

NEWS BRIEF

CDC Issues Operational Strategy for Reopening Schools

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued its [operational strategy](#) for reopening schools. These guidelines are not federal mandates, but are a “roadmap” based on best available evidence and CDC findings. According to the CDC, evidence suggests that many K-12 schools that have strictly implemented mitigation strategies have been able to safely open for in-person instruction and remain open, and the agency suggests that schools can reopen safely if they follow proper protocols.

The operational strategy focuses on essential COVID-19 mitigation strategies, while stating that vaccinating teachers is important but not a requirement for in-person instruction.

According to the operational strategy, as communities plan to reopen schools, the first step is to decide when and under what conditions to deliver safe in-person instruction to protect students, teachers and staff. Essential elements of these reopening strategies include:

- Consistently implementing layered mitigation strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in schools
- Identifying levels of community transmission to determine risk and guide decisions
- Using phased mitigation and determining learning modes based on levels of community transmission

Five key mitigation strategies are listed as essential for safe delivery of in-person instruction and to help mitigate COVID-19 transmission in schools:

1. Universal and correct use of masks

2. Physical distancing
3. Hand-washing and respiratory etiquette
4. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities
5. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with local health departments

In addition, testing programs and vaccination for teachers and school staff as supply allows can provide additional layers of COVID-19 prevention in schools.

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According to the CDC, in-person school attendance is not a primary driver for community transmission of COVID-19.

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What This Means

This operational strategy does not yet mean that all schools will reopen. Determinations on school reopenings will vary by locality and be determined by local officials.

Employers should follow local media to stay up to date on reopening timelines. As employees return to the office, employers should consider how the reopening of schools may impact employees who have caregiving obligations. JP Griffin Group will monitor ongoing CDC guidance and keep you updated on any noteworthy developments.



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