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Making Decisions about School Operations

(0-3%) If there is no to minimal community transmission, reinforcing everyday preventive actions, ensuring proper ventilation within school facilities, including buses, and maintaining cleaning and disinfection practices remain important. These actions can help minimize potential exposure. Schools should also monitor absenteeism among teachers, staff, and students to identify trends and determine if absences are due to COVID-19, symptoms that led to quarantine, concerns about being in the school environment and personal health and safety, or positive test results. Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should stay home and self-isolate for the timeframe recommended by public health officials. Anyone who has had close contact with someone who has tested positive or is symptomatic for COVID-19 should be tested and stay home until receiving a negative result, or stay home and monitor for symptoms.

(4-5%) If there is minimal to moderate community transmission, schools should follow the actions listed above, and continue implementing mitigation strategies such as social distancing, use of cloth faced coverings, reinforcing everyday preventive actions, and maintaining cleaning and disinfection. This also can include ensuring that student and staff groupings/cohorts are as static as possible and that mixing groups of students and staff is limited.

(6-10%) If there is substantial, controlled transmission, significant mitigation strategies are necessary. These include following all the actions listed above and also ensuring that student and staff groupings/cohorts are as static as possible with limited mixing of student and staff groups, field trips and large gatherings and events are canceled, and communal spaces (e.g., cafeterias, media centers) are closed.

(Above 10%) If there is substantial, uncontrolled transmission, schools should work closely with local health officials to make decisions on whether to maintain school operations. The health, safety, and wellbeing of students, teachers, staff and their families is the most important consideration in determining whether school closure is a necessary step. Communities can support schools staying open by implementing strategies that decrease a community's level of transmission. However, if community transmission levels cannot be decreased, school closure is an important consideration. Plans for virtual learning should be in place in the event of a school closure.

Created with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [Making decisions about school operations](#).