

COVID Considerations for School Hearing Screenings

TIPS & TRICKS



Hearing screening requirements have **not** changed for the 2020-2021 school year. Screenings are mandated by Indiana law for students in grades 1, 4, 7, and 10, regardless of virtual or in-person learning. A student may be considered exempt from hearing screening only if the proper school authority receives written objection from the student's parent/guardian. Consider the following measures to minimize risk of COVID-19 exposure for the students and screeners.

- Conduct screenings in a location with two separate doors for entrance and exit, which will allow one-way flow of students in and out. Consider using a large, quiet room with optimal air circulation (i.e. the school library).
- Utilize visual guides to direct students. Arrows on the floor will direct students in and out without doubling back. Mark spaces on the floor 6 feet apart where students must wait in line to facilitate social distancing.
- Consider setting up screening without chairs. Most students can stand during the screening.
- Have students wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol before and after screening.
- Technicians must wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer before screening, after any child contact, and at regular intervals throughout the day. If gloves are worn, it does **not** negate the need for hand hygiene before and after testing each child.
- Consider using [headphone covers](#). Older students can disinfect the headphones and headband with alcohol-free disinfectant wipes and dispose of their own headphone covers and wipes after screening in a no-touch trashcan. [Buy Disinfectants](#)
- With the exception of first grade, most students should put their headphones on without assistance. Direct the students to put the headphone with the red indicator over the right ear and the blue over the left ear. *The screener should remove and reposition the headphones before rescreening if the student does not pass the initial screen.* Consider setting up testing stations with sanitizer, headphone covers, and earphones ready and placed on a table next to student test site.
- Students and screeners must wear face coverings for the entirety of the screening process.
- Screen in pods or cohorts of students and disinfect the screening areas before children from another pod or cohort arrive.
- If using otoscopes and tympanometry, disinfect equipment after each use; only disposable specula and ear tips should be used and should be disposed after each use.
- If using toys for play audiometry, they must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Have a large number of toys available to reduce the need to frequently clean them.

Indiana Department of Education. (2020, November 9). *Guidance for School-based Hearing Screening During the COVID-19 Pandemic.* <https://bit.ly/3jUfLad>.

