



Eric J. Holcomb  
Governor

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG  
State Health Commissioner

October 26, 2021

Dear Superintendents and Local Health Officers:

The Indiana Department of Health (IDOH) is reaching out to clarify any confusion about school requirements concerning COVID-19. Indiana schools are legally required to comply with COVID-19 control measures, including quarantine requirements for students.

Indiana communicable disease laws require schools to comply with certain disease intervention activities, called control measures, to help stop the spread of disease. Indiana law, specifically IC 16-41-2-1, requires the IDOH to publish a list of reportable dangerous communicable diseases and their control measures on its website. In general, for dangerous communicable diseases, reporting to health departments allows local health officials to institute the proper control measures to limit the spread of the disease. Schools are legally required to comply with control measures directed to schools.

The COVID-19 control measures are posted on the IDOH website as required by IC 16-41-2-1. These control measures, which are attached, include reporting cases, contact tracing, isolation of positive cases, and quarantining of close contacts as necessary. 410 IAC 1-2.5-77(b) and 410 IAC 1-2.5-79 legally require local health departments to institute control measures in their jurisdiction, meaning they are required to ensure that schools in their jurisdiction comply with the control measures.

IDOH has also provided guidance to schools about how to limit the spread of COVID-19, including mitigation measures such as masking and social distancing. The guidance is evidence-based on the most current knowledge concerning the spread of COVID-19. While IDOH strongly encourages schools to follow its guidance recommendations, schools are not legally required to comply with those, in contrast to control measures.

In summary, schools are required to comply with control measures, including isolation and quarantine, but have discretion as to implementing the guidance measures such as masking and distancing. IDOH encourages school districts to make decisions about control measures in cooperation with their local health department and elected officials. As noted above, our guidance is evidence-informed using the latest information available from the CDC and other resources. Decisions to deviate from control measures and IDOH guidance at the local level may result in potential liability concerns or other unintended issues. We cannot speak to the potential impacts specifically and encourage schools to work with their legal counsels to make informed decisions for their districts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Kristina M. Box MD FACOG'.

Kristina M. Box, MD, FACOG  
State Health Commissioner

Attachments

To **promote**, **protect**, and **improve** the health and safety of all Hoosiers.