



## CITY OF SALEM SCHOOL DIVISION

### Return to Learn COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

#### Goals

1. **Maximize in-person instruction.** We believe students learn best in a safe and disciplined environment provided by caring and respectful adults. Therefore, our primary goals are to minimize exposures to keep students in school and keep schools operating at full capacity.
2. **Continue to be a community health partner.** As one of the largest employers and the largest childcare provider in our community, we are committed to working with community healthcare agencies to ensure the health and safety of our staff, students, and the community.
3. **A scalable plan.** We desire to create a scalable plan that allows us to meet the health and safety needs of our staff, students, and community as local conditions and guidance change.

#### Guiding Principles

- **Students benefit from in-person learning.** Safely returning to and maintaining in-person instruction during the 2021-22 school year is a priority.
- **Focus on prevention.** Promote vaccination, as it is the leading prevention strategy to end the COVID19- pandemic and keep schools open for in-person instruction. Establish a school culture of adherence to prevention strategies both in and out of school. Establish environments in which vaccination is promoted, and people physically distance, wear masks correctly and consistently, practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and clean frequently. Coordinate closely with local health departments. Educate students/staff to monitor health daily and stay at home if they have symptoms, and follow public health recommendations. Consider screening testing programs to identify cases early.
- **Consider community needs.** Consider disease and vaccination trends and understand the socioeconomic factors, literacy barriers, and other educational needs in your community when developing plans.
- **Be flexible and innovative.** Scientific knowledge evolves rapidly, and local context is incredibly important. Community transmission and the level of impact to a given school can change and the combination of prevention strategies may evolve with time.

#### Legal Requirements

**2021 Senate Bill 1303** - A BILL to require each school board to offer in-person instruction to students enrolled in the local school division

**Each school board shall** (i) adopt, implement, and, when appropriate, update specific parameters for the provision of in-person instruction and (ii) **provide such in-person instruction in a manner in which it adheres, to the maximum extent practicable, to any currently applicable mitigation strategies** for early childhood care and education programs and elementary and secondary schools **to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 that have been provided by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.**

**Executive Order Two**- One of 11 Executive orders signed by Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin on January 15, 2022, that directed the State Health Commissioner to end the mask mandate for Virginia K-12 schools, empowered parents to opt their children out of any local mask mandates, directed the State Superintendent of Instruction to issue new guidance for K-12 schools, and directed schools to address indoor air quality.

**Note: Va. Judge passed an injunction on Feb. 4, 2022, temporarily blocking EO2.**

## **Current Recommendations**

### **American Academy of Pediatrics**

- The AAP recommends COVID-19 vaccination for all children and adolescents 5 years of age and older who do not have contraindications using a COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use for their age.
- Pediatricians should emphasize a layered approach that prioritizes attending school in person while protecting students and staff from SARS-CoV-2 variants that may be more transmissible.
- The AAP continues to recommend that all staff and students who are 2 years or older wear face masks unless medical or developmental conditions prohibit their use.

### **Centers for Disease Control**

- Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in fall 2021 is a priority.
- Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- Masks should be worn indoors by all individuals (age 2 and older) who are not fully vaccinated. Consistent and correct mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is especially important indoors and in crowded settings, when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

### **VDH**

There are benefits and costs to mask-wearing in the school environment. Masks made of plain cloth, masks that are soiled or poorly fitting, and masks that are not worn properly provide reduced or no benefit. The CDC presently recommends the use of N95 or KN95 masks to reduce COVID transmission.

There is presently a lack of consensus among health experts regarding the costs and benefits of mask-wearing for children in school. Parents should consult with their medical providers if they have questions about whether or not their child should mask and for how long; this is especially true if a child is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or lives with individuals at higher risk for severe illness.

In situations where a child is returning from isolation due to COVID or was subject to a close contact exposure, the benefit of temporary masking is likely to outweigh the risks.

### **VDH FAQ**

- The VDH continues to recommend universal masking indoors during periods of high transmission.
- The CDC states that masks offer some protection against all variants.
- Masks will continue to be required on buses due to federal requirements.
- The VDH is moving away from contact tracing individual cases.
- Schools are no longer expected to contact trace individual cases.
- VDH no longer expects schools to report every known case to the health department.
- Schools should continue to report suspected outbreaks (10% or more of specific groups).
- Known positive cases should be excluded from school.
- Any reported close contacts should be excluded from school.
- Schools have the authority to direct students to stay home from school due to illness or exposure.
- Decisions to close classrooms should be made in consultation with the health department.
- Parents are expected to notify schools when their child tests positive or has symptoms of COVID.

## Current Community Conditions

### Vaccination Coverage 1/27/2022

People Vaccinated with at Least  
One Dose

**6,742,229**

People Fully Vaccinated

**5,866,364**

People Vaccinated with Booster/  
Third Dose

**2,399,186**

Federal doses administered are included in the number of People Vaccinated with at Least One Dose (350,537), People Fully Vaccinated (313,025), 5+, 12+, 18+ KPI but are not included in the other demographic groups below.

Locality Name

(Includes Out-of-State and Not Reported Options)

Salem

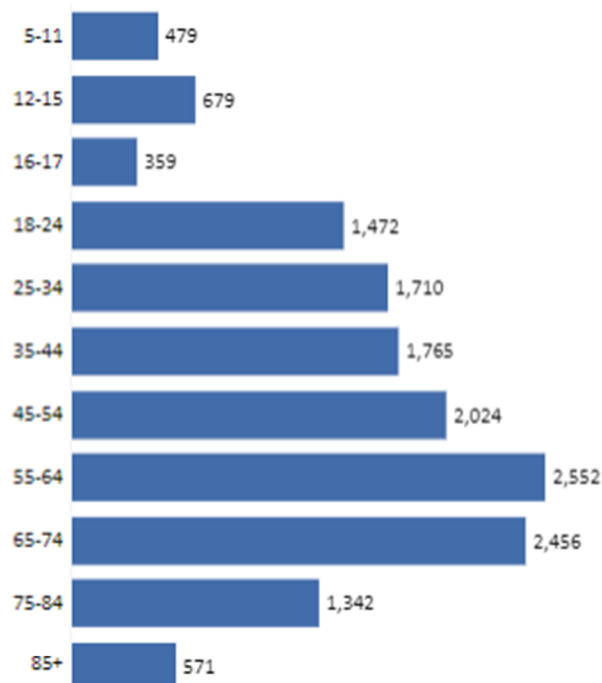
Vaccination Status

Fully Vaccinated

Age Group Type

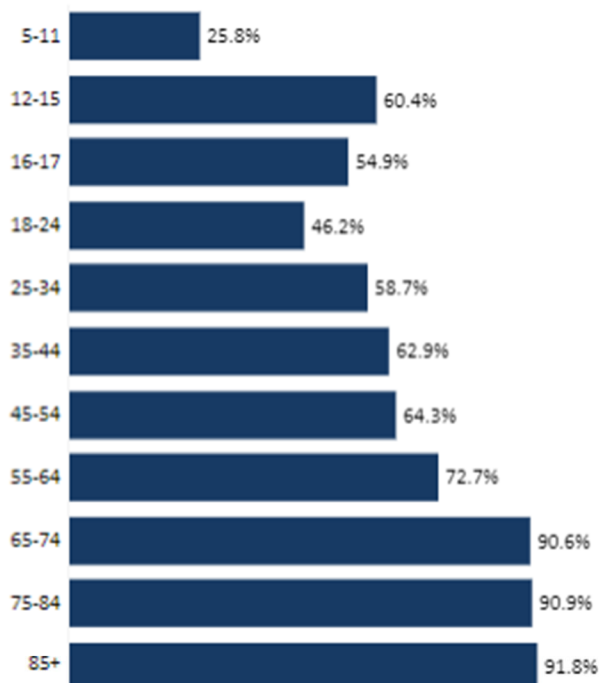
Vaccine

#### Vaccination Count By Age Group



Not Reported: 0

#### Percent of the Population Fully Vaccinated - By Age Group

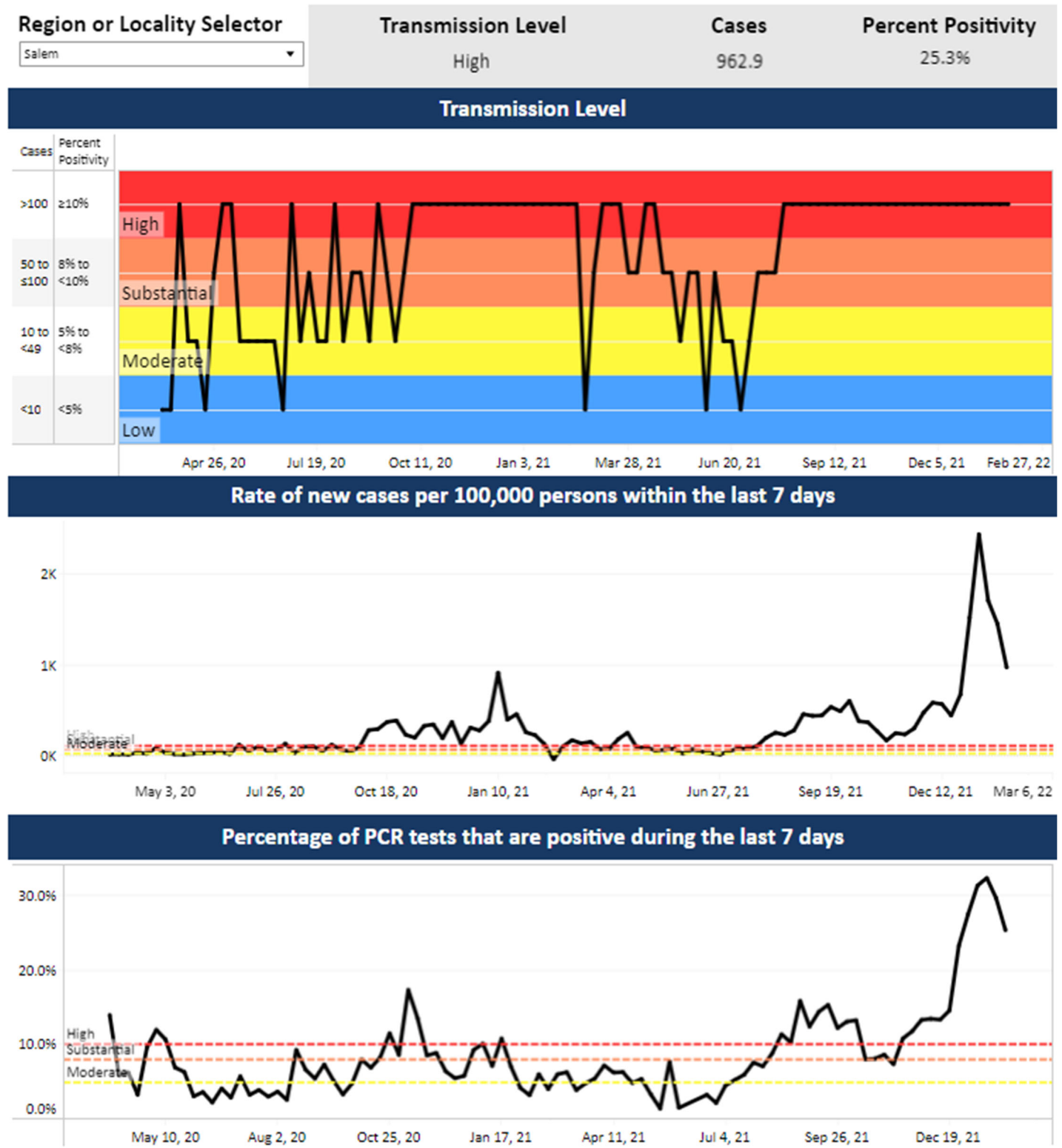


Ages : 5-17	Ages : 5+	Ages : 12+	Ages : 18+	Ages : 65+
People Vaccinated:	People Vaccinated:	People Vaccinated:	People Vaccinated:	People Vaccinated:
<b>1,517</b>	<b>15,409</b>	<b>14,930</b>	<b>13,892</b>	<b>4,369</b>
% Vaccinated: <b>41.7%</b>	% Vaccinated: <b>64.2%</b>	% Vaccinated: <b>67.4%</b>	% Vaccinated: <b>68.2%</b>	% Vaccinated: <b>90.8%</b>

### Vaccination Rates by School

SHS = 54%  
 ALMS = 43%  
 GWC = 18%  
 West = 15%  
 South = 14%  
 East = 12%

## Transmission as of 02/06/22



- Since January 2, 2022, in the Salem City School Division, there have been a total of 170 Employees and 447 students have been absent due to a positive case of COVID or exposure to COVID.
- In January 2022, Salem City Schools had an average fill rate of 84.5% on jobs that required a substitute teacher.

# Isolation and Quarantine Requirements

## Close Contact/Exposure

Anyone within six feet of someone who has tested positive COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes in 24 hours while they were considered to be contagious is considered a close contact. In K-12 settings, a student who is at least three feet from an infected student is not considered a close contact as long as both students are wearing masks and the school has other [prevention strategies](#) in place.

**NOTE: As of 1/27/2022 the VDH is no longer conducting contact tracing for individual cases of COVID-19. Schools are no longer expected to conduct contact tracing for individual cases of COVID-19 and are no longer required to report every known case to the VDH. Instead, schools should focus on contact tracing and quarantine when they experience an outbreak (10% of a population) or at least three cases in a typical classroom setting.**

**If a student tests positive or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19**, they can return to school after quarantining at home for 5 days after the onset of symptoms as long as:

- they currently have no symptoms and have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication, **and**
- they wear a well-fitting mask and avoid close contact for an additional 5 days after their isolation period ends.

## **If a student has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 outside the home:**

- If they are unvaccinated they should:
  - Quarantine for 5 days as long as they do not develop symptoms within that time, wear a well-fitting mask, and avoid close contact for an additional 5 days when they are around others.
- If students are fully vaccinated:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine following an exposure.
- If a student has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days of the current exposure:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine following an exposure.

## **If someone in the home tests positive for COVID-19:**

- If students are unvaccinated they should:
  - Quarantine for 15 days as long as they do not develop symptoms within that time, wear a well-fitting mask for an additional 5 days when they are around others.
- If students are fully vaccinated:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.
- If a student has previously tested positive for COVID-19 within 90 days of the current exposure:
  - they do *not* need to quarantine unless they develop symptoms.

# Scalable Mitigation Plan

If/when guidance and legal requirements allow for local control, the Salem City School Division will utilize the following chart to make decisions regarding mask requirements at school.

**Transportation** - The CDC [federal order requiring masks on public transportation](#) remains in effect and applies to buses operated by Virginia public schools. Students and staff will be required to wear masks on school buses and all other forms of school transportation at all times.

## School Impact Considerations

Criteria to Consider	Level of Impact to a School*		
	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within school	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Single outbreak or sporadic outbreaks in school. Sizes of outbreaks remain small.	Several outbreaks in school within a short time period; sizes of outbreaks are large or scope of outbreak is significant (e.g., multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted).
Student absenteeism	At baseline/Low	Slightly above baseline	High
Staff Capacity**	Normal	Strained	Critical

## Community Transmission Considerations

Community Transmission Level			
Low	Moderate	Substantial	High+
Optional	Recommended	Required**	Required

**High+** Is to be determined through consultation with the Roanoke Alleghany Health District based on community-specific factors and how local transmission levels are impacting schools, the community, and health care providers.

\*\* Parents may choose to opt-out of mask use through an official opt-out process defined by the school division.

## Additional Mitigation Strategies

- Physical Distancing
- Daily Health Screening
- Regular Handwashing
- The availability of hand sanitizer
- Routine Cleaning Practices
- Respiratory Etiquette
- Contact Tracing
- Quarantining as recommended by the VDH

## Return to In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services

**Overview:** Schools will operate using normal procedures and implement the following mitigation strategies to limit infections and exposures.

Area	Mitigation Strategies
Transportation	Masks are required on all division provided transportation Promote physical distancing to the maximum extent possible
Arrival	Masks as required based on scalable mitigation Promote physical distancing to the maximum extent possible
Breakfast	Breakfast in class and cafeteria to promote physical distancing Seating charts Cohort students to the extent possible Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation
Classrooms (General)	1st-period health screening Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation Seating charts to support contact tracing
Health & PE	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks, as required based on scalable mitigation unless engaged in strenuous activity (indoors) Masks, are not required outdoors
Music (Singing & Band)	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation unless 10ft apart Masks can be removed to play instruments as necessary.
Transitions	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation
Lunch	Lunch in the class and cafeteria to provide for physical distancing Seating charts Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation except when eating.
Dismissal	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation Masks are required to board division-provided transportation.
Playgrounds	Masks are not required.
Cleaning/Hygiene	Normal cleaning procedures
Health Services	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation
Visitors/Volunteers	Visitors and volunteers allowed Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation Unmasked visitors must verify vaccination status Cafeteria visitors are not allowed.
Action Plan if Confirmed Case	Contact tracing Communication as appropriate and required
Extra-Curricular Activities	Physical distancing to the maximum extent possible Masks as required based on scalable mitigation Masks are not required outdoors or when engaged in practice or games.

