

FLOYD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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This email is being sent to both clarify and announce a new Back to School recommendation from the Floyd County Health Department. We are seeing community wide improvements in the COVID-19 crisis that will allow some easing of policies.

Our community index of disease is down to 6.83%, the lowest since the end of September 2020. Our ISDH color code has improved to YELLOW. At time of writing nearly 20,000 high risk people in Floyd County have been vaccinated, about 50% of the needed minimal number for effective herd immunity. Hospital census of COVID-19 patients is at its lowest since August 2020. About 10,000 people have been infected in Floyd County.

State contact tracing and CDC research shows that in-school education is currently not driving the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, I am recommending a local policy change to maximize student availability. Using this policy will also give early information on a return to traditional educational modalities. At this time the scenario below is the only circumstance that is using the local Health Officers discretion to vary from IDOH/IDOE previous guidance.

If a parent or household member tests positive the children at home need to quarantine. I have made the decision to fix this as a 10-day interval from the person's positive rest, not the extended period advocated by some agencies. This quarantine policy applies to just this issue, taking into account the rapid spread in households and the overall decreasing incidence locally in schools. The goal of this policy is to return children to school in an expedient manner to minimize harm to their educational attendance and process.

As things improve on a State and National level, I expect the Back to School issue will become increasing contentious as the differing interest groups weigh in. Please contact me if you have additional questions or concerns at tharrismd@aol.com or 812-987-3015. I will do my best to keep you informed of significant developments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Th Harris MD". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Thomas M. Harris, MD, FACEP
Floyd County Health Officer