



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Tony Evers, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

May 18, 2021

Dear Wisconsin School Administrators,

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, however, **the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) school guidance for mask wearing remains unchanged.** All teachers, staff, and students should continue to wear masks and physically distance.

In the last week, while there were major strides with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) expanding Pfizer's emergency use authorization to 12-15 year olds and the CDC announcing that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear masks or physically distance, COVID-19 disease activity remains high in Wisconsin.

All students, teachers, school administrators, and staff, regardless of vaccination status, should continue to practice physical distancing and wear masks at school and on the school bus until more people, including children, have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

We need to continue to protect those who are not fully vaccinated, including young children who are not yet eligible for a vaccine.

Continue Disease Prevention Practices

Regardless of vaccination status, disease prevention strategies should continue, such as hand washing, staying home, and getting a COVID-19 test if you have symptoms. Schools should also continue frequent cleaning and [disinfection](#) of highly touched surfaces.

[Isolation and quarantine practices](#) remain effective as necessary strategies to decrease the transmission of COVID-19 in schools. **A 14-day quarantine remains the safest strategy and is recommended for students and staff who are unable to safely and consistently wear masks or maintain physical distancing.** Isolation and quarantine strategies are critical in the prevention of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools.

Help Stop the Spread of COVID-19

Vaccines are one of the most effective tools we have to help move forward from the pandemic. After successful clinical trials and a rigorous review of all available data, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for children ages 12-15 and is currently available in Wisconsin. In clinical trials with participants aged 12-15 years old, the vaccine demonstrated [100% efficacy](#) and provided a strong antibody response.

Parents and guardians of children ages 12-15 have a variety of options for scheduling COVID-19 vaccination, including with their health care provider, at community-based vaccination clinics, local and tribal health departments, or pharmacies. Parents and guardians can refer to the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) for more information about COVID-19 vaccines and can use [Vaccines.gov](#) to find a Pfizer vaccine for their child.

We encourage anyone who is eligible to be vaccinated against COVID-19. This will help Wisconsin schools progress toward a healthier school year in the fall.

For the latest COVID-19 information and resources for schools, please visit [DHS' website](#). Thank you for your continued leadership and dedication to keeping Wisconsin students, teachers, and staff safe during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julie Willems Van Dijk".

Julie Willems Van Dijk
Deputy Secretary & State Health Officer

Cc: Local and tribal health departments