

July 19, 2022

DuPage County School Administrators, School Health Professionals, Childcare Health Partners, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Health Professionals:

As the 2022-2023 school year approaches, we are highlighting three key areas for review to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in educational settings. Up to date COVID-19 information for [schools and daycares](#) in DuPage County can be found at the DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) website.

1. **COVID-19 transmission will continue to occur.** DuPage County continues to be at a “High” COVID-19 Community Level based on rates of new infections and new COVID-19 hospital admissions. As a result of ongoing high activity globally and locally, new variants of the virus will continue to emerge, and some spread more easily and quickly than other variants, which may lead to more cases of COVID-19. Parents and schools can reduce the risk of ongoing transmission in schools by excluding students and staff who are ill or who test positive for COVID-19.
 - a. Per the [Illinois Control of Communicable Diseases Code, Section 690.30](#), **schools are still required to exclude COVID-19 cases and to assess and manage close contacts** as outlined in the [IDPH & ISBE Joint Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in Schools](#) and [Interim Guidance on Testing for COVID-19 in Community Settings and Schools](#) (including outbreak definitions).
 - b. We recommend that schools and childcare centers continue to track COVID-19 cases internally and report COVID-19 cases using the [COVID-19 Case Reporting Form for DuPage County Schools and Daycares](#). Schools and childcare centers need to identify and respond to outbreak activity per [IDPH/ISBE](#), [DCFS](#), and CDC guidance, including review and application of outbreak criteria and mitigation measures. To prioritize public health outreach and consultation for outbreaks, schools (pre-K to 12 and IHE) and childcare centers should contact DCHD when 1) **outbreak activity is identified, particularly large-scale (e.g., 10 or more COVID-19 outbreak-associated cases** in a core group within a 14-day period) with a [completed outbreak assessment questionnaire](#) or 2) for any questions.
 - c. Schools should **ensure that notification is sent to parents/guardians** of identified close contacts when an exposure has occurred in school, childcare, or extracurricular settings.
2. **Vaccination** is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to prevent adverse outcomes related to COVID-19. People who are [up to date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines are at lower risk of symptomatic or severe infection, hospitalization, and death.
 - a. Please **encourage families and staff to be vaccinated and up to date** with COVID-19 vaccines. Locate COVID-19 vaccines for anyone age 6 months and older at [www.vaccines.gov](#).

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- b. DuPage County Health Department can provide mobile COVID-19 vaccine clinics with schools. Please complete this form to **request a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at your location or a location in your community**: <https://www.dupagehealth.org/692/COVID-19-Vaccine-Organizations>
3. **COVID-19 testing resources** are available to schools interested in providing testing to students, families, or staff. Testing continues to be an important way to identify infections and prevent ongoing transmission.
 - a. Individuals may request free at-home tests through www.covid.gov/tests.
 - b. [Most individuals with public or private health insurance are eligible to receive up to 8 tests per month for each individual on the plan.](#) Contact your pharmacy or health insurance provider to learn more.
 - c. COVID-19 testing through SHIELD Illinois is free to all Illinois K-12 public and non-public schools. Learn more at: <https://shieldillinois.com/for-school/>
 - d. Schools may request at-home tests for distribution to students and families through the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) or [DCHD](#). IDPH is currently in the process of strategizing the deployment of tests to all eligible K-12 public schools with Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Additional details are forthcoming.

Please note, DuPage County Health Department has a new general inquiry email and phone number. Moving forward, kindly use the following for any COVID-19 related questions: phone 630-682-7400 or email COVID19@dupagehealth.org

Thank you for your time and cooperation, and best wishes for a safe, healthy, and productive school year!

DUPAGE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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