

Indicators for In-person Instruction in Yellowstone County Schools

These four indicators will help Yellowstone County public health officials & education leaders make recommendations about in-person school instruction. Recommendations for suspension of in-person instruction will be considered when three out of four metrics are red.

Metrics

Weekly case mix & clusters: Increases in new cases in children under 19 & clusters within schools

- GREEN** Stable case mix with few increases in new cases involving children under age 19 & rare clusters within schools
- YELLOW** Increasing cases involving children under age 19 & significant clusters within schools
- RED** Significant increases of cases involving children under age 19 & widespread clusters within schools

Capacity of healthcare & public health systems: Includes staffing, timeliness of contact tracing, supplies, testing capacity, hospital beds, active cases in service area, etc.

- GREEN** Operating as expected, normal capacity
- YELLOW** Needs are beginning to outpace capacity
- RED** Stressed operations, critical concerns

Weekly average daily case count per 100,000: The number of cases per day, divided by 161,300 (population of Yellowstone County), multiplied by 100,000, averaged over a 7-day period.

- GREEN** Less than 10 new cases per 100,000 for 2 consecutive weeks
- YELLOW** Ten to 25 new cases per 100,000 for 2 consecutive weeks
- RED** Greater than 25 new cases per 100,000 for 2 consecutive weeks

Weekly positivity rate: Number of weekly positive tests divided by the number of tests conducted that week.

- GREEN** Less than 5 percent for 2 consecutive weeks.
- YELLOW** Five to 10 percent for 2 consecutive weeks
- RED** Greater than 10 percent for 2 consecutive weeks



If COVID-19 levels increase steadily within color bands, increased measures will be considered. For more information on COVID-19 status, visit the Yellowstone County [COVID-19 dashboard](https://www.yellowstonecountymt.gov/covid-19) at: [covid.RiverStoneHealth.org](https://www.yellowstonecountymt.gov/covid-19)

Risk Reduction Strategies for Yellowstone County Schools

These are possible risk reduction strategies for school administrators to consider implementing to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

GREEN

**Minimal
Community Transmission**
(3 out of 4 metrics are green)

- Require face coverings, physical distancing, & limit activities where social distancing is not feasible
- Sick students must stay home
- Provide clear messages & flow charts to parents about when children should remain at home & when they should return to school after illness
- Provide parents with the definition of a close contact & what parents should do if their child is a close contact of someone testing positive for COVID-19
- Identify each school's COVID-19 Point of Contact for school personnel & families

YELLOW

**Increased
Community Transmission**
(Mix of various colored metrics)

- Cohort groups maintained in class schedules & during lunch to limit exposure
- Hybrid schedules: part online, part in person
- Staggered scheduling: Monday & Tuesday cohort; Wednesday all online to allow deep cleaning & added ventilation; second cohort Thursday & Friday
- In-person grades K-5; shift to online for grades 6-12
- Limit in-person instruction to students who need supportive services or have special needs
- If unable to contact trace effectively, shift to more broad mitigation, including quarantining larger cohorts, classrooms, teams or schools
- Require testing of all students with COVID-19 symptoms OR require 10-day absence from illness onset if not tested
- Consider outbreak testing if cluster is identified in cohorts, classes, or teams

RED

**Substantial
Community Transmission**
(3 out of 4 metrics are red)

- Consider suspension of in-person instruction until yellow level maintained on a 7-day average basis
- Activate remote learning
- Continue essential student support including meals & student engagement

Sources Consulted to Develop Metrics & Strategies

References:

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11. Washington <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/FallGuidanceK-12.pdf>
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