



# MI Safer High School End-of-Year Events Recommendations

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

Issue Date: June 1, 2021

## New Updates

- Based on the most current [CDC Guidance](#):
  - Individuals can gather outdoors for end-of-year events without wearing face masks, regardless of vaccination status.
  - Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to wear a mask indoors.
- MDHHS recommends that individuals continue to wear face masks while in crowded spaces, indoors and outdoors.

## Executive Summary

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is providing guidance on how to hold safer high school end-of-year events – such as prom, graduation, and end-of-year parties – during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document provides:

- General guidance for how schools can be safer while holding end-of-year events.
- Guidance for schools that choose to implement an end-of-year school testing program.

Based on the current epidemiology of the virus across the state at this time, **virtual events are safest**, and MDHHS encourages schools to assess the risk of holding an in-person event in their community. Schools, families, students, local health departments, and communities should assess the risk versus benefit of participating in school events. Individual circumstances should be considered before participating, including underlying health conditions that put participants or household contacts at increased risk of severe disease if they should contract COVID-19. The local characteristics of spread of the virus should also be considered ([MI Safe Start Map](#)). Mitigation efforts can reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19; however, mitigation efforts will not eliminate COVID-19 risk.

**A higher rate of vaccination among participants is another way to reduce the risk of transmission at the event and may allow participants to engage in more activities more safely. Encourage participants to complete their vaccination series (or single dose) at least two weeks prior to the event to maximize the risk reductions.**

## End-of-Year School Events Testing Recommendations:

**1. Test 25% of the unvaccinated in-person student population on a weekly basis.**

Schools should test at least 25% of its in-person student body (except for those who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic).

**2. Test any unvaccinated student, staff, volunteer, or other attendee who will participate in the end-of-year event within 24 hours of the event.**

Anyone who plans to attend an end-of-year event and who is not fully vaccinated should obtain a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test within 24 hours before the event, or a negative Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAAT - e.g., RT-PCR) within 72 hours before the event.

- Documentation of prior COVID-19 infection in the last 90 days may be used if proof of a NAAT or antigen test can be provided.

MDHHS recommends that schools offer on-site rapid antigen testing before an end-of-year event.

**3. Exclude students, staff, volunteers, or other attendees who test positive for COVID-19 from participating in in-person learning and end-of-year events for the duration of their infectious period.**

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should follow [current CDC guidelines](#) for isolation. This includes fully vaccinated individuals.

**4. Exclude unvaccinated students, staff, volunteers, or other attendees who have been "close contacts" of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 from attending an event that takes place during their quarantine period.**

Anyone with [close contact](#) to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 should quarantine according to their local health department requirements. Even if an individual tests negative for COVID-19 by antigen or PCR test, that individual – unless fully vaccinated – should not participate in in-person learning and in-person end-of-year activities for the duration of their quarantine period if deemed a "[close contact](#)" with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19.

**5. Exclude students, staff, volunteers, or other attendees with COVID-19 symptoms from attending the event.**

Even if an individual tests negative for COVID-19 by antigen or PCR test, that individual should not participate in in-person learning or in-person end-of-year activities while presently exhibiting COVID-19 [symptoms](#). This includes fully vaccinated individuals.

### Testing Support from MDHHS

MDHHS will provide training, guidance, and rapid antigen testing materials to schools that sign up and agree to the MI Safe Schools Testing Program requirements. MDHHS will provide:

- **Sufficient testing supplies.** Enroll your school to receive supplies through the program website.
- **Guidance.** The training series for school antigen testing can be found at the program website, including weekly office hours.

More information about the testing program, including how to order supplies and report testing results, can be found [here](#).

Schools may also contract with external vendors to support their testing needs, however MDHHS will not be able to reimburse the cost of those expenses.

### General Guidance for End-of-Year School Events:

#### 1. Location

Beginning on June 1, 2021, MDHHS will no longer limit the number of people who may gather together outdoors. All end-of-year events should be conducted in outdoor spaces to decrease the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Barns, tents, and other coverings may be used to provide refuge from inclement weather, as long as doors and/or tent flaps remain open to increase airflow.

If the event cannot be held outdoors, the overall capacity limit of an indoor establishment - including students, guests, staff, and all other persons - will be limited to 25 people or 50% of the limit established by the fire marshal, whichever is greater. If the establishment does not have such a capacity limit, then the overall capacity limit will be 30 people per 1,000 square feet.

#### 2. Cohorting for unvaccinated participants

For social events like prom and end-of-year parties, cohorting or pods should be considered for unvaccinated participants, to maintain small groups throughout the events. Participants should be cohorted into groups in order to do traditional activities.

The **same cohort** should be maintained for all the examples listed below, and individuals should avoid intermingling with others from outside of their cohort for the duration of the event. Lists of cohort members should be documented for contact tracing purposes.

Examples include:

- **Outdoor dining for unvaccinated individuals:**
  - Tables should be placed six feet apart and individuals should have assigned seating with one cohort seated per table.

- The consumption of food or beverages should be permitted only while seated in designated areas.
- **Dancing for unvaccinated individuals:**
  - Individuals may dance with members of their own cohort without social distancing (but those who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks indoors).
  - All individuals are encouraged to wear face masks whether indoors or outdoors.
  - Six feet of distance should be maintained between each cohort and cohorts should not intermingle.
- **Activities and games for unvaccinated individuals:**
  - Individuals may play games with members of their cohort without social distancing (but those who are not fully vaccinated must wear masks indoors).
  - Six feet of distance should be maintained between each cohort and cohorts should not intermingle.
- **Transportation for unvaccinated individuals:** Party buses or limousines may be used to transport members of a single cohort. Face masks should be worn at all times.

### 3. Face Masks for unvaccinated individuals

Beginning on June 1, 2021, MDHHS will no longer require anyone to wear a face mask when outdoors. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated will still be required to wear a face mask when indoors and the mask must cover each person's nose and mouth. However, face masks may be temporarily removed when eating or drinking.

### 4. Physical Distancing for unvaccinated individuals

Students, staff, and volunteers should stay six feet apart from other individuals outside of their cohort.

- Students may dance, play games, or otherwise socialize without practicing physical distancing within their cohort, so long as everyone follows the applicable mask requirements and recommendations and remains at least six feet from other cohorts.

### 5. Clean and Disinfect Often

- Use FDA approved cleaning supplies that are listed [here](#).
- Have hand sanitizing and cleaning supplies stations easily and plentifully available for use.
- Do not share items that are difficult to clean, sanitize or disinfect (such as props in photo booths).

### 6. Additional Considerations

- Consider scheduling students in staggered time slots for the event (e.g., 100 students each time slot).
- Consider decreasing the duration of the event. Longer events increase the chance of transmission.
- Be prepared if someone gets sick during or after the event. Implement contact tracing and follow recommendations from local health departments.

- Review the [CDCs Readiness and Planning Tool to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Events and Gatherings](#) to determine the level of readiness to implement mitigation measures and other safety measures.

### Specific Guidance for Prom and other End-of-Year Parties

1. Capacity limits for end-of-year events occurring June 1, 2021 or later, whether on school grounds or at another establishment, must be in accordance with the [MDHHS Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(effective June 1, 2021\)](#) as follows:
  - a. Outdoors: no gathering limit
  - b. Indoors: overall occupancy of all must not exceed *whichever is greater*:
    - i. 50% of the total capacity limits established by the fire marshal (or 30 persons per 1,000 square feet if no applicable fire marshal limit exists); OR
    - ii. 25 people
2. Capacity limits include all participants in attendance at the event, including students, guests, staff, and volunteers.
3. Inviting outside guests increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
4. MDHHS recommends testing every participant attending prom or end-of-year events with a rapid antigen test within 24 hours prior to the event (except for those who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic).
5. Encourage cohorting of groups and document names of participants within cohorts such that contact tracing can be performed if a case is detected after the events.
6. Consider strategies to reduce density at the event (staggered time slots for attendees)
7. Consider alternate activities to dancing. If dancing is planned, then consider strategies to reduce density on the dance floor. Consider several smaller dance floors around the venue.

### Specific Guidance for Graduation Ceremonies

1. Capacity limits for graduation ceremonies occurring June 1, 2021 or later, must be in accordance with the [MDHHS Gatherings and Face Mask Order \(effective June 1, 2021\)](#). The number of students, faculty, staff, and guests allowed is limited by the capacity limits set forth below.
  - a. Outdoors: no gathering limit
  - b. Indoors: overall occupancy of all must not exceed *whichever is greater*:
    - i. 50% of the total capacity limits established by the fire marshal (or 30 persons per 1,000 square feet if no applicable fire marshal limit exists); OR
    - ii. 25 people
2. Family members or spectators who attend end-of-year events, such as graduation, are encouraged to cohort in groups. Cohorts should remain six feet apart from individuals in other cohorts at all times.
3. MDHHS recommends testing every participant attending graduation—including family members and guests—with a rapid antigen test within 24 hours prior to the event (except for those who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic).

4. For graduation ceremonies, consider fist bumps, elbow bumps, or air high fives in lieu of traditional handshakes.

### **Further Information**

- [MDHHS Antigen Test FAQ and Guideline](#)
- [MDHHS Testing for School Programs](#)
- [CDC Readiness and Planning Tool to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Events and Gatherings](#)
- [CDC: Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool](#)