



*Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary*

January 16, 2024

Dear Public and Non-public School Contacts,

Greetings and Happy New Year. We are writing to share recommendations from the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) regarding respiratory virus infection prevention and control.

MDH currently recommends that healthcare settings implement broad source control (masking) in all patient care areas when the statewide combined weekly respiratory virus-associated hospitalization rate ([as calculated by the CDC](#)) meets or exceeds 10 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents.

As of January 16, 2024, the CDC data continue to show that the Maryland combined respiratory virus-associated hospitalization rate is above 10 per 100,000. The rates for the weeks ending on January 6, 2024, and December 30, 2023, were 10.8 and 19.7 respectively. This recommendation and the weekly statewide combined respiratory virus-associated hospitalization rate can be found [here](#).

**MDH considers school health suites to be healthcare settings for the purpose of these recommendations.**

Broad source control in the school health suite consists of universal masking (i.e., masking of all school health staff when interacting with students and other staff in the health suite and masking of all students/staff who enter the health suite for any reason).

School health staff should implement additional key measures to prevent and contain the spread of respiratory infections, such as:

- Promoting vaccination against COVID-19, influenza, and RSV in eligible school staff and students;
- Encouraging testing and isolation of infected individuals at home as indicated;
- Using Personal Protective Equipment appropriately;
- Identifying and adhering to standard precautions;
- Optimizing ventilation in the school health suite.

Broad source control can be discontinued once the combined weekly respiratory virus-associated hospitalization rate has been below 10 hospitalizations per 100,000 residents for two



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consecutive weeks. Regular infection prevention and control measures should continue regardless.

For questions about these recommendations, please contact Jasmin Whitfield at [jasmin.whitfield@maryland.gov](mailto:jasmin.whitfield@maryland.gov). We appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jasmin Whitfield".

Jasmin Whitfield, MSN, MPH, DNP  
School Health Program Manager  
Maryland Department of Health

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jamie Perry".

Jamie Perry, MD, MPH  
Director of School Health  
Maryland Department of Health