



# **COVID-19 OUTBREAK RESPONSE PLAN FOR SCHOOL SETTINGS**

Prevention and/or Control of COVID-19 in Schools

August 2020

## RECORD OF CHANGE

Description of Change	Pages Affected	Date of Review Or Change	Review or Change Made By
Plan Development (Initial)	All	August 2020	Vickie Key
Revision II	All	September 2020	Vickie Key

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## **BACKGROUND**

The 2020 outbreak of COVID-19, commonly referred to as “coronavirus,” originated in the Wuhan province of China. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include mild to severe respiratory illness accompanied by fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The virus is spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person speaks, sneezes or coughs. The droplets can land in the mouths or noses of others nearby or may hang in the air to be inhaled. Transmission may also be possible through contact with contaminated surfaces. COVID-19 is reported to be more contagious than flu and can be devastating – even causing death. Symptoms typically appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus. However, many people who are infected and contagious may be asymptomatic.

Braxton County Health Department (BCHD) has worked closely with the Braxton County Superintendent of Schools, school principals and the school nurses throughout the spring and summer of 2020, in order to mitigate and/or contain the spread of COVID-19 in school children of the county. The superintendent and her staff have worked to strictly follow public health, DHHR and the state department of education guidelines. BCHD has consulted on each decision for school activities, plans or student gatherings and for resumption of classes.

## **PURPOSE**

Early public health efforts to contain infectious disease outbreaks may help to contain or mitigate the overall impact of an outbreak, especially those that are highly contagious but with limited medical prophylaxis or treatment. Surveillance, identification, reporting and intervention when COVID-19 is detected in school settings may help to eliminate the source of infection may well interrupt its spread and protect the school system’s efforts to function. To facilitate investigation, intervention and support of Braxton County Schools, the health department will utilize resources from the WV DHHR, WV Health Command, DIDE, and CDC as well as local medical, response and government assets.

## **SCOPE**

This plan is applicable to Braxton County Health Department and its work with the Braxton County School System but will require the support and cooperation of other county stakeholders. Information will be shared with community partners as well as state and federal agencies as appropriate. Large-scale COVID-19 outbreak response will require support from local and state agencies such as, but not limited to, the local hospital and lab, clinics, private physicians’ practices, school personnel, emergency services, DIDE and the WV Office of Laboratory Services. LHD or provider resources located out of the Braxton County region will be accessed as needed for information and/or response support.

The COVID-19 Outbreak Response Plan for schools is intended to be used as a guide for Braxton County Health Department (BCHD) staff to monitor, report and mitigate a COVID-19 outbreak in Braxton County Schools. It will be utilized with other Braxton County plans to include all aspects of response such as communications, managing volunteers, health and safety of staff, responders and volunteers and, eventually the mass dispensing of vaccine. This plan will be incorporated into the BCHD Outbreak Response Plan and be referenced under the BCHD All-Hazards Plan. The COVID-19 Outbreak Response Plan for School Settings integrates the

key elements of communicable disease control and prevention with emergency management concepts.

### **AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES**

In WV, the Governor and Health Officer (or his/her designee) has statutory authority in the WV Legislative Code and Legislative Rules to take immediate actions to mitigate the health impacts of an infectious disease outbreak. In Braxton County, local government will work with the Braxton County Board of Health and Office of Emergency Management to coordinate local declarations and response.

References: Braxton County Health Department's response plans  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
WV Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology  
[www.dide.wv.gov](http://www.dide.wv.gov)

### **ASSUMPTIONS**

Mitigating COVID 19 is a fluid and dynamic process that includes constant evaluation and decision making. For school systems to remain open for in person activities, a system of protective measures to limit person to person spread of this infectious disease must be in place including:

- The judicious wearing of a mask
- Frequently and effectively washing hands
- Effectively using social distancing techniques in social settings

AND

- The identification of infected individuals through laboratory testing, symptom screening, and contact tracing
- The diligent and timely collecting, analyzing, and sharing of information to drive disease intervention decision making.

Most COVID-19 outbreaks in Braxton County will be on a scale manageable by BCHD and community partners using the tools provided by state and federal partners. Local community partners and volunteers will be called on to supplement BCHD staff when needed. Events that require more than local resources may necessitate more outside help. BCHD and/or the Braxton County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) may request state support and guidance if/when local resources are overwhelmed.

### **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

BCHD and Braxton County Schools are planning and will carry out back-to-school activities according to the guidelines provided in the WV Schools Re-Entry Toolkit. Braxton County School Superintendent has distributed this toolkit to each school nurse, board member and principal and has scheduled workshops to make sure all faculty and staff members are familiar with and will strictly adhere to the guidelines it contains. BCHD has consulted with the superintendent and principals on best practices, with the aim of keeping schools free of outbreaks through mitigation and containment.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

Information regarding COVID-19 outbreaks in schools will be shared with the public, the media, individuals and other agencies as appropriate, per Braxton County Crisis Emergency Risk Communications Plan (CERC). Information to parents and guardians of school children may be distributed through the mass recipient messaging system used by the superintendent's office. BCHD may utilize volunteers to screen calls from parents and concerned citizens which will reduce the number of calls to the medical staff and will provide as much information as possible to the callers. Information will also be posted on the BCHD Facebook and Webpage sites.

## **OBTAINING AND SHIPPING LABORATORY SPECIMENS**

Laboratory specimens collected for verification of COVID-19 will be obtained and shipped according to guidelines from DIDE, the WV Office of Laboratory Services and/or references labs used by this agency.

## **GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS FROM RE-ENTRY TOOLKIT – Excerpts**

### **Definitions**

- **Confirmed case:** A person who has tested positive for the COVID-19 virus using a laboratory test.
- **COVID-like symptoms:** Temperature of 100.4 or higher, fever or chills, new cough, shortness of breath or difficult breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and/or diarrhea.
- **School outbreak-associated case:** A confirmed case among students/staff should be classified as outbreak associated.
- **Family members or others outside the school** who get sick should not be classified as a school outbreak associated case.
- **Isolation:** Staying home from work, school, and/or activities when a person has a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- **Isolation lasts for at least 10 days** after the onset of symptoms, 24 hours fever-free without fever reducing medication and an improvement of symptoms. For people who have not had symptoms, isolation lasts 10 days from the day they had their first positive test. In some instances, as determined by an individual's medical provider, isolation may last in excess of days.
- **Quarantine:** Staying home from work, school, and/or activities when a person is a close contact of someone with COVID-19. Quarantine lasts for 14 days (unless the person develops symptoms, then they will be put in isolation).
- **Close contact:** A person who:
  - was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 (even if they did not have symptoms) for at least 15 minutes total.
  - provided care for someone who is sick with COVID-19.
  - had direct physical contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19.
  - shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who is sick with COVID-19.
  - got respiratory droplets on them (through sneezing, coughing, shouting, etc.) from someone who is sick with COVID-19.
  - was in the same class/core group as a person with COVID-19.

- **Core Grouping:** The practice of keeping the same individuals in the same group at all times during the school day.
  - Changes in core groups are timed to align with school breaks. Core grouping helps limit the number of contacts each individual has. As a result, quarantines, dismissals, or suspension of in-person learning in the event of a student or staff member with COVID-19 affect fewer people. Students may be in multiple core groups (for example, bus ride to school, after-school sports, classroom).
- **Confirmed outbreak:** Two or more confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/staff from separate households, with onset within 14 days in a single classroom or core group.

### **Best Practices to Address Symptoms**

- **Symptoms of COVID-19** include new onset cough or shortness of breath by themselves OR at least 2 of the following:
  - fever (100.4°F or higher), chills, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, loss of sense of smell and/or taste or gastrointestinal symptoms of diarrhea, vomiting or nausea
- If a person has a new symptom (for example, new loss of smell only) with no other diagnosis to explain it, they should stay home and talk to their health care provider about testing for COVID-19, even if it is the only symptom they are experiencing.
- If a person is given an alternative diagnosis (e.g. strep throat, influenza, etc.) they should be stay home from school following the standard exclusion criteria for communicable diseases in schools.

### **Responding to COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks in Schools**

- **Single cases response** - One student with confirmed diagnosis within a school
  - Student stays home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after COVID-19 symptom onset, 24 hours fever-free, and improving symptoms).
  - Class/core group stays home for a 14-day quarantine irrespective of test result
  - If school is not practicing core grouping or there is some mixing of grouping, work with local health department to identify close contacts (including providing class schedules and class rosters), exclude contacts until released from quarantine
  - Anticipate grade-wide or school-wide dismissal for several days while identification and notification of close contacts is ongoing.
- **One teacher/staff member with confirmed COVID-19**
  - Staff member stays home until 10 days after onset of symptoms and 24 hours fever free and with improved symptoms (10 days from test date for those who asymptomatic).
  - Classroom/core group must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.
  - All close contacts (students/staff) must quarantine for 14 days.
  - WVDHHR will determine when testing is appropriate for close contacts.
- **Confirmed outbreak**
  1. Two or more people from separate households with confirmed COVID-19 with onset within 14 days, in a single classroom or core group (classroom or core group

outbreak)

- All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).
  - Class/core group must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results. WVDHHR recommends testing close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).
  - If outbreak and exposures are limited to one classroom or core group, suspension of in-person instruction for the entire school should not be necessary.
2. School Outbreak - two or more classrooms/core groups
- All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms)
  - All classrooms/core groups, including staff, must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results
  - WVDHHR recommends testing of close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms)
  - Consider suspension of in-person learning for the school, especially if evidence of transmission between classroom/core groups within the school (as opposed to two distinct classroom outbreaks both starting with known household exposures). See information below on suspension of in-person learning for a school.
3. School Outbreak – in schools, not core groupings, two or more people, from separate households, with confirmed COVID-19 with onset within 14 days in the same school
- All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).
  - Work with local health department to identify contacts. All contacts must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results
  - WVDHHR recommends testing of close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms)
  - Consider suspension of in-person learning if teacher/staff staying home interferes with the ability of the school to operate

### **Considerations for Siblings**

- The siblings of people with COVID-19 will likely be considered close contacts because they often live in the same house as the person who has COVID-19. They will stay home for a 14-day quarantine.
- The siblings of people who are home for quarantine because they were exposed to COVID-19 do not need to stay home or be tested unless the sibling in quarantine develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19.
- Parents should closely monitor all of their children for symptoms.

### **Considerations for COVID-19 Testing in Schools**

- It is important that people who are sick get tested for COVID-19.
- People who are not sick but were a close contact of someone with COVID-19 should get tested for COVID-19 about five days after they were in contact with a sick person.



- Students and staff should work with their health care provider to get tested.
- Public health can help with testing if a person does not have a health care provider.

*Testing everyone in a school (either before school starts or during school) is not recommended. Testing everyone has not been well-studied. Social distancing and wearing masks are more important ways to prevent COVID-19. A negative test means that the person did not have COVID-19 when they were tested. A negative test does not mean they are “safe” or “cleared” to be at school.*

### **Criteria for Suspending In-Person Learning**

- **Suspending In-Person Learning for a Classroom**  
In-person learning for a single class/core group should be suspended when:
  - There is a student or staff member with confirmed case of COVID-19 because all members of the class/core group will be quarantined for 14 days. Length of suspension: 14 days.
  - There is a classroom/core group outbreak, because all members of the class/core group will be quarantined for 14 days. Length of suspension: 14 days
- **Suspending In-Person Learning for a School**  
In-person learning for a school should be suspended when:
  - Five or more classroom/core group outbreaks (defined above) occur within a 14-day period. Length of suspension: 14 days.OR
  - 5% or more unrelated students/staff have confirmed COVID-19 within a 14-day period (minimum of 10 unrelated students/staff). Length of suspension: 14 days.
- **District-Wide Suspension of In-Person Learning**  
In-person learning for an entire county should be suspended in accordance WV DHHR School Alert System, [wvde.us/reentry](http://wvde.us/reentry) metrics

### **SURVEILLANCE AND REPORTING, CONTACT TRACING**

Braxton County Health Department will follow guidelines from WVDHHR, WVDIDE and CDC for surveillance and reporting outbreaks of COVID-29. Contact tracing and monitoring will follow the same guidelines used for tracking and mitigating all contagious diseases. Community partners and WVDIDE will support this effort by reporting identified cases of COVID-19 to BCHD promptly and by providing as much information for each case/patient as they have available.

### **MAINTIANING AND UPDATING THIS DOCUMENT**

This outbreak plan is the initial plan that deals with the Braxton County school system as a focus area for concentration of mitigation and/or containment of COVID-19 disease. It is subject to frequent expansion, changes, or updates as more or better information becomes available. The plan has been shared with the superintendent of schools and with the OEM for inclusion in the

Braxton County Health Department COVID-19 Outbreak Response Plan for School Settings

Braxton County Response Plan. BCHD will continue to work closely with Superintendent of Braxton County Schools.

**Objective Action Matrix:**

COVID Pandemic Classroom Status <i>(Reference 1)</i>	Public Health Actions	School System Actions	Expected Intervention <i>(Reference 1)</i>
<p><b>Distance Learning Only</b></p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>Students, Parents, Faculty, and Staff participate in COVID 19 mitigation measures.</p>
<p><b>In person</b> Class taking place no known COVID 19 Cases within school</p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>Students, Parents, Faculty, and Staff participate in COVID 19 mitigation measures.</p>

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<p><b>Single student with confirmed COVID-19 within a school</b></p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces. Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>Student stays home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever-free, and improving symptoms).</p> <p>Class/core group stays home for a 14-day quarantine irrespective of test results.</p> <p>If school is not practicing core grouping or there is some mixing of grouping, work with local health department to identify close contacts (including providing class schedules and class rosters), exclude contacts until released from quarantine.</p> <p>Anticipate grade-wide or school-wide dismissal for several days while identification and notification of close contacts is ongoing.</p>
<p><b>Single teacher/staff member with confirmed COVID-19</b></p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces. Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p>	<p>Staff member stays home until 10 days after onset of symptoms and 24 hours fever free with improved symptoms (10 days from test date for those who were asymptomatic).</p> <p>Classroom/core group must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.</p> <p>All close contacts (students/staff) must quarantine for 14 days.</p>

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	Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.	Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.	WVDHHR will determine when testing appropriate for close contacts.
<b>Two</b> or more people from separate households with confirmed <b>COVID-19</b> , with onset within 14 days <b>in a single classroom or core group</b> (classroom/core group outbreak)	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces.</p> <p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).</p> <p>Class/core group must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.</p> <p>WVDHHR recommends testing close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).</p> <p>If outbreak and exposures are limited to one classroom or core group, suspension of in-person instruction for the entire school should not be necessary.</p>
<b>Two</b> or more <b>outbreak classrooms</b> /core group (school outbreak)	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces.</p> <p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p>	<p>All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).</p> <p>All classrooms/core groups, including staff, must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.</p> <p>WVDHHR recommends testing of close contacts (about 5 days after</p>

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	<p>Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).</p> <p>Consider suspension of in-person learning for the school, especially if evidence of transmission between classrooms/ core groups within the school (as opposed to two distinct classroom outbreaks both starting with known household exposures). See information below on suspension of in-person learning for a school.</p>
<p>In schools, not core grouping, two or more people, from separate households, with <b>confirmed COVID-19</b> with onset within 14 days in the <b>same school</b> (<i>school outbreak</i>)</p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Braxton County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces.</p> <p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever-free, and improving symptoms).</p> <p>Work with local health departments to identify contacts. All contacts must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.</p> <p>WVDHHR recommends testing of close contacts (about 5 days after exposure or earlier if contact develops symptoms).</p> <p>Consider suspension of in-person learning if teacher/ staff staying home interferes with the ability of the school to operate.</p>

Braxton County Health Department COVID-19 Outbreak Response Plan for School Settings

<p>5% of students/staff have <b>confirmed COVID-19</b> within a 14- day period <i>(school outbreak)</i></p>	<p>Engage communication cycle with Braxton County school system, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance</p> <p>Engage virtual Joint Information Center (JIC) with Marion County School System, DHHR Health Command, and DIDE for public Information.</p>	<p>Provide Braxton County Health Department with identifying and contact information for COVID 19 cases and contact traces. Engage communication cycle with Braxton County Health Department.</p> <p>Implement COVID 19 Mitigation Measures.</p> <p>Provide COVID 19 Management Guidance to student, parents, faculty, and staff</p> <p>Engage Joint Information with Braxton County Health Department for public Information.</p>	<p>All students and staff with COVID-19 stay home until released from isolation (usually 10 days after symptom onset, 24 hours fever free and improving symptoms).</p> <p>Work with local health department to identify contacts. All contacts (students and staff) must quarantine for 14 days irrespective of test results.</p> <p>WVDHHR will determine when testing is appropriate for close contacts</p> <p>Recommend suspension of in-person learning for 14 days.</p>

## Communication Plan:

**Communication Cycle:** Communications for COVID 19 Response are dynamic and ongoing activities that should include defined points of contact for information sharing that create feedback loops to sustain situational awareness for all participants.

<b>Braxton County Health Department Contact Information</b>		
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Vickie Key, <b>Threat Preparedness Coord. / Volunteer Coordinator / OAH</b> P.O. Box 1 and/or 611 Main Street Sutton, WV 26601	(304) 765-2851-Work (304) 765-3828-Home (304) 701-8671-Cell	<a href="mailto:vickie.d.key@wv.gov">vickie.d.key@wv.gov</a>
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Updated 8-31-20.....vdk



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