

With the current surge of COVID-19 that the County is experiencing, as well as the anticipation of the return of University students from all over the country, we at the Story County Board of Health feel it is important that everyone in the county should continue to practice mitigation to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Below are guidelines we expect to be followed. They are based on published CDC standards, as well as common sense. Anyone reading this will notice the emphasis on wearing masks. We cannot emphasize, enough, the importance of everyone wearing masks when out in public or around people. While certain masks are better at preventing the spread of COVID-19, ANY mask worn over the nose and mouth will help. N-95 or surgical grade masks are best but cloth masks also work well.

1). Daycare(home and institutional). Masks in young children are hard to keep on and NOT recommended by the CDC for children under 2 yo. However, masks should be worn by all providers of care as well as staff. Hand cleansing stations should be plentiful and frequently used. Children should be kept in as small of groups as possible and the groups should not mix at playtime, outings and lunch. Screening of all entering children with a temperature is highly recommended.

While small home daycares may feel they are better protected, with this current outbreak, we do not feel that can be assumed. It is important to understand these mitigation practices not only protect the children but also the providers. We feel the previous stated procedures should be followed in home day-cares.

2).Events/gatherings. Social distancing(greater than 6 feet) should be practiced. People who have already been in contact with each other and feel comfortable that they are all practicing social isolation(such as families) can be grouped together, but we feel the groups should not be greater than 10. Masks should be required for all present. Hand cleansing stations should be plentiful and encouraged to be used. Sharing of food, beverages and utensils should be highly discouraged. BYOS(bring your own stuff)! We have observed that many times after these events are concluded the attendees tend to socialize, take off masks, and congregate closely in parking lots and such. This should be highly discouraged and the attendance of an event organizer should be present to discourage this practice.

3) Religious services. Please see #2 above. We also recommend, as an added precaution, temperature screening of all attendees.

4). Schools. When schools resume in the fall we are assuming guidelines for mitigation of spread of COVID-19 will be forthcoming from the Department of Education. However, we feel these minimums are indicated. All staff should be required to wear masks at all time when they are around students or other staff. Masks are hard to keep on children so a little laxity here may be acceptable. Social distancing in classes, minimizing classroom changes, staggered lunches and recesses as well as temperature screenings should be followed.

5). Athletic teams(including Iowa State University). While we understand that wearing a mask during the strenuous activity of sports is impossible, all coaching and support staff should wear a mask at all times other people are present. Social distancing should be practiced when possible. Screening of athletes and staff daily with a temperature is indicated. Group meetings and/or meals should be put on hold at this time and remote meetings should be used. Exercise sessions, such as weightlifting and/or swimming, should be staggered to allow social distancing.

Sporting events should practice social distancing for spectators and well as athletes when they are not playing. Masks for spectators, coaches and athletes when not playing should be required. Restrooms should be monitored to limit crowding. Concession stands should be closed.

6). Iowa State University. Masks should be required for all students in classes and when in university buildings. University sponsored gathering should be cancelled unless the above practices(see sporting events above) can be followed. Hand cleansing stations should be plentiful and encouraged.

Students should be encouraged, in the strongest language the University can legally use, to practice social isolation principles when off campus.

Group living situations, such as dormitories and fraternities/sororities are a special and difficult situation. However, certain practices can be used to mitigate risks. Masks should be worn at all times except when in sleeping chambers with roommates. Dining should be staggered to allow social distancing. Hand cleansing should be encouraged. Social events should be cancelled unless the principles outlined in sporting events can be followed. All group living situations need to develop a plan of how to isolate a student who is found to be COVID-19 infected.

A final note. We implore Iowa State University to cancel spectators at sporting events this fall. Please only broadcast them. We cannot think of any way these events can be made even remotely safe with the masses of people from all over the state who routinely attend these events. Please do it for the health of our community.

We fully understand that what we are proposing is difficult and also that NO mitigation plan is foolproof. However, if these principles are followed we can get and keep this virus under control until the availability of a vaccine. Story County, up to this point, has done a remarkable job of practicing social isolation and as such we have previously had a remarkably low rate of COVID-19 infections for a county of our size. We can get there again. Do it for yourself. Do it for your neighbor. Do it for the world.