



## Speak Up for Keeping Kids Safe and In School

**Let your school and community leaders know keeping our kids healthy and our schools open for safe in-school learning should be a top priority.**

Many parents, guardians, and teachers in Wisconsin agree: the COVID-19 pandemic has hit our kids hard. It has disrupted their growth both academically and socially. It's also important to remember how school closures are especially hard for children with disabilities, children living in poverty, and children who belong to Wisconsin's communities of color. In-school learning helps give everyone the same opportunities to grow and excel.

Kids of all ages receive more than just academics. In-school learning also provides:

- Social and emotional skill development
- Physical exercise
- Access to mental health and other support services
- Critical services like school lunch programs for healthy meals
- A safe and supportive learning environment
- Access to technology and the internet
- In-person instruction for better, more attentive learning



## What You Can Do

Communicating your concerns with your local school leaders can make a big difference. We encourage you to support the steps that work to keep kids, teachers, and staff safe while at school. Here are some effective methods to try:

- Share your support for vaccines, mask requirements, and participation in a school-based testing program
- Stay educated on what your local school policies are and what they are doing for COVID-19 precautions
- Get involved in the PTA
- Attend a school board meeting – speak or make a presentation
- Write a letter to the school board, individual school board members, or the local paper

### Make sure your community knows...

Wisconsin families know schools are a safe place for kids to learn and grow. Multiple studies have shown COVID-19 transmission rates within school settings are typically lower than, or similar to, community transmissions when multiple prevention strategies are in place. When we keep our schools safe, we keep our kids and their teachers safe.

Our community needs a multi-layer strategy for continuing in-person school. If everyone does their part, in-school learning can continue, and children can continue to learn in the most productive and safe way possible.

#### Schools and community leaders can:

- **Promote the COVID-19 vaccines for ages 5 and up** — They are safe, effective, and our best prevention strategy for stopping the spread
- **Require the wearing of a well-fitted mask in school and public indoor settings** — When all students, staff, teachers, visitors, and others wear masks correctly, both vaccinated and unvaccinated people are protected
- **Ensure families know the symptoms of COVID-19** — Parents and guardians should be encouraged to get kids tested if they think their child has been exposed and to keep kids home when they're sick or at risk
- **Adopt additional strategies** — Options include ensuring good ventilation, practicing physical distancing, and handwashing

#### Parents and guardians can:

- **Get your child vaccinated** against COVID-19 and boosted when they are eligible
- **Talk to your child** about why wearing a mask is so important to keeping them at school and in their activities
- **Give permission** for your child to get tested if your school participates in a testing program
- **Follow quarantine guidance** and keep your child home if they are feeling sick

School safety is essential to the well-being of our broader community. When schools remain safe and open, parents and guardians can continue to work — adding to the strength of the local economy. And communities showing a strong focus on school safety have been linked to lower transmission rates — easing the burden on local health care systems and community resources.

Protecting against exposure to COVID-19 and new variants is essential. Schools need to work with local public health officials to monitor community transmission and any other metrics that can help guide decisions on how to best protect students, staff, volunteers, and any school visitors.

### Learn more

Keep your family and community in the know. Find the latest COVID-19 data, practical safety tips, and more at <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid19>.

