



Media Advisory

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Distance Learning Strongly Recommended for All Yakima County Schools

YAKIMA, WA – The Yakima Health District has spent the last several weeks meeting with school officials to plan for the upcoming school year. Through these discussions and based on the Washington State Department of Health [guidelines](#), the data is clearly demonstrating that Yakima County continues to have high level of COVID-19 activity in the community. For this reason, the Yakima Health District is strongly recommending that schools implement a distance learning only model.

While Yakima County continues to see great improvement in our COVID-19 cases, we still have one of the highest rates of COVID-19 transmission in the state. At this time, COVID-19 positive case counts in Yakima County remain high at over 338.7 cases per 100,000 residents within the past 14 days. Current Washington State Department of Health guidance for safe in-person education “[Decision Tree for Provision of In Person Learning among K-12 Students at Public and Private Schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)” recommends distance-learning for counties at with high COVID-19 activity, this is defined as counties with more than 75 cases per 100,000 residents every 14 days. Yakima County currently has an incidence rate more than 3 times that threshold.

As a community, we must continue to follow the public health recommendations so we can facilitate a safe learning environment for students and teachers. Collectively, we can continue to slow the spread of COVID-19. All school districts in Yakima County will be communicating with families on what their specific distance-learning plan is for their area. Any questions related to the logistics of the plan at the school level should be directed to the school districts

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Stay at home as much as possible
2. Do not gather with other people outside of your immediate household for things like parties, barbecues, large family dinners
3. If you must go out, ensure at least 6 feet, or 2 meters, of distance between yourself and another person
4. Wear a mask every time you are in a public setting where you can't maintain physical distance
5. Wash your hands frequently, sanitize surfaces frequently
6. If you experience symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, get tested within 24 hours.
7. If you experience any time of illness symptoms, stay at home

QUOTES:

“The YHD understands the important roles schools play not only in education, but in social-emotional learning, addressing students with special needs, acknowledging racial and social inequities and providing assistance with meeting basic needs such as nutrition, physical activity and safety. As we make the health and safety of both students and school staff our highest priority, at this time I strongly recommend distance learning only, with the exception of considerations for small group instruction (≤5 students) to support the most educationally at-risk students, such as those with severe learning barriers and/or disabilities, at the discretion of school district leadership.”

Dr. Teresa Everson, Health Officer, Yakima Health District

Additional Resources

[Safe Start Risk Assessment Dashboard](#)

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