



Washtenaw County Health Department

Communicable Disease Guidance for Schools and Childcares

Updated 6/14/2024

Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools

For overall guidance, please refer to [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' \(MDHHS\) communicable disease guidance](#).

Expectations for Schools

Schools are expected to:

- **Exclude** students and staff with communicable diseases in accordance with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) guidance, ([see p. 3 and the table on pp. 8-12](#)).
- **Report to Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) in the following situations:**
 - **Individual case reporting:** Report cases of any communicable disease listed in the reportable disease list (e.g., measles, pertussis). These require **same day** reporting. Use the [communicable disease reporting form](#) to report these cases.
 - The diseases in bold in the Disease Specific Table on [table on pp. 8-12 of the MDHHS guidance](#) represent a subset of the diseases required to be reported.
 - For a complete list of diseases that are required to be reported, please see: [Reportable Diseases in Michigan- By Condition](#).
 - Individual case reporting is NOT required for COVID-19, influenza, or norovirus unless it is a school administered antigen test. Ensure you follow all MDHHS requirements for antigen testing.
 - **School administered tests:** if a school administers antigen testing as a CLIA-certified provider or under a CLIA certificate of waiver, individualized reporting of positive results is required. Use the [communicable disease reporting form](#) to report these positive test results.
 - **Outbreak/cluster reporting:** Report all outbreaks of suspected or confirmed communicable disease using the outbreak reporting form: bit.ly/outbreakreport. This form should be used any time you are aware of an outbreak where 20% or more of a particular group (e.g., a classroom or an athletic team) is sick within a seven-day period. We will ask for details about the outbreak and detailed information on any student or staff person who is known to be hospitalized for the illness.

- **Track illnesses:** Keep a list of absences for ALL illnesses, whether they are COVID, influenza, norovirus, strep throat, or other illnesses. WCHD may ask for information from this list for outbreaks or other specific illnesses (e.g., pertussis). Primarily, this is a tool for the school to use to see patterns, help identify outbreaks and when additional steps should be taken to contain illness. As long as you are keeping a line list, you do not need to report weekly aggregate data to WCHD. A template is available to download [here](#). The list should include:
 - Student/staff information: name and class/grade
 - Illness, if known; symptoms if illness is not known (e.g., strep throat OR sore throat)
 - Symptom onset date (or date reported)
 - Who is reporting it (name/relationship, e.g., parent)
 - Space for additional comments/notes (e.g., on football team)
- Have a policy to manage communicable disease outbreaks. See [pp. 19-21 of the MDHHS guidance](#) for additional planning considerations.
- Have clear guidance on when families and staff will be notified about cases.
 - Families should understand that there will be occasional cases of communicable diseases in schools. Notification is best practice to increase awareness among families and reduce spread. Individual cases of certain diseases require notification when specified by WCHD. Notification is not needed for individual cases of COVID-19 and influenza.
 - Schools should notify smaller groups (e.g., a sports team or a classroom) when there is an outbreak/cluster of a communicable disease. Further notification is not necessary if additional cases are identified as part of the outbreak/cluster, unless specified by WCHD.

Support from Washtenaw County Health Department

WCHD is available to help with decision-making in complicated situations and in outbreak situations. The health department can be reached at 734-544-6700 or health@washtenaw.org.

Support from Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)

Currently, MDHHS is offering the following programs for schools:

- [MI Backpack Home Test Program](#): provides backpack COVID-19 tests for students and staff. No reporting is required. Order through the [MI Backpack Ordering Form](#).
- [MI Safe Schools Testing Program](#): provides school-based COVID-19 antigen tests and/or multiplex tests for simultaneously testing COVID-19, Flu A, and Flu B. Order online through the [MI Safe Schools Ordering Form](#). Positive test results must be reported to WCHD using the [communicable disease reporting form](#).
- [MI Safe School Indoor Air Ventilation Program](#): provides free air purifiers.

Links and Resources

- [MDHHS communicable disease guidance](#)
- [WCHD school health webpage](#)
- [WCHD outbreak reporting form](#)
- [WCHD communicable disease reporting form](#)
- [CDC Respiratory Virus Guidance](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Prevention the Spread of Infections in K-12 Schools](#)
- [CDC Science Brief: Prevention and Control of Respiratory and Gastrointestinal Infections in Kindergarten through Grade 12 \(K-12\) Schools](#)