

# In-person schooling is returning: How to keep your kids safe from COVID

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If your kids are going back to school in person this year, how can you protect them from COVID-19? Johns Hopkins Children's Center experts have solid suggestions. Credit: Public domain image

School will soon begin for children and adolescents around the United States, and for many, that means returning to classes in-person for the first time since the start of the pandemic. So, what do parents need to know to help ensure their kids stay safe from coronavirus infection?

The most current advice comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), which both recently released guidelines on preventing coronavirus spread in schools. At the top of the CDC and AAP lists—and heartily supported by Johns Hopkins Children's Center (JHCC) experts—is getting vaccinated.

"For any adolescent age 12 and older, getting fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is essential," says JHCC infectious diseases specialist Aaron Milstone, M.D. M.H.S, professor of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "While kids don't often come down with serious cases of COVID-19, they can pass it on to others, which can cause serious consequences."

The CDC calls for children who aren't vaccinated to wear properly fitting face [masks](#) at school, while the AAP recommends universal masking for students in class.

"Wearing face masks will not only help prevent the spread of COVID-19 but also will help reduce the spread of other viruses with similar transmission routes," says Milstone. "In turn, this will reduce absenteeism and disruption in schools."

All children—no matter the vaccination status—also should wash their hands frequently and maintain proper respiratory etiquette, such as sneezing or coughing into a tissue or the crook of their elbow. Sending kids to school with hand sanitizer, the experts add, may help if they are unable to frequently wash their hands.

JHCC experts emphasize that keeping the school community safe means keeping children at home if they're sick. If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, parents should follow the guidance of their local public health agency, pediatrician and child's school regarding when return to class can occur.

"Resuming in-person schooling is so important for our kids' educational success and overall wellbeing," says JHCC pediatrician Kate Connor, M.D., M.S.P.H., assistant professor of pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. "It's imperative to keep COVID-19 safety precautions in place to make sure everyone has a safe and healthy school year."

Along with heeding the new CDC and AAP back-to-school [guidelines](#), Milstone, Connor and others at JHCC recommend that parents learn and follow the COVID-19 prevention policies of their child's school and check with their child's pediatrician for more tips on how to stay COVID-19 free.

Provided by Johns Hopkins University School of  
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