

For Immediate Release

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Washtenaw County Health Department Issues Public Health Emergency Orders for Schools *Masks and isolation or quarantine required in K-12 educational settings*

YPSILANTI, Mich., Sept 2, 2021 – Washtenaw County Health Department is issuing two local orders for Washtenaw County K-12 educational institutions and settings: one requiring face masks indoors and one requiring isolation or quarantine. Washtenaw County is now at high transmission levels, and masks will be required to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while transmission remains high or substantial according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Data Tracker](#).

“We are grateful to our local schools and districts that have already done the work to require masks and that continue to work closely with us on isolation and quarantine measures,” says Jimena Loveluck, MSW, health officer with Washtenaw County Health Department. “Unfortunately, we are trending in the wrong direction, and it’s imperative that we use all of our tools to prevent and control COVID in educational settings and provide in-person learning as safely as possible.”

Both orders are in effect as of Tues., Sept 7 at 12:00 am.

Mask Requirements

[The mask order](#) will remain in effect until community transmission for the county is “moderate” or lower for at least 14 consecutive days, or until further notice from the health officer. The order requires that everyone in educational institutions and settings consistently and properly wear a face mask while inside any enclosed building or structure.

The order applies to public, private, vocational, and charter schools that provide pre-K through 12th grade education in Washtenaw County as well as any affiliated extracurricular activities or athletics.

The mask order does not apply to the following individuals:

- Those actively eating or drinking, swimming, or diving or who are alone in a room.
- Anyone under the age of four years; however, supervised masking is recommended for children who are at least two years of age.
- Anyone with developmental conditions attending school when the use of a face mask would inhibit the person’s access to education.
- Vaccinated staff working with children who are hard of hearing or students with developmental conditions who benefit from facial cues.
- Anyone who has a medical reason confirmed in writing from a medical doctor or doctor of osteopathic medicine currently licensed to practice medicine in the State of Michigan.

Isolation and Quarantine Requirements

Washtenaw County Health Department is also issuing a local health order requiring individuals in Washtenaw County educational institutions and settings to isolate or quarantine as directed for

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illness or exposure to COVID-19. Isolation and quarantine are standard procedures for preventing additional spread of illness once cases have been identified. [The local order](#) allows for enforcement, if or when necessary.

Violations of either order will be enforced under the terms of Michigan's Public Health Code, including, but not limited to, misdemeanor enforcement and/or civil monetary penalties.

The isolation and quarantine order will remain in effect until further notice from the health officer.

COVID-19 in Washtenaw County

Washtenaw County is now at a high level of transmission. The seven-day cumulative case rate is 100.9 per 100,000 and an average of 53 cases per day for [Aug 24-Aug 30](#). Yesterday, Sept 1, the Health Department confirmed [117 cases](#) and two hospitalizations. Test positivity is 3.7% for the same time period, a decrease from the prior week. Starting today, case rates by age group for 5-11 years and for 12-17 years will be added to [two-week snapshots](#) published weekly using local data.

Studies of COVID-19 incidence in school districts during the 2020-21 school year show masking is a critical mitigation strategy to prevent secondary transmission in schools. Masking is part of a multi-layered approach to prevent and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Other preventative measures include COVID vaccination, social distancing, hand cleaning, staying home when sick and isolation and quarantine.

Currently, students under 12 years of age are not eligible for vaccination, and many students 12 years and older have not been vaccinated. As of Aug 31, 60% of 12-15-year-olds and 40% of 16-19-year-olds in Washtenaw County are fully vaccinated ([MDHHS COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard](#)).

"We have evidence of low transmission in classrooms, and this is good news for maintaining in-person learning. But we cannot remove key components like masks, isolation, and quarantine and expect similar results," says Loveluck.

"We also have to watch carefully for secondary or uncontrolled spread because we know the impact of the Delta variant or subsequent variants may be very different," continues Loveluck.

Important Links

- [COVID-19 Health Orders](#)
 - [Isolation and Quarantine Order in Educational Settings](#)
 - [Wearing of Masks in Educational Settings Within Washtenaw County](#)
- [Effectiveness of Face Masks](#)
- Health Department COVID-19 Information for [Schools, Childcare, Camps & Sports](#)
- [Health Department COVID-19 Vaccine Page](#)

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community, including responding to health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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