

## Scientific Medical Advisory Committee, Alachua County: General Considerations

The risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) within a school setting includes a) the risk that infected students, teachers or staff will be present in schools (which is a function of transmission rates within the community), and b) the risk that once introduced into a school, the virus will be able to spread rapidly among members of the school community.

A variety of parameters have been proposed for assessing transmission rates of SARS-CoV-2 within a community. None of these metrics are perfect, and are dependent on a number of possible factors, including frequency and focus of testing in the community. In general, data on successful school openings come from areas with minimal evidence of SARS-CoV-2 community transmission, as reflected by low percentages of positive test results and low rates of daily new cases. We do not have good data on whether mitigation strategies are sufficient to stop school-based transmission when school openings coincide with higher levels of community virus transmission.

At a community level, Alachua County's data are consistent with moderate ongoing transmission of the virus. Under these circumstances, it is highly likely that the virus will be periodically introduced into the schools by students, teachers or staff. If schools are to open, prevention/mitigation efforts must include the following:

- Careful adherence to CDC guidelines, with a particular emphasis on masking and social distancing recommendations, including cohorting students (e.g. classes) with minimal to no interaction.
- When assigning teacher and staff responsibilities, consider risk factors and pre-existing health conditions.
- Implementation of procedures which will permit rapid identification of members of the school community infected with the virus, with associated isolation and appropriate quarantine of close contacts. Doing this will require:
  - Availability of adequate medical and public health personnel in schools, to assess and test students and teachers, and to do necessary contact tracing.
  - A system which will permit students and teachers suspected of being infected (or having come in contact with infected persons) to be tested on site, with results available within 24 hours
    - As required, consent forms for all students that permit testing (nasal swabs) of symptomatic and asymptomatic children by school nursing personnel
- Establishment of protocols for class/classroom and school quarantine and closure, depending on results of testing and contact tracing (see attached page and table)

- **Scientific Medical Advisory Committee (SMAC), Alachua County: Guidance for School and Classroom Risk Mitigation for COVID-19**
- Guidance subject to modification as epidemiologic details are established.
- Each scenario will be considered individually based on school, community, and household dynamics
- For K-12, assigned seating is strongly recommended for every class and for bus transportation. Bus seating should entail youngest students in front progressing to older students in back with windows open/ventilation maximized.
- K-5 classes should be cohorted, and middle/high school classes should be cohorted to the extent possible. Middle and high school classes with positive cases will be evaluated for isolation, quarantine and testing as epidemiological investigation details indicate.

| LEVEL OF SCHOOL TRANSMISSION                   | SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND DESCRIPTION   | METRICS   | LEVEL OF SCHOOL MITIGATION  | COMMENTS<br>Consider broader community transmission  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Substantial, uncontrolled transmission</b>  | Large scale, uncontrolled school transmission, including communal settings (e.g. classrooms, buses, offices)                               | Crisis Care implemented in hospital system<br>or<br>More than 10% or $\geq 3$ schools closed and evidence of school-based transmission. | School District Closed and/or Community Shelter in Place Orders.<br>Public Health Advisory Issued by State Health Officer after consultation with SMAC  |  |
| <b>Substantial, controlled transmission</b>    | Large scale, controlled school transmission, including communal settings e.g., classrooms, buses, offices)                                 | $\geq 3$ K-5 classrooms closed<br><br>10% MS/HS classrooms closed   | Significant mitigation<br><br>Close school after consultation w/ SMAC   | All school families advised to quarantine for 14 days  |
| <b>Minimal to moderate school transmission</b> | Sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings and potential for rapid increase in cases       | $\geq 25\%$ OR $\geq 3$ cases in class, OR teacher confirmed positive, with potential for classroom transmission                        | Moderate mitigation<br><br>For K-5: Close classroom and test all students and teacher(s); Isolate any positive cases for 10 days, and quarantine all test-negative at home for 14 days.<br><br>For MS/HS: close/discontinue specific class that meet threshold, test all students and teacher(s) in this class, isolate positive cases for 10 days, and quarantine all test-negative persons at home for 14 days.       | All positive cases isolated at home for 10 days, and their family quarantined for 14 days.<br><br>Students and teachers who initially test negative and are quarantined will be re-tested at day 9. If test negative can return to school on day 10.                           |
| <b>No to minimal school transmission</b>       | Evidence of isolated cases or limited school transmission, case investigations underway; no evidence of exposure in large communal setting | One confirmed positive case in one classroom  | Low Mitigation:<br><br>For K-5: Isolate confirmed positive case, test all students and teacher(s) in class, monitor class, and retest any child or teacher who subsequently becomes symptomatic. Retest class and teacher(s) at day 9.<br><br>For MS/HS: isolate confirmed positive case. Test and quarantine all close contacts at home, and retest any child or teacher in class who subsequently becomes symptomatic | Case is isolated at home for 10 days and their family quarantined for 14 days<br><br>For MS/HS: Students and teachers who initially test negative but quarantined because they are close contacts will be re-tested at day 9. If test negative can return to school on day 10. |