

December 23, 2022

To: Schools and ECE

From: Communicable Disease Program

New COVID-19 guidance was issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Effective January 1, 2023, **outbreak reporting will no longer be required for non-high-risk settings. Non-high-risk settings include schools, daycares, businesses, and institutions of higher education. These facilities are encouraged to monitor outbreaks internally using the [checklist provided by IDPH](#).** If additional assistance or support is needed, a new Lake County Health Department (LCHD) [REDCap](#) reporting form will be provided or contact the Community Liaison, Patricia Brady at pbrady2@lakecountyil.gov 224-688-7630 or call LCHD at 847-377-8130. LCHD should also be notified for unusual or special circumstances (e.g., burden of disease in the setting is greater than expected relative to community activity).

Please keep in mind the following steps:

- a) In situations of suspected COVID-19 outbreaks in a core group with at least 20% affected OR at least five cases (including those identified via home testing) with symptom onset within seven days of each other:
 - i. Consider recommending universal masking for all members of the core group until 10 days have passed from the onset date of the most recent case with no new cases in the group.
 - ii. Notify workers/students/parents/caregivers of the outbreak/cluster ([LCHD template letters](#)) and encourage them to:
 - Stay home if symptomatic and return with a negative lab-based PCR (molecular) test or two negative antigen tests at least 48 hours apart. Encourage policies that allow for employees with a positive test to stay home until at least day 6 or until symptoms resolve.
 - If asymptomatic and masking, use home antigen testing kits every other day prior to entering the facility and only enter if testing negative (isolate if positive).
 - If asymptomatic and not masking, use home antigen testing kits daily and only enter the facility if testing negative (isolate if positive).

- iii. Improve ventilation (e.g., moving activities outdoors, opening windows and doors, using air filters, upgrading HVAC systems).
 - iv. Increase physical distance in indoor spaces where possible and consider activities that reduce risk.
- b) If after implementing the above steps, cases continue to escalate:
- i. Implement biweekly testing either via home testing kits, with SHIELD Saliva-based PCR testing, or another contracted testing company where available for seven days from the date the last case in the cohort was identified.
 - ii. Suspend high-risk activities, such as extracurricular activities (e.g., band, chorus, indoor sports, dances, or other events with close contact).
 - iii. Further increase physical distancing in indoor spaces.

Resources:

New Reporting form: <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=9TRPF9HP4LFYP9WM>

Checklist (page 3): <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/50200>