

Wishkah Valley School District #117

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Department of Health Guidance for K-12 Schools

[FAQ's on the Back to School Rules](#)

We know many people have questions about what school will look like this fall, especially the precautions being taken to keep students and staff safe.

The information below is taken from the [Department of Health Requirements for K-12 Schools 2021-2022](#), dated August 11, 2021.

In-Person Instruction - For the 2021-2022 school year, schools must plan to provide full time in-person education for all interested students. Universal masking is required. Universal masking means that face coverings are required to be worn by all individuals, regardless of vaccination status.

Vaccination - COVID-19 vaccines are available free to all people age 12 and older. While universal masking is required of all students and staff now, there is the possibility in the future that fully vaccinated people may not be required to wear masks indoors.

Students do not have to be vaccinated to attend school. School staff must be vaccinated by October 18, 2021, or obtain a religious or medical exemption/accommodation.

Face Coverings/Masks - Correct use of cloth face coverings or masks helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 and is required when indoors at K-12 facilities for all school personnel, students, and visitors. There are specific exceptions based on age, development, or disability. See [DOH's Guidance on Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information.

Passengers and drivers are required to wear a mask on school buses.

Schools must provide face coverings or masks, as appropriate, for staff and students who do not have them.

Outdoor Mask Requirements - Face coverings are not required outdoors except in certain athletics and activities situations. Schools should support students and staff who choose to wear a mask or face covering outdoors.

Physical Distancing - Maintain physical distance of three feet or more between students in classroom settings to the degree possible and reasonable that allows for full-time, in-person learning for all students. There may be moments, such as passing by others in the hallway or during play at recess when students are not fully physically distanced from each other.

Maximize distance between students to the degree possible for all students when masks cannot be worn, such as:

- When eating lunch.
- In common areas outside of the classroom.
- High-risk activities such as PE or exercise, singing or playing instruments, and cheering or shouting should be moved outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces whenever possible.

Ventilation - Good ventilation and indoor air quality are important in reducing airborne exposure to respiratory pathogens, chemicals, and odors. Schools should offer more outside time, open windows often, and adjust the HVAC system to allow the maximum amount of outside air to enter the program space and increase air filtration.

Because Wishkah Valley upgraded our HVAC system two summers ago, we are able to easily exceed ventilation standards.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette - Schools should continue to encourage frequent handwashing and good respiratory etiquette to both prevent contracting and spreading infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, a way to dry hands, tissues, face masks (as feasible), and no-touch/foot- pedal trash cans. Ensure that teachers and staff practice proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

When handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol should be used.

Staying Home When Sick - *Staying home when symptomatic is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools. Students and school employees who have symptoms of infectious illness should stay home and seek medical evaluation, which may include testing for COVID-19 and other respiratory infections.*

Diagnostic Testing - Schools must ensure access to timely diagnostic testing among students with symptoms or who are close contacts of someone with COVID-19. As Wishkah is 30 minutes from a testing facility, Wishkah Valley is working on an option (PCR and Rapid Test) that would allow testing to be done at the school under the direction of trained staff and only with parent permission.

Responding to Cases or Suspected Cases of COVID-19 - Schools should prepare for instructing students who are excluded from school due to illness or quarantine.

Any student, teacher, or staff who reports COVID-19-like symptoms must be immediately isolated from others and sent home and referred to diagnostic testing as soon as feasible. While waiting to leave school, the individual with symptoms must be isolated in a designated isolation space.

What to Do if Someone is a Close Contact of Someone with COVID-19 - In a K-12 indoor classroom, the close contact definition excludes students who were at least three feet away from an infected student when (a) both students were wearing face coverings/masks and (b) other prevention strategies were in place. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Quarantine - People who may be exempt from quarantine:

- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms.
- Close contact who had confirmed COVID-19 in the past three months, have recovered and do not have symptoms.

Notification - Schools must have a response and communication plan in place that includes communication with staff, families, their school district, and their local health jurisdiction.

Schools should prepare for instructing students and their families who are excluded from school due to illness or quarantine in accordance with all federal and state laws.

Schools are required to provide written notice to all employees, and the employers of subcontracted employees, who were on the premises at the same worksite as the person with COVID-19 that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Athletics, Extra-curricular activities and Performing Arts - The Department of Health has specific guidelines for student activities that can be found in the DOH document starting on Page 13.

Don't hesitate to ask questions! - The best way to get accurate information is to ask questions. This will help minimize the volume of misinformation out there. Your questions are welcome and should be directed to the attention of Superintendent, Don Hay, dhay@wishkah.org, 360 532-3128.