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COVID UPDATE September 9, 2021

State updates quarantine guidance for students exposed to COVID-19

To help ensure Michigan students and educators are as safe as possible in the classroom and keep students in school for in-person learning, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) [has issued updated quarantine guidance](#). The school quarantine guidance for asymptomatic students who were exposed to a student infected with COVID-19 varies depending on a variety of circumstances including mask wearing, distancing, and whether the students were vaccinated or not.

While applauding MDHHS for the change, Dr. Josh Meyerson, Medical Director for the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, cautioned parents and students to remain vigilant and, if eligible, get vaccinated against COVID-19.

“We have already received reports of several cases of COVID infection affecting our schools in the first few days of school,” he said. “Vaccination is the best way to protect against COVID-19. Students and staff who have been vaccinated and are exposed (close contacts) are able to continue to attend in person class, but should consider getting tested 3-5 days after exposure and if any symptoms develop within the 14-day post exposure period. The next best way to keep children in school is to have universal masking. In classrooms where the person infected and the person exposed are both masked, no quarantine is required if they are at least 3 feet apart.

“The one big change to the MDHHS guidance is that it allows for a quicker return (now 7 days from the standard 10) to the classroom of quarantined students if they test negative on day 7,” Dr. Meyerson added.

When layered prevention strategies such as masking, distancing, testing, isolation and quarantine are applied consistently, school-associated transmission of COVID-19 is significantly reduced - which keeps kids in the classroom so they can learn, said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. “However, if someone is exposed to COVID at schools, it's important for them to follow quarantine guidance to prevent spread to other children.”

Local health departments and schools work together to quickly isolate COVID-19 cases among students and staff, identify close contacts of those cases and adopt quarantine policies that reduce the risk of transmission in schools while allowing in-person learning. When evidence-based prevention measures, including universal masking, are in place, modifications may be made to the 10- to 14-day at-home quarantine.

The best protection against COVID-19 are the three safe and effective vaccines that are available, and all eligible people are urged to get vaccinated. Yet, because many students are too young to be vaccinated, masks are an important tool to prevent the spread of the virus and allow for in-person learning to continue uninterrupted, health officials note.

School quarantine guidance for asymptomatic students who were exposed to a student infected with COVID-19 varies depending on a variety of circumstances. The [updated guidance from MDHHS](#) details exposure scenarios informing students and parents how they can keep their student in school after an exposure, based on testing, and when the student should stay home to quarantine. In all cases, the student who has tested positive for COVID-19 should isolate and follow directions from their local health department.

Any individual that displays [COVID-19 symptoms](#), regardless of vaccination status, should be tested and isolate as directed. MDHHS is providing schools antigen testing supplies free of charge through the [MI Safe Schools Testing program](#). Schools and individual school districts can request antigen test kits through the Mi Safer Schools: [School Antigen COVID Test Ordering form](#). MDHHS will be leveraging its partnership with Intermediate School Districts to help distribute COVID-19 antigen tests based on the orders placed in the School Antigen COVID Test Ordering Form.

School Quarantine Guidance

What to do when a student is exposed to COVID-19 but doesn't have symptoms.

Masking helps keep kids in the classroom.

MDHHS Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

If the COVID-exposed student was:	Then they should:
Vaccinated, regardless of masking and distancing.	Test on day 3, 4, or 5 and monitor symptoms for 14 days.
Distanced 3–6 feet and masked AND the COVID-positive student was masked.	Monitor symptoms for 14 days.
Less than 3 feet apart and masked AND the COVID-positive student was masked.	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="background-color: #c8e6c9; padding: 5px; flex: 1;"> Daily test for 7 days and monitor symptoms for 14 days. </div> <div style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0 5px;">OR</div> <div style="background-color: #bbdefb; padding: 5px; flex: 1;"> Stay home for 7 days, return after day 7 with negative test or return after day 10. </div> </div>
Unmasked OR the COVID-positive student was unmasked.	Stay home for 7 days, return after day 7 with negative test or return after day 10.

✓ = Vaccinated
■ = Stay in-person
■ = Stay home

COVID Testing

The health department is offering free COVID-19 testing with the support of HONU lab. The test is free, and no doctor's order is required. Pre-registration is not required, but it is recommended to reduce time spent at the testing clinic, and walk-ins are welcome. Testing is available:

- Mondays, 10-3: Suttons Bay Old Middle School, 310 Elm, Suttons Bay (North drive/entrance)
- Tuesdays, 10-3, Crystal Café, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia
- Thursdays, 12-6: Suttons Bay Old Middle School, 310 Elm (North drive/entrance)
- Fridays, 10-3: Crystal Café, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia

To register for testing at the Suttons Bay Site visit: <http://honumg.info/OldSuttonsBayMS>

To register for testing at the Crystal Café/Benzonia site visit: <https://honumg.info/CrystalCafe>

COVID Vaccine

Vaccination is our most powerful tool. Everyone is welcome at all health department clinics, including residents and non-residents. All three COVID-19 vaccines are available at every clinic. Minors must be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian. Public health nurses are on-site at these events and able to answer any questions about the vaccines.

All clinics are open to walk-ins, or an appointment can be scheduled by clicking on the clinic link below:

Tuesdays

- Suttons Bay Middle School Gymnasium, 310 S. Elm Street, Suttons Bay, MI 49682
- Time: 2:00-6:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesdays

- Crystal Cafe, 1681 Benzie Hwy, Benzonia, MI 49616
- Time: 2:00- 6:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

COVID-19 Case Counts

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting the following case information:

- Tuesday, September 7: Benzie 7 cases; Leelanau, 7 cases
- Wednesday, September 8: Benzie 10 cases; Leelanau 3 cases
- Thursday, September 9: Benzie 6 cases; Leelanau 6 cases

As of 4:00 p.m. today, the Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department is reporting:

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,340, Leelanau– 1,393
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 54, Leelanau– 88
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,252, Leelanau– 1,287
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 34, Leelanau– 18
- Hospitalized: 180 total; 3 currently