sports or activities where mask wearing is not followed may be at an increased risk of transmission and/or exposure. |

| Size of the Team and/or Competition        |
| The amount of people in a single space (athletes, staff, and spectators) should allow for adequate social distancing and maneuverability. Large groups of people increase the risk of transmission. |

If schools decide against Health Department recommendations, it is important to take adequate risk-reduction precautions. These precautions may include: masking, cohorting teams, testing to quickly identify infections, not allowing spectators or limiting spectator attendance to immediate family members, and monitoring symptoms.