

Central District Health Position on School Operations for Potential Shift to Category 3 (RED) for Ada County

Position

Central District Health (CDH) continues to monitor case activity in our jurisdiction and we are mindful of the efforts underway to make our educational settings safe for all staff, faculty, and students. We are focused on providing information that will allow school boards to appropriately address the educational needs of students.

With case rates on the rise across our district, we see the distinct possibility of returning to Category 3 guidance for school operations*. The Idaho Back-to-School Framework guided schools to move to remote learning when in Category 3. At this time, Central District Health supports schools operating with *some level* of in-person learning despite the Category 3 designation. This recommendation may change should increases in case rates continue. The following recommendations reflect major topics addressed by this shift in guidance:

Recommendations in Category 3

- Schools should be working actively to moderate and/or slow reopening plans and adjusting accordingly to reduce risk.
- All programs should be operating with physical distancing measures in place
 - At least 6-feet between individuals or small pods, which are independently spaced groups limited to 3-5 students. These should be in place CONSISTENTLY throughout the instruction day for in-person operations, including before and after school, classrooms, meal times, and at recess or breaks).
- Schools should evaluate at-home learning or hybrid models if operating in a 5 day-a-week instruction model and physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- All functions of in-person instruction should be evaluated and moved to operations at a reduced capacity if physical distancing (6 ft.) cannot be maintained.
- Programs should work with Central District Health to actively monitor cases and transmission as a result of exposure. Messaging assistance for these occurrences will be provided as requested through CDH.
- If transmission of COVID-19 is occurring in the physical structure or among a specific team or extracurricular event, schools should modify plans and operate under these modified plans for at least 2 weeks from an identified positive case in order to accurately assess if there is additional risk of transmission occurring.
- All cases and any exposed contacts must follow quarantine guidelines outlined by Central District Health in conjunction with the current guidelines provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - This includes a **full 14-day quarantine** from the date of last exposure for identified contacts.
- *Youth extracurricular activities* can be high-risk and are leading to a number of exposures and quarantines. During Category 3 we recommend assessing extracurricular activities based on *whether the activity can be done with physical distancing and face coverings*. For those activities where these mitigations are either not practical or cannot be enforced, they should be paused until in Category 2 to effectively reduce risk of transmission occurring in any and all parties involved in the operation of these events.
 - Extra precautions should be considered in all activities that utilize bussing and/or carpooling, as both increase exposure risk.

** Following additional outlined guidance tools provided on the Central District Health webpage, including those listed above in this document, will aid to our successful efforts in this pandemic response.*