

Rapid COVID spread not seen in several studies of schools

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Students wear face masks at a school in the US, where many classrooms remain shuttered due to the pandemic

Schools that practice social distancing, mask-wearing and other precautions have not seen rapid spread of coronavirus, but indoor sports activities should be avoided, researchers said Tuesday.

The researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reviewed studies of [school](#) settings in the United States and other countries.

"As many schools have reopened for in-person instruction in some parts of the US as well as internationally, school-related cases of COVID-19 have been reported, but there has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission," they wrote in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* on Tuesday.

"The preponderance of available evidence from the fall school semester has been reassuring insofar as the type of rapid spread that was frequently observed in congregate living facilities or high-density worksites has not been reported in education settings in schools," they said.

They said the data suggests a path forward to "maintain or return primarily or fully to in-person" instruction.

"All recommended mitigation measures in schools must continue," they said.

These include universal mask use, [physical distance](#) and hybrid attendance models to limit crowding.

Other measures include increasing room air ventilation and expanding testing to rapidly identify and isolate asymptomatic infected people.

Other actions include "taking steps to reduce community transmission and limiting school-related activities such as indoor sports practice or competition that could increase transmission risk," they said.

"With two vaccines now being distributed under Emergency Use Authorizations and more vaccine options anticipated to be available in the coming months, there is much hope on the horizon for a safer environment for schools and school-related athletic activities during the 2021/22 [school year](#)," the researchers said.

The researchers looked at studies and data from US schools in Mississippi, North Carolina and Wisconsin as well as schools in countries in Europe.

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