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## COVID-19 Update: School Guidelines, Public Health Advisory System

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted today provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### K-12 SCHOOL GUIDANCE:

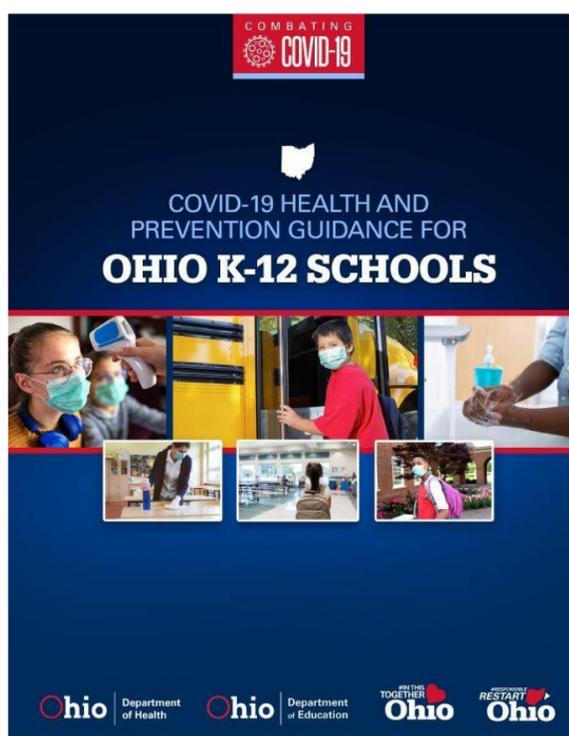
Governor DeWine today announced new guidance for resuming school in the fall.

"We know that each school system, and perhaps each school building, will likely look different in the fall. We also know that Ohio has a long history of local control and that school administrators and teachers know their schools best," said Governor DeWine. "Working together and consulting with educators and other health officials, we have developed a set of guidelines, backed by science, that each school should follow when developing their reopening plans."

The newly issued guidance report advises schools to vigilantly assess symptoms, wash and sanitize hands to prevent spread, thoroughly clean and sanitize the school environment to limit spread on shared surfaces, practice social distancing, and implement a face coverings policy.

"Just as we have done in the business sector with employees, we are requiring school staff to wear face coverings to reduce the spread of the virus, unless it is unsafe or when doing so could significantly interfere with the learning process. When face coverings aren't practical, face shields may be considered," said Governor DeWine. "We strongly recommend that students in 3rd grade and up wear face coverings as well."

More details on the new school guidance will soon be available on [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).



To assist schools in their efforts to implement the guidance, the Ohio Department of Education has created a document titled, "[The Reset and Restart Education Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts](#)," which is designed to help teachers, principals, and administrators with solutions to safety challenges. The document provides resources and information for community decision-makers as they contemplate how to reopen safely.

The guidance announced today was developed in consultation with school superintendents, teachers, parents, the Ohio Federation of Teachers, Ohio Education Association, Ohio Association of Public School Employees, Buckeye Association of School Administrators, Ohio School Boards Association, Ohio Association of School Business Officials, Alliance for High Quality Education, and Ohio Association of Career Tech Education.

Governor DeWine today also committed to working with the Ohio General Assembly on a plan to ensure that federal CARES Act dollars are made available to Ohio's school districts for unforeseen expenses associated with creating a safe environment.

### PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY ALERT SYSTEM:

Governor DeWine announced today that going forward, Ohio will maintain vital, necessary baseline orders to control the spread of COVID-19 while also implementing a new alert system.

The Ohio Public Health Advisory System will provide local health departments and community leaders data and information to combat flare-ups as they occur in different parts of the state. The system consists of four levels that provide Ohioans with guidance as to the severity of the problem in the counties in which they live.

"Our new Public Health Advisory System will help make clear the very real dangers happening in individual counties across Ohio," said Governor DeWine. "This is a color-coded system built on a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the virus' spread and to inform, engage, and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments, and others in their response and actions."

### Data Indicators:

A county's alert level is determined by seven data indicators:

1. New Cases Per Capita
2. Sustained Increase in New Cases
3. Proportion of Cases that Are Not Congregate Cases
4. Sustained Increase in Emergency Room Visits
5. Sustained Increase in Outpatient Visits
6. Sustained Increase in New COVID-19 Hospital Admissions
7. Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Bed Occupancy

Additional measurements still in development include county-level data on contact tracing, tests per capita, and percent positivity.

Detailed descriptions for each indicator can be found on [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).

### Alert Levels:

**Alert Level 1 Public Emergency (Yellow):** Baseline level. County has met zero or one indicator. Active exposure and spread. Follow all health orders.

**Alert Level 2 Public Emergency (Orange):** County has met two or three indicators. Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.

**Alert Level 3 Public Emergency (Red):** County has met four or five indicators. Very high exposure and spread. Limit Activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.

**Alert Level 4 Public Emergency (Purple):** County has met six or seven indicators. Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.

Counties that are approaching Alert Level 4 are indicated with a star.