



Indiana State Department of Health

Back to School Resources, School FAQs Attendance, Waivers and Immunizations

Q: Has there been any discussion about providing a waiver for vision/hearing screenings this year? There seems to be a recommendation to not have outside guests in the school. Would this include eye doctors for the Modified Clinical Technique (MCT) part of vision screening, or should these continue to be scheduled?

A: Please continue to schedule these important school health screenings as you can. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) recognizes the challenges some schools face in having a licensed eye professional perform the MCT part of vision screening, and the department can grant a waiver for students in kindergarten or first grade. Schools may wait until the spring semester to [request such a waiver](#). The [IDOE Health website](#) has more health-related info.

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

A: Dental screenings are not required but are an important part of health-related screenings for students. Because the state doesn't mandate dental screenings, it's up to the individual school to decide. While it is a non-aerosolizing screening, you should confirm the provider's comfort level in providing the service at the school.

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

A: 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.

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

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

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

A: Immunizations are more important than ever, and we expect students to be current on their immunizations unless they have an exemption on file. This includes remote students.

To help with immunization challenges tied to COVID-19, [pharmacists and pharmacist interns now may administer or dispense CDC-recommended vaccines](#) for anyone 11-18. That authorization continues until at least Dec. 31, 2020, under State Health Commissioner Dr. Kristina Box's standing order. You can find [Indiana 2020-2021 Required and Recommended School Immunizations](#) in English and [Calendario de vacunación escolar obligatorio y recomendado de Indiana 2020-2021](#) in Spanish/Español.

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

A: 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.

Q: How feasible will it be for our parents to get their children's immunizations? Are local health departments overwhelmed? I usually notify parents at kindergarten roundup in April about immunizations needed for August, but that didn't happen this year.

A: 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 if they've not already. We suggest building principals and superintendents send an "all-call" or districtwide email to remind parents that vaccinations remain a priority.

Pharmacists and pharmacist interns may now administer or dispense CDC-recommended vaccines for anyone 11-18 to help with immunization challenges tied to COVID-19. They will be able to continue that until at least Dec. 31, 2020, under Indiana Health Commissioner Dr. Kristina Box's [standing order](#). You can find [Indiana 2020-2021 Required and Recommended School Immunizations](#) in English and [Calendario de vacunación escolar obligatorio y recomendado de Indiana 2020-2021](#) in Spanish/Español. If your child's behind on immunizations, the [CDC has a catch-up immunization schedule](#).

Q. When should schools close for high absenteeism?

A. IDOE has an absenteeism reporting rule that states once a school reaches a 20% absenteeism rate, the school should contact the LHD and the IDOE.

If students are quarantined, they do not count in the 20% absentee rate as they are not ill and are able to attend school virtually. Only those students who are ill and are physically unable to attend school either in person or virtually would be counted as absent.

Here are a few other guidelines:

- The 20% rate is calculated and report per individual school, not per school corporation.

- The 20% absenteeism rule is for reporting purposes only.
- There is not a certain percentage that dictates a school's response. Once a school reaches the 20% absenteeism rate and has reported this information to both the LHD and IDOE, the school and LHD should collaborate on next steps depending upon the type of illness causing the absenteeism.
- In regard to COVID-19, the LHD and school should use the same perimeters used to determine if the school should return to all distance learning.

Rule [512 IAC 1-2-1, "Threshold of Student Absences for Reporting Purposes to Local health Departments"](#)
