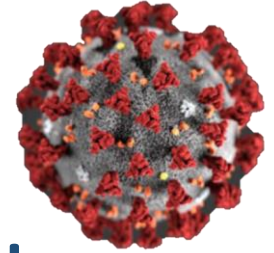


# New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 Weekly Call for Education and Childcare Partners



March 17, 2021

*Ben Chan  
Elizabeth Talbot  
Beth Daly  
Lindsay Pierce*

## **Q&A Session: To ask a question use the Q&A feature in Zoom**

- Hover over bottom of Zoom screen to find “Q&A”
- This is a public call, do NOT share confidential/sensitive information
- Ask general questions, individual consultation should be directed to the Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at 603-271-4496 (ask for a public health staff members)

# Agenda

- Highlight CDC's updated child care guidance
- Discuss physical distancing in schools (3 ft vs. 6 ft) and changes to NH's quarantine recommendations for schools (controlled and monitored educational settings)
- NH COVID-19 HAN Update #38 being released today
- Questions & Answers (Q&A)

# Updated CDC Child Care Guidance

# NH Child Care Guidance

**NH Child Care Guidance was last updated  
January 12, 2021 and remains current:**

<https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-child-care.pdf>

# CDC Child Care Guidance

**The U.S. CDC updated their “Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs During COVID-19” on March 12, 2021:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

# Components of CDC's Child Care Guidance

- Planning and communication, signs and messaging
- Respiratory etiquette
- Hand hygiene
- Wearing face masks: “everyone 2 years and older should wear a mask covering their mouth and nose when around people who do not live in their household, except when eating and sleeping.”
- Cleaning and disinfection (more details, including some helpful instructions for mixing and using bleach solutions)
- Increase outdoor air ventilation and air filtration (new details and considerations)

# Components of CDC's Child Care Guidance

- Physical distancing and modifying layouts
- Cohorting, scheduling pick-up and drop-off
- Playgrounds and outdoor play spaces
- Food service
- Children with disabilities or special needs
- Staff planning and training
- Symptom and risk factor screening (and exclusion): “children who have symptoms of any infectious illness or symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend your child care program... conduct daily health screenings for any person entering the child care facility...”
- Preparing for when someone is sick with COVID-19

# CDC vs. NH Child Care Guidance

- CDC's and NH's Child Care Guidance are very similar and complementary
- Core strategies and recommendations are the same
- Very similar messaging and recommendations around face mask use and continued need for symptom screening and exclusion
- CDC's guidance adds details that might be helpful (e.g., cleaning and disinfection, building ventilation and air filtration, children with disabilities and special needs)



# Physical Distancing in Schools and Changes to NH Quarantine Guidance


# Background

- World Health Organization recommendations: 1 meter (3.3 feet) of physical distance
- CDC recommendations: maximize physical distance “to the greatest extent possible” (goal of at least 6 feet)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: 3-6 feet of physical separation
- NH DOE/DHHS: students should be spaced “at least 3 feet apart with a goal of attempting to get chairs/desks 6 feet apart” (“minimize close contact... maximize physical distance”)

# Evidence: Risk of Transmission in K-12 Schools

- NH DPHS [Considerations for Transitioning Between School Instructional Models](#) (January 26, 2021)
- NH DPHS Weekly Call for Education and Childcare Partners ([January 27, 2021](#))
- CDC [Science Brief](#): Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools (February 12, 2021)
- NH [school dashboard data](#) and contact tracing experience

# Effectiveness of three versus six feet of physical distancing for controlling spread of COVID-19 among primary and secondary students and staff: A retrospective, state-wide cohort study

Polly van den Berg, MD, Elissa M Schechter-Perkins, MD, MPH, Rebecca S Jack, MPP, Isabella Epshtein, MPP, Richard Nelson, PhD, Emily Oster, PhD, Westyn Branch-Elliman, MD, MMSc 

Summary: “There is no significant difference in K-12 student and staff SARS-CoV-2 case rates in Massachusetts public school districts that implemented  $\geq 3$  feet versus  $\geq 6$  feet of physical distancing between students, provided other mitigations measures, such as universal masking, are implemented”

# Mitigation Measures in MA schools

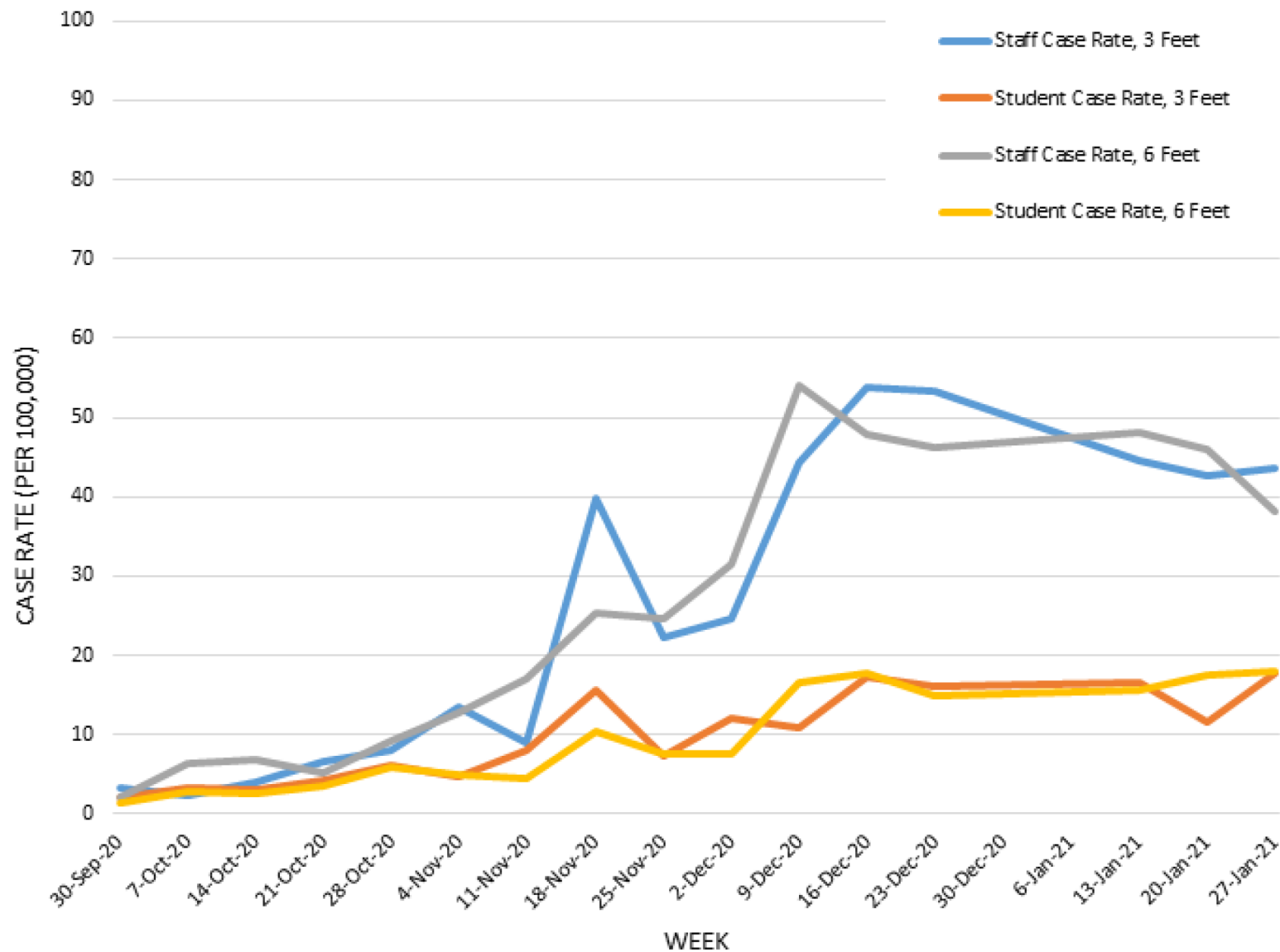
- Students in grade 2 and above, and all staff were required to wear a face mask in school buildings
- School districts were permitted to choose to require or recommend universal masking for students in all grades
  - 70% of districts required masking for younger grades and 26% of districts “strongly encouraged” masking for students in younger grades (i.e., younger than grade 2)
- Schools were encouraged to aim for  $\geq 6$  feet of distancing between individuals when possible, but minimum requirement of  $\geq 3$  feet of distancing between students was permitted

# Study Purpose

- Goal: to measure the effectiveness of different physical distancing policies on incidence of SARS-CoV-2 infections among students and staff after school re-opening in fall 2020
- Retrospective cohort study
- Analysis period: 9/24/2020 – 1/27/2021
- 251 school districts in the analysis
- Compared incidence rate in districts that implemented  $\geq 3$  feet of distancing between students (n=48) vs. districts with  $\geq 6$  feet of distancing (n=194) using an incidence rate ratio (IRR)

# Study Findings

- Cases from districts with  $\geq 3$  feet of distancing:
  - 895 students
  - 431 staff
- Cases from districts with  $\geq 6$  feet of distancing:
  - 3223 students
  - 2382 staff
- Students adjusted IRR: 0.90 (95% CI: 0.62-1.33)
- Staff adjusted IRR: 1.02 (95% CI: 0.75-1.37)





# Additional Study Findings & Limitations

- Incidence rates in students and staff were lower than surrounding communities
- Strong correlation between community rates and positive cases in schools
- This study did NOT specifically evaluate if infections occurred due to transmission in schools vs. introductions due to community transmission
- Study evaluated “official policy” vs. “real-world implementation of the policy”

# Study Conclusion

“We can conclude that more restrictive physical distancing policies would not have substantial impact on preventing cases in students attending in-person schooling”

The New York Times

## *Three Feet or Six? Distancing Guideline for Schools Stirs Debate*

Some public health officials say it's time for the C.D.C. to loosen its social distancing guidelines for classrooms, but the idea has detractors.

**By Emily Anthes**

March 16, 2021

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/health/coronavirus-schools-social-distance.html>

# Existing Public Health Recommendations for Schools

- NH continues to allow for a minimum of 3 feet of physical spacing between students/staff in classrooms (goal is still to maximize physical distancing to the extent possible)
  - When face masks are taken off (e.g., when eating lunch) students should be spaced at least 6 feet apart
  - If wind instruments and singing are involved in a classroom activity, the NH [arts & music education guidance](#) still applies, and students and staff should be separated by the recommended 8-10 feet of physical distance
- Face mask use continues to be strongly recommended in all educational settings (including classrooms), especially if students are spaced within 3-6 feet of each other
- See CDC guidance on wearing [well-fitted, multi-layered face masks](#)

# New Public Health Quarantine Recommendations for Schools

- NH public health will not recommend quarantine for students or staff if an exposure occurs in the classroom setting where students and staff are seated and spaced at least 3 feet apart with consistent and appropriate face mask use
- This guidance only applies to controlled and monitored educational classroom settings (including K-12 schools, colleges, and universities)
- In other settings (i.e., un-controlled movement or un-monitored settings), NH DPHS will continue to recommend quarantine for persons within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a cumulative time of 10 minutes or longer during the person's infectious period, regardless of mask use

# THIS IS AN OFFICIAL NH DHHS HEALTH ALERT

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[Health.Alert@nh.gov](mailto:Health.Alert@nh.gov)  
March 17, 2021 Time 1600 (4:00 PM EDT)  
NH-HAN 20210317

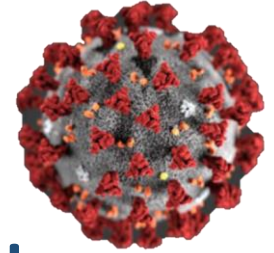


## **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak, Update # 38** ***Updated Travel Guidance*** ***Quarantine Guidance for Schools***

<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/alerts/han.htm>



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