

Talking points for K-12 schools, child cares, and partners on guidance updates

WA DOH updated the [Guidance to Prevent and Respond to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools and Child Cares](#) on May 30, 2023. WA DOH also sunset the [Interim SARS-CoV-2 Self-Testing Guidance for K-12 School and Child Care Providers](#). These talking points are intended for schools, child cares, local health jurisdictions, and partners to summarize the changes being made to the guidance documents. These talking points will be distributed to school & child care partners, including ESDs, Health Commons, OSPI, DCYF and others as needed.

Please note: *While the new guidance will be effective immediately upon release, it is not the intention of WA DOH that K-12 schools change any policies or practices between the release of the updated guidance and the end of the school year. There is no expectation that K-12 schools review and implement any guidance changes prior to the end of the 2022/2023 school year.*

What schools, child care, and partners need to know about the [Guidance to Prevent and Respond to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools and Child Cares](#):

- In the 2023/2024 school year, schools and child cares will no longer be required to report positive results from at-home tests or from tests administered by healthcare providers or labs outside of the school or child care to their local health jurisdictions.
 - Schools will continue to be required to report test results from tests administered by the school, per the [COVID-19 Point-of-Care Test Reporting for K-12 Schools](#).
 - Schools and child cares will continue to be required to report any outbreaks or suspect outbreaks of COVID-19 to their LHJ.
 - Because case reporting requirements for schools and child cares will now align with requirements for other establishments, the [Interim SARS-CoV-2 Self-Testing Guidance for K-12 School and Child Care Providers](#) will be sunset. For additional information on self-testing guidance, K-12 schools and child cares should refer to the [SARS-CoV-2 Self-Testing Guidance for Establishments](#). Individuals and families should refer to the [COVID-19 Self-Testing Guidance](#).
- The updated guidance includes a new section with considerations for flu, RSV, and other respiratory illnesses.
- References to the Secretary of Health Mask Order, which ended on April 3, 2023, have been removed. However, anyone working near or providing care to a person known to have COVID-19 or with COVID-19 symptoms should wear [appropriate personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#). Schools and child cares should refer to [L&I Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19 \(wa.gov\)](#) for additional details on level of respiratory protection needed for employees.
 - Masking may be necessary and required in response to an increase in cases, high absenteeism due to respiratory illness, or in response to an outbreak.
- References to the Say Yes! COVID Test program, which ended on May 11, 2023, have been removed.
- Recommendations referencing the CDC COVID-19 community levels have been removed.
 - Instead of monitoring CDC community levels to implement layered mitigation strategies, K-12 schools and child cares should consider additional strategies during outbreaks or when there is high absenteeism due to respiratory illness.

- Recommended mitigation strategies are described in detail in the [Guidance to Prevent and Respond to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools and Child Cares](#) and can include masking, improving ventilation, and screening testing.

If you have any questions, please contact your local health jurisdiction or the COVID-19 information hotline by dialing 1-800-525-0127, then press #.