



## Recommendations for Schools and Child Care Settings Responding to COVID-19

Boulder County Public Health

February 18, 2022

Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) strongly recommends all K-12 schools and Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs follow [Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's \(CDPHE\) school guidance](#). Additionally, in order to continue in-person learning, BCPH continues to strongly recommend all prior COVID-19 mitigation strategies as best practices against transmission and severe illness. These strategies are listed below.

### Layered Mitigation Strategies

CDC, CDPHE, and Colorado Department of Education guidance all emphasize the importance of layered mitigation strategies as effective in preventing the transmission of COVID-19 in school and child care settings. BCPH will continue to monitor for trends in community transmission, vaccination coverage, and for potential outbreaks as recommended by CDC.

The following table summarizes the recommended layered mitigation strategies for all schools and child care settings in Boulder County:

#### Strongly Recommended Strategies

- Promotion of COVID-19 vaccinations including booster doses when available and age appropriate; Click [here](#) to find COVID-19 vaccine providers in Boulder County. In potential outbreak situations, being up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations can help individuals avoid quarantine.
- Face coverings indoors for individuals two and older as specified below
- Social distancing as much as possible
- Symptom screening and screening testing
- Sick individuals strongly recommended to remain at home until symptoms resolve or improve
- Improving ventilation where possible
- Promotion of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Promotion of cohorting in small groups to aid in contact tracing, if indicated
- Routine cleaning
- [Test to Stay \(TTS\)](#) and other testing options administered by CDPHE for K-12 settings, as supported by the school or facility, as infrastructure allows.

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## Ongoing Routine Disease Control Activities

### Case Investigation:

Colorado regulation 6 CCR 1009-1 *Rules and Regulations pertaining to Epidemic and Communicable Disease Control* requires schools and childcare facilities to report to public health reportable diseases, conditions, and related events, including COVID-19. State law also requires schools and child care facilities to cooperate with BCPH in timely reporting, communication, and sharing of records related to the investigation and disease control activities of COVID-19. During case surges beyond the investigational capacity of BCPH case investigation and disease control, activities may not be possible.

### Routine reporting of increases in respiratory illnesses:

As was required prior to COVID-19, if a facility observes an increase in rates of respiratory illnesses or detects a cluster of cases of COVID-19 in a class or cohort, facilities are required to report to BCPH as soon as possible. An increase in respiratory rates may not necessarily rise to the level of an outbreak; however, such increases must be reported. BCPH will work with the facility to determine if additional mitigation measures such as masking, or testing may be required to contain transmission. In lieu of school-based individual case investigation and contact tracing, facilities may implement new cluster or outbreak detection strategies. An example of this is reporting school absenteeism data to BCPH.

Reporting of child care cases and cases associated with camps can be sent to [HealthECECOVID@bouldercounty.org](mailto:HealthECECOVID@bouldercounty.org) and school-aged cases can be reported to [K12epiteam@bouldercounty.org](mailto:K12epiteam@bouldercounty.org). **Please note:** These email addresses are for facilities and providers reporting cases only, not for questions from the general public. General questions can be asked directed to the Boulder County Call Center at [healthinfo@bouldercounty.org](mailto:healthinfo@bouldercounty.org).

### Cooperation in the distribution of Public Health Notices (PHN):

School and child care providers must assist BCPH in the timely dissemination of exposure notifications and quarantine letters to affected families. Timely communication helps families make informed decisions about symptom monitoring, testing, quarantining, notifying employers, and avoiding close contact with others who are more likely to have severe disease if infected. A PHN may also include resources such as testing locations, vaccination information and locations, and financial resources. During case surges beyond the investigational capacity of BCPH, exposure notifications may not occur or may be delayed.

## Face Covering Recommendations

*BCPH expects the CDC to update their mask guidance in the coming weeks and Boulder County Public Health will review the updated guidance and update these recommendations accordingly and if needed.*

BCPH recommends that individuals, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, wear a medical grade face covering while in close proximity to those with [higher risks](#) for severe disease, hospitalization, and death or in settings that primarily serve individuals who are not up to date or at high risk for severe disease.

Individuals who are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations should continue to wear a medical grade face covering around others while Boulder County remains in substantial or high transmission pursuant to [CDC metrics](#).

We recommend upgrading from a cloth mask to a well-fitted, unvented KN95 or N95 mask. [Masks for Colorado Schools](#) provides schools with free KN95 masks. CDPHE also provides [masks via some public libraries](#).

Schools and facilities may work with families of high-risk individuals to work out protective strategies. Schools and facilities should advise anyone who is at high risk for severe disease to consult with their health care providers on their recommended course of action should they be exposed, come down with any symptoms, or test positive. Those with high risk for severe disease should consult with their health care provider for both prophylactic medications as well as post-exposure treatments that may be indicated.