



Indiana State Department of Health

COVID-19 Planning for Schools and Local Health Departments: Frequently Asked Questions

Attendance, Waivers and Immunizations

Has there been any discussion in providing a waiver for vision/hearing screening this year? There seems to be a recommendation to not have outside guests in the school. Would this include the eye doctors for MCT, or should these continue to be scheduled?

There are no waivers, as vision/hearing screenings remain an important part of school health. Use reasonable need as a guide. We need the MCT to be completed or application for a waiver for MCT submitted to the Indiana Department of Education. As in past years, a waiver does exist for the MCT portion of the vision screening and can be found on the IDOE Health webpage. In light of COVID-19, schools may need to delay their vision and hearing screenings until later in the fall or spring semester.

I have a dental hygienist/mobile dentist that provides screenings/restoration to students. Should that continue this year, or should it be postponed?

Dental screenings are not required but are an important part of providing health-related screenings to students. Because they are not mandated by the state, it is up to the individual school to decide. It is a non-aerosolizing screening, but discuss with the provider of service to confirm their comfort level in providing service at the school.

What new procedures should school nurses put in place to safely conduct vision and hearing screenings for students this school year?

Wear a surgical-grade mask and gloves and conduct those screenings in an area separate from where sick students are waiting. Require students to be masked. Thoroughly wash hands and change gloves between students.

Do you have any ideas on how attendance will be handled with potential multiple students having 10-day isolations? Will there be grace on that?

Send any questions about attendance to state attendance officer Lisa Truitt at ltruitt1@doe.in.gov.

Is the 20-day exclusion date for immunizations still in effect?

Immunizations are more important than ever, and at this time, we expect students to be current on their immunizations unless they have an exemption on file. This includes remote students. Click [here](#) for more information.

Should we allow students who have an exemption on file to attend school virtually if they are not immunized?

Exclusions for unimmunized children generally look at diseases that would be covered by a vaccine if the child had the disease. The plan should be to continue following American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations for completion of school-aged vaccines in anticipation of face-to-face learning in the near future.

I'm worried about how feasible it will be for our parents to get their children's immunizations. Are local health departments overwhelmed? During a normal year, our health department schedules appointments almost two months out. I usually notify parents at kindergarten round-up in April of necessary immunizations needed for August. Unfortunately, it appears I won't have any way to contact these parents until late July/early August.

Reminders of immunization requirements should be sent as soon as possible. Local health departments and healthcare providers are aware of the need for students to be current on their immunizations, so parents are encouraged to consult their pediatrician now. We suggest an "all-call" or district-wide email communication be sent by building principals and superintendents to remind parents that vaccinations remain a priority.
