



Health, Safety, & Facilities Protocols for 2021-2022 School Year

Background Information

On July 9, 2021, the Indiana Department of Health indicated in its guidance (below) that schools need to continue to conduct contact tracing investigations as well as quarantine those determined to be a close contact of a positive COVID individual.

School boards have the jurisdiction to implement routine prevention measures they deem necessary to protect the health of school students and staff, such as masking, distancing, and disinfection. The IDOH is awaiting updated guidance from the CDC and will provide updated school guidance soon thereafter.

COVID-19 is a reportable communicable disease, and as such, falls under the provision of the Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.5). This rule incorporates, by reference, best practice disease prevention and control guidance from the CDC, among other organizations. In addition, local health departments have authority to implement prevention and control measures for disease cases and outbreaks, including isolation and quarantine. Schools are required to report positive cases, and COVID-19 cases are treated in the same way as other vaccine-preventable communicable diseases in the school environment, such as chicken pox and measles. Once COVID-19 cases are identified in a school, they are reported to the local health department and should be entered into the K-12 Gateway portal. Cases would be required to isolate until they meet the CDC criteria for release from isolation, and those who are unvaccinated and exposed would be excluded from school (quarantined at home) until they meet CDC criteria for release from quarantine. Fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to a COVID-19 case would not be excluded from school unless they become symptomatic.

The US Department of Transportation, in conjunction with a CDC Order, has [mandated masks](#) covering the nose and mouth while riding public transportation, including school busses.

On July 9, 2021 the CDC provided guidance found [here](#) for the upcoming school year.

The Mt. Vernon community has a high vaccination rate with Zip Codes for McCordsville and Fortville hovering at the 80% rate for fully vaccinated individuals.

MVCSC Actions Related to Health and Safety

MVCSC will continue to conduct contact trace investigations.

- Students and Staff who are considered a close contact of a COVID positive individual will be placed on quarantine *unless they are vaccinated*.
 - Verification of full-vaccination may be provided to the school nursing staff at any time even as late as identification as a close contact.
 - Contact tracing will be implemented within 6 feet when masks are not being required. (Green, Blue or Yellow)
 - Contact tracing will be implemented within 3 feet in a regular classroom when masks are required. (Orange or Red)

- Students who are identified as a close contact and must be quarantined will be deemed excused when absences are due to quarantine.
 - We will apply all traditional extended absence policies and practices to students who are quarantined.
 - Please read your school's handbook for attendance procedures.
- We will continue to offer BinaxNow testing for those who identify as a close contact and are asymptomatic.
 - This will possibly allow 10-day quarantines to be reduced to only 7 days in length.
 - For students and staff, we will open this up to non-school close contacts as reported by parents or staff.
- Every attempt will be made to arrange classroom furniture to provide for at least three (3) feet of distance between students.
- MVCSC will comply with federal and state regulations and require all individuals riding a school bus to properly wear a mask covering the nose and mouth throughout the duration of the ride and until the individual steps off the bus.

Communication

- MVCSC has updated our tiered health and safety protocol with the most recent guidance and requirements set by the Governor, the Indiana State Health Department, and the Hancock Health Department
- Our tiered health and safety protocol puts into place certain mitigation strategies based on the absence rate due to illness per building.
- We will develop a tracker of absences due to illness per building that we will post on our corporation website.
 - This will be updated at least weekly when the absence rate due to illness is under 10%.
 - If the absence rate due to illness in a particular building reaches 10% or above, the tracker will be updated daily.
 - We will use the color code corresponding to the tier identified on our tiered health and safety protocol.
- Should we reach 16% absence due to illness in a building, all personnel in that building will be required to wear a mask until the daily tracker reports a lower than 16% absence due to illness rate.
 - The minimum number of days that masks may be required would be two (2).
 - As previously reported, in non-pandemic school years, the average daily absence due to illness hovers in the 3% range with very few spikes approaching 6%.

We are tracking a still changing landscape of guidance and directives by public health agencies. We may make changes to our plan as needed and at any time.



Health, Safety, & Facilities Protocols for 2021-2022 School Year

- Systematic protocols to keep students, families, faculty/staff and the surrounding community safe and healthy.
- Essential actions in alignment with CDC guidelines, Indiana Department of Health and Hancock County Health Department. This includes wearing a mask at all times while traveling on a school bus.
- All procedures are contingent upon any guidance provided by appropriate public health agencies.

GREEN. MVCSC to start the 2021-2022 school year under traditional guidelines with masks for unvaccinated individuals being encouraged, but not required. There is low community spread.

BLUE. Absentee rate of 12% due to combined illness of students and staff within an individual building. There is moderate community spread.

- Start additional sanitizing procedures
- Daily sanitizing of surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- Restrict use of water fountains (close bubblers). Students must use a water bottle or cup.

YELLOW. Absentee rate of 14% due to combined illness of students and staff within an individual building. Community spread continues to increase.

- Continue daily sanitizing
- Begin fogging all buildings
- Begin fogging between all bus routes when any school is at 14%
- Students and staff will be encouraged to wear masks

Orange. Absentee rate of 16% due to combined illness of students and staff within an individual building. Community spread is approaching high levels.

- Students and staff will be required to wear masks
- Deep cleaning- all surfaces cleaned after all activities within the building and classrooms
- Daily fogging of building

Red. Absentee rate of 20% due to combined illness of students and staff within an individual building.

- MVCSC will consult with Hancock County Health Department on possible closure •

Preventive Cleaning Procedures:

- Deep clean during all extended breaks
- Deep clean during flu season (October-March)