

2 major studies show that schools with masks are better at blocking COVID

Odds of a COVID-19 outbreak are 3.7 times higher in schools with no mask requirement, CDC study finds

By: [Matt Zalaznick](#) | September 27, 2021



More evidence shows masks significantly reduce the spread of COVID in schools as judges are taking varying stances on vaccine requirements, face coverings and other policies.

Two studies just released by the CDC give strong support to administrators and school boards who have insisted that masks mandated are a simple way to keep schools open for in-person instruction.

One study, conducted from July through September, found that counties without school mask requirements experienced larger increases in pediatric

COVID-19 case rates than did counties where masks had been mandated since the first day of classes.

The changes in COVID rates from the week before school started to the second week of school was 18.5 cases per 100,000 lower in counties with mask mandates, the study found.

“Increases in pediatric COVID-19 case rates during the start of the 2021-22 school year were smaller in U.S. counties with school mask requirements than in those without school mask requirements,” the report says. “School mask requirements, in combination with other prevention strategies, including COVID-19 vaccination, are critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in schools.”

The second study found that the odds of a COVID-19 outbreak were 3.7 times higher in schools with no mask requirement, based on data from Maricopa and Pima counties in Arizona.

“Lapses in universal masking contribute to COVID-19 outbreaks in school settings,” the report says. “Given the high transmissibility of the delta variant, universal masking, in addition to vaccination of all eligible students, staff members, and faculty and implementation of other prevention measures, remains essential to COVID-19 prevention in K-12 settings.”

In two separate court cases in Tennessee, judges ordered two school districts to reinstate universal mask mandates in lawsuits filed by the families of students with disabilities.

One lawsuit, filed in Williamson County on behalf of a girl with Down syndrome and another with diabetes, argued that the district’s classrooms and buses were unsafe for special needs students, NewsChannel5.com reported. Families of three students with underlying medical conditions also sued Knox County Schools and Gov. Bill Lee to force a mask mandate. A judge ruled Friday that the district must now require face coverings, WVLT.tv reported. Their parents, who alleged discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, had enrolled the students in virtual learning.

And earlier, a California superintendent had to issue a warning after a few students attended school despite testing positive for COVID.

“Some of these recent cases have been as a result of students attending school with symptoms present OR, in a few limited cases, students attending school with a known COVID-19 positive test result,” San Marcos USD Superintendent Andy Johnsen posted on the district’s website. “Although our overall positive cases across the district represent less than one percent

of students and staff, it is important that we work together to keep our case rates low.”

Vaccine mandate delayed

Another court ruling over the weekend delayed New York City schools’ vaccine requirement for teachers and staff. which was supposed to take effect on Sept. 27.

A U.S. court of appeals granted a temporary injunction to a small group of teachers and paraprofessionals who challenged the mandate’s lack of a weekly testing option, [Reuters reported](#).

Meanwhile, New York City has given more than 500 public school employees medical or religious exemptions to the vaccine mandate, [Gothamist reported](#).