



Benzie County Office
6051 Frankfort Hwy, Ste 100
Benzonia, MI 49616

Phone: 231-882-4409
Fax: 231-882-0143

www.bldhd.org

Leelanau County Office
7401 E. Duck Lake Rd
Lake Leelanau, MI 49653

Phone: 231-256-0200
Fax: 231-882-0143

PERSONAL HEALTH DIVISION

For Immediate Release

August 19, 2021

Health department releases updated toolkit to help schools prepare for 2021-2022 school year

The Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department released an updated [COVID-19 School Toolkit](#) today to help school districts prepare for the 2021-2022 school year. Among other things, the toolkit provides background information on COVID-19, how it is spread, includes screening tools for students and staff, and provides tips for managing the virus in the school and community with a goal to keep the risk low and keep schools and school activities as safe as possible.

“Schools, working together with local health departments and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), have an important role in slowing the spread of COVID-19 to help ensure students have safe and healthy learning environments,” said Lisa Peacock, Health Officer. “When educational and childcare settings carefully coordinate, plan and prepare, cases of COVID-19 may still occur within the community and schools. Proper preparation can help the entire school community be prepared for when a case, or multiple cases, are identified,” she noted.

Schools will need to “dial up or dial down” their mitigation measures - wearing a mask indoors, washing hands, maintaining distance, and enhancing ventilation - as the risk of transmission fluctuates. A layered protection strategy should be followed to ensure a healthy environment, allowing all residents the best chance to remain healthy and physically present at work and in the classroom setting. Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases – largely due to the Delta variant – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently changed its mask wearing and testing recommendations. The CDC now recommends:

- Anyone who is exposed as close contact, regardless of vaccination status, be tested 3-5 days after exposure. To locate testing information, visit the [Michigan COVID-19 Test Finder](#) website.
- All students and adults in K-12 schools wear a mask indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- All people in areas where transmission levels are substantial or high wear a mask when indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

“We need a high number of people vaccinated in order to drive down COVID-19 transmission. If this virus can find a vulnerable host, it will move from person-to-person, mutate and continue to spread,” Peacock said. “Getting vaccinated is the answer to stopping this virus and keeping our children in schools, our businesses open, and our community healthy.”

Although COVID-19 outbreaks have occurred in school settings, [data from multiple studies](#) has shown that transmission rates within school settings, when multiple prevention and mitigation strategies are in place, are typically lower than or similar to community transmission levels. “The main goal of mitigation measures is to protect students, teachers and staff, in order to maintain in-person learning for the school year,” Peacock said. “We are providing school officials with this toolkit to help them take precautionary measures to mitigate risk and prepare for and manage any cases that do occur. Our ultimate goal is to provide schools with the tools they need to maintain in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year,” she added.

One way parents, community members, and staff can help schools maintain in-person learning is to keep students and staff with [symptoms](#) home. “We urge staff and parents of students who are sick with even mild symptoms to stay home in order to keep our schools in person,” Peacock added. The toolkit encourages parents/families to screen for symptoms before their child leaves for school, provides information for families and school staff on best practices to

consider to prevent cases and outbreaks within the school population, and how to be prepared for symptomatic or positive staff and students.

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:

Tuesday, August 24th

- Suttons Bay Middle School Gymnasium, 310 S. Elm Street, Suttons Bay, MI 49682
- Time: 10:00-2:00pm
- Vaccine: Moderna, Janssen, and Pfizer (open to 12 or older, parent/guardian must accompany minor)
- To schedule an appointment: [Click Here](#)

Wednesday, August 25th

- 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:

- On Tuesday, August 17, 9 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (2), and Leelanau (7).
- On Wednesday, August 18, 4 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (1), and Leelanau (3).
- Today, August 19, 9 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Benzie (1) and Leelanau (8).

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

- Total COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,296, Leelanau– 1,334
- Active COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 29, Leelanau– 58
- Recovered COVID-19 cases in the following counties: Benzie– 1,233, Leelanau– 1,259
- Confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the following counties: Benzie – 34, Leelanau– 17
- Hospitalized: 172 total; 2 currently

Media Contact:

Rachel Pomeroy, PIO

231-882-6085

RPomeroy@bldhd.org

###