



Chisago County  
Health and Human Services  
Public Health Division



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*(10/26/20)*

**Operation: Keep Schools Open**

**\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

From all of us at Chisago County Public Health, we want to thank all of our residents for your continued support and strong efforts in helping mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We all want the same thing and that is for this virus to go away. Unfortunately, the outlook of this virus across the nation, Minnesota and Chisago County is that the spread of the virus will continue and cases will jump to a level that we have not seen in the last eight months. This can have a major impact on the way we operate within our communities, specifically, our schools.

The Public Health department understands the importance of keeping our schools open as no other setting has more influence on a child's health and well-being than their school. At this time, we also understand that the best available evidence indicates that COVID-19 poses relatively low risks to school-aged children, according to the CDC. Factors such as: Virus spread in concentrated areas, ability to provide appropriate school staffing, and analyzing trend data are key in the conversations public health and school officials are having to determine the health and safety of keeping our schools open.

Our schools are taking COVID-19 precautions very serious by ensuring those within their buildings are maintaining mask wearing, social distancing, hand-washing, covering coughs and having people stay home when they are sick. The control they have over these mitigation measures are confined only to the walls of the school building that surround them five days a week, eight hours a day. Public Health will continue to express grave concern for the gatherings, events, and activities that occur beyond school building walls. Chisago County continues to see a rise in community spread of the virus and many are directly linked to gatherings, events or activities where a large group of people are in close contact for an extended period of time, potentially not wearing face coverings and infected people are unknowingly attending. Individuals that then attend school or work that following day or week can result in unintended consequences, or spreading the virus even further and increasing the chances of having to adjust school operations.

Public Health and school administration will continue to monitor our local COVID-19 data on a daily basis, but are jointly concerned with the trend we are seeing. As rates and virus spread within our communities continue to rise, distance learning may be unavoidable. It is time for all of us to play our part in the fight to keep in-person learning a possibility. Information and operating status of our schools are subject to change based on press release published date.