As COVID-19 continues to spread in Wisconsin, this school year will look very different from previous years. At the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), we want to ensure that students, teachers, and school staff are able to receive and provide education in an environment that values their health and safety. It is essential for school districts and health departments to have plans in place to identify and quickly address COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in schools as we move through the school year.

Recognizing that schools that resume in-person instruction are likely to experience outbreaks of COVID-19, the goal was to create a consistent but flexible approach so local health departments have the tools and information they need to work with schools in responding to outbreaks.

This guidance provides guidelines for:

- Outbreak prevention measures specific to children and schools (considerations such as physical distancing, wearing face coverings, absence policies, and hand hygiene).
- Detecting cases and outbreaks in schools (K-12), including information for school staff on identifying cases and close contact among students.
- Gathering information, contact tracing with cases and close contacts, and notification of family and staff.
- Special considerations (student age, classroom set up, level of cohorting) when it comes to identifying close contacts with cases in a school setting.
- Case and outbreak mitigation measures (information on exclusion from in-person instruction, how to best isolate and quarantine, and effective cleaning and disinfecting practices).

Resources such as checklists for investigations, health screenings, and template letters for schools to use in the situation of confirmed cases or close contact are also included in this guidance.

These recommendations are not exhaustive. The strategies and measures provided may not be appropriate or feasible in all situations. School-level assessments should be made by local health departments in consultation with school administration, Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and epidemiologists at DHS. School interventions and control measures should be based on the most recent guidance available from local, state, and federal public health and regulatory authorities.

We know this is going to be a school year like no other. As we move through the school year, this guidance will be a helpful roadmap that extends throughout the year. The safety and health of our students and school staff is our priority, which is why we have released this guidance as a structure to help effectively prepare local health departments and school districts.