



Johnson County Recommends Red Zone FAQ

November 2020

Q. What is the Nov. 3 announcement about?

A. Due to the data JCDHE is seeing, the recommended phase for school gating criteria has been updated to the Red Zone.

Q. Why is the County moving schools into the 'red zone'?

A. Last week, JCDHE reported 1,251 cases, a 75% increase from the preceding week. There are also significant household transmissions occurring representing approximately 20% of new infections since September 1.

Q. Are schools causing the spread of the virus?

A. It's important to note the spike in cases is not being driven by schools, but activity within the community.

Q. What is causing the community spread?

A. The increase in new cases is coming from people in the 20-60 years old range, who are gathering in large groups in places such as crowded restaurants or bars, as well as people who are attending small and large social gatherings, such as football watch parties, birthday parties, camps, weddings and church events.

Q. Why make this change now? Haven't schools been doing a good job at controlling any outbreaks in schools?

A. High community spread impacts everyone. The JCDHE warns it especially places our schools and residents of long-term care facilities at higher risks. Increased community spread is starting to impact the number of hospital beds available for people who are very ill, and staffing, if healthcare workers become ill. Rising infections have also stretched the capacity of public health to conduct case investigations in a timely manner.

Q. Does this mean school districts will change plans for in-person learning?

A. While school districts may decide not to change to more restrictive learning mode, JCDHE is stressing the need for heightened vigilance in our school districts. The risks of introduction of the virus to schools and of outbreaks is higher with this level of community spread.

Q. If it's this serious to move into the red zone, why isn't the JCDHE recommending that schools stop in-person learning modes?

A. As always, it is up to individual school districts to determine if they will change their current modes of learning. JCDHE is stressing the need for heightened vigilance in our school districts. The risks of introduction of the virus to schools and of outbreaks is higher with this level of community spread.