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Gov. Beshear Announces K-12 School Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Delta Variant

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Masks recommended indoors for all children under 12, unvaccinated Kentuckians 12 and older

FRANKFORT, Ky. (July 26, 2021) – Today, Gov. Andy Beshear shared new masking recommendations for K-12 schools in response to the highly contagious COVID-19 delta variant. (<https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=879>)

“Our priority is our kids,” said Gov. Beshear. “How we make decisions has to come from one simple place: What gives us the best chance to have our kids in school the maximum number of days in the midst of a pandemic? That is our North Star.”

The Governor was joined by Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) Commissioner Dr. Steven Stack, Kentucky Department of Education Commissioner Dr. Jason Glass and Kentucky Board of Education Chair Lu Young.

Gov. Beshear and the state officials agreed Kentucky’s challenge is that the delta variant spreads quickly and aggressively among unvaccinated people of all ages. Without mitigation efforts, they expect the delta variant will spread through unvaccinated classrooms and throughout buildings resulting in large, frequent quarantines of students and staff.

Therefore, the Governor recommended the following:

- School districts should require all unvaccinated students and unvaccinated adults to wear a mask when in classrooms and other indoor school settings;

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- School districts should require all students under 12 years of age to wear a mask when in classrooms and other indoor school settings; and
- School districts wishing to optimize safety and minimize risk of educational and athletic disruption should require all students and all adults to wear a mask while in classrooms and other indoor school settings.

“Those working in and learning in our schools know what to do to keep in-person learning going and to do so safely. We have already definitively proven that,” said Commissioner Glass. “Now as conditions have shifted again with the rise of the delta variant and reinfections, we need to call once again upon your courage, dedication and commitment to keep our schools open for school this fall.”

“I want to thank elected school board officials for consistently rising to the challenges that we’ve faced throughout this pandemic,” said Chair Young. “You have maintained a laser-like focus on the best interests, safety and health of the children in our districts and you’ve proven that we can put these kind of return-to-school guidelines in place successfully.”

K-12 COVID-19 Testing Program

The K-12 School COVID-19 Testing Program is a voluntary program offered by KDPH in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for Kentucky K-12 schools to assist in reopening safely for in-person instruction.

“We’ve been given \$134 million by the federal government to create a testing program for K-12 schools, public and private, throughout the entire commonwealth,” said Dr. Stack. “I urge everyone who operates a school out there to explore the options and make testing available to keep yourselves safe.”

Superintendents and school administrators can learn more here (<https://govstatus.egov.com/K-12-kentucky-school-testing-program>).

- Testing will be limited to staff and students of Kentucky K-12 public, private and charter schools and includes school district employees and staff (contracted or otherwise), such as bus drivers, maintenance, office staff or as determined by the school administrator.
- The K-12 School COVID-19 Testing Program will operate the entire 2021-22 academic year.
- Participation in the school-based COVID-19 screening testing program is **voluntary** and at **no-cost**.

COVID-19 Case Information

Number of people who have received at least one vaccine dose in Kentucky: **2,278,834**

Number of unique individuals who have received a vaccine dose in the past day: **17,513**

New Cases: 783

Positivity Rate: 7.89%

Current Hospitalizations: 486

Current Intensive Care Admittances: 159

Currently on Ventilators: 71

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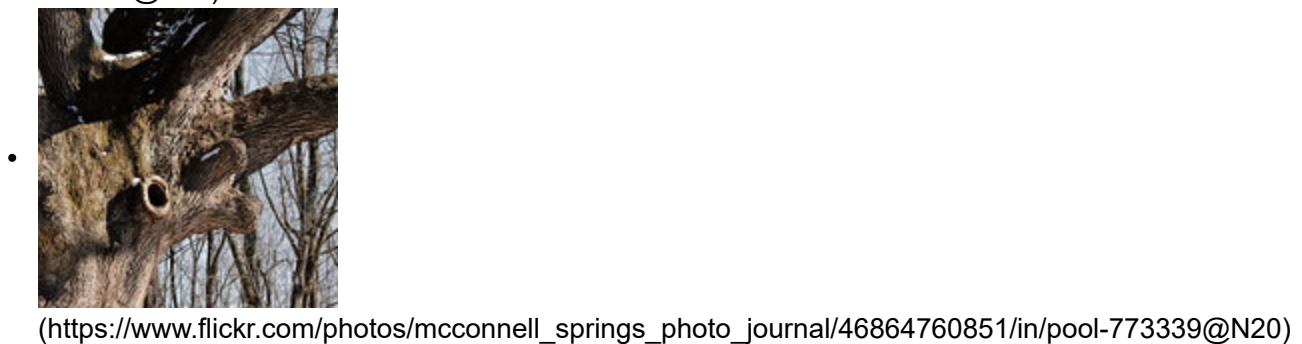


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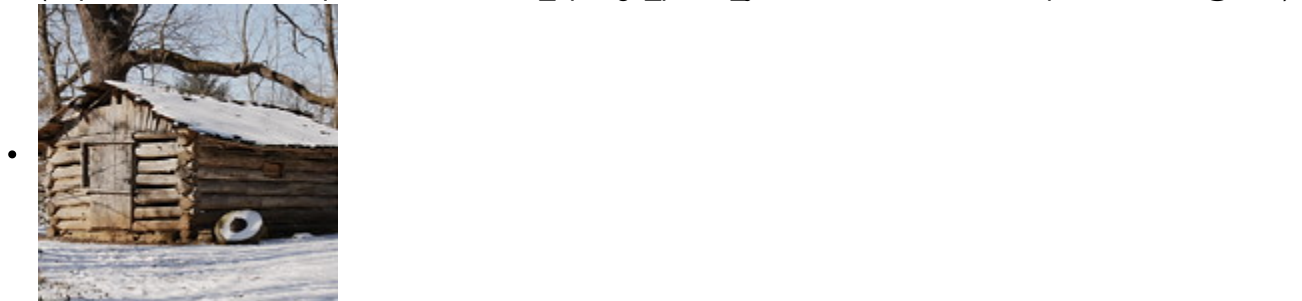


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