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## Guidance for Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) with Students Returning to In-Person K-12 School

Students with disabilities may be disadvantaged if in-person education options are not provided. Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID) should plan for allowing residents to safely attend in-person K-12 schools to promote fair access to safe educational environments for students and staff. The ICF/IID facility administration should assess the use of the following mitigation strategies to reduce transmission of COVID-19 in the schools their residents attend.

### Universal Masking and Wearing Masks

Most staff and students can safely tolerate wearing a mask. However, some students with disabilities may experience challenges to wearing masks consistently, including being physically unable to wear a mask, unable to comply with wearing a mask, or safely wearing a mask. Anyone who cannot safely wear a mask should not be required to wear a mask. For example, individuals who are physically unable to remove a mask without assistance if breathing difficulties occur should not be required to wear a mask.

If a student cannot wear a mask, then ensure the school can maintain physical distancing or use physical barriers to reduce COVID-19 transmission, such as plexiglass barriers between student desks or sneeze guards. A face shield alone is not a substitute for a mask, but may help in reducing COVID-19 transmission.

Staff and teachers working with students who are deaf or hard of hearing should consider wearing a clear mask or a cloth mask with a clear panel. If these options are not available, consider using written communication and decreasing background noise.

### Physical distancing at school

Promote physical distancing of at least six feet between people. When physical distancing is not feasible, use alternatives such as physical barriers, sneeze guards, staggered scheduling of drop-off times or locations by cohort, and limiting visitors. Close communal dining, if possible, or use communal dining shifts to allow physical distancing and disinfect between each use. Stagger group and extra-curricular activities to limit exposures and prevent crowds.

### Hand Washing and Cough Etiquette

Teach and reinforce handwashing for at minimum 20 seconds. Also encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue when not wearing a mask and then immediately wash their hands. Encourage staff and students to wash their hands or sanitize their hands before snacks, meals, and after touching

frequently-touched surfaces and objects (i.e., door knobs, hand rails, etc.). Students with disabilities may need assistance with hand washing and cough etiquette.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities

Regularly disinfect frequently-touched surfaces and objects (door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, toys and playground equipment) within the school and on school buses. Maximize physical space, such as adjusting desks to face the same direction. Install physical barriers and guides to promote physical distancing and minimizing crowds. Discourage sharing items, particularly those that are difficult to clean. Close communal use of shared spaces, such as dining halls if possible, or cohort students to use the dining hall with physical distancing and disinfect between use. Consider use of larger spaces for education environments to maximize physical distancing. Improve ventilation by opening windows and doors to increase outdoor air circulation. Do not open windows and doors if it poses a safety risk or health risk to anyone in the facility.

## Contact Tracing, Isolation and Quarantine with the Collaboration of the Health Department

Individuals with a positive COVID-19 test result should isolate and close contacts may be asked to quarantine. Individuals should isolate or quarantine at home per the [COVID-19 School Manual](#). Provide the schools with the ICF/IID facility contact information for any contact tracing needs.

## COVID-19 Testing

Understand whether the school is performing surveillance testing for teachers, staff, and students. Ensure ICF/IID students are meeting or exceeding the testing frequency for the school.

## Vaccination of Teachers and Staff

Understand where the school is in their vaccination program. Establish if the teachers and staff working directly with the resident have been vaccinated.

## Aerosol-Generating Procedures Performed at Schools

For performing aerosol-generating procedures (i.e., tracheostomy care, tube changing, open suctioning, or oral suctioning), a separate and private area to perform aerosol-generating procedures should be identified. The room must be idle for one hour between procedures on other students. Open a window or door to the outside if possible. If performed indoors, the room should be disinfected according to the CDC guidelines, including the use of an EPA-registered disinfectant. The caregiver performing aerosol-generating procedures should wear the following PPE: long-sleeved gown, a fit-tested N95 mask, eye protection (face shield) and gloves. If a closed suctioning system is used, then the student may be suctioned in the classroom. If students are going to be bussed, they should be seated six feet apart and wear a mask. If suctioning is required on the bus, it must be a closed suction system and windows opened when possible. Aerosol-generating procedures should be limited and performed as needed instead of on a regular schedule.

## How To Care For ICF/IID Students Going to In-Person School

1. ICF/IID facilities should cohort students attending in-person school from other residents, especially residents who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Consider cohorting residents who attend the same school.
2. Encourage students to mask within the facility outside of their rooms, if possible and safe.
3. Encourage hand hygiene upon return from school and disinfect any equipment the student takes between the facility and the school.
4. Screen students for symptoms each day prior to leaving the facility for school. If a student has symptoms, isolate the student, place the student on Contact and Droplet precautions, and perform COVID-19 testing. If the student tests positive, notify the resident's parent or guardian, the school the student attends so the school can perform contact tracing appropriately, and the HAI team for guidance and additional testing resources.
5. Perform surveillance COVID-19 testing for students before attending school. Students at long-term care facilities or ICF/IID facilities may be at higher risk for experiencing a disproportionate burden of COVID-19 cases or severe disease. Surveillance testing may help identify asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic cases and prevent COVID-19 transmission. Consider testing more frequently if there are multiple COVID-19 cases at the school. PCR testing is recommended for surveillance testing. However, if PCR testing supplies are low, then Point of Care (POC) rapid antigen testing may be used with PCR testing in an alternating pattern.

<b>COVID-19 Community Risk</b>	<b>County Positivity Rate</b>	<b>Surveillance COVID-19 Testing Frequency</b>
Low	<5%	Twice weekly
Medium	5% - 10%	Three times weekly
High	>10%	Five times weekly

## Ethical Considerations of Testing

Testing should be offered on a voluntary basis. It is unethical to test someone who does not want to be tested, including students whose parents or guardians do not want them to be tested.

## Reference

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Updated March 19, 2021). Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>.

*Recommendations of the Long-Term Care Facility Subcommittee of the Utah Governor's COVID-19 Community Task Force*