

**Department of Public Health**

Dottie-Kay Bowersox, MSA  
Public Health Administrator

730 Washington Avenue  
Racine, Wisconsin 53403  
262-636-9201  
262-636-9564 FAX



Website: [www.cityofracine.org/Health](http://www.cityofracine.org/Health)  
Email: [publichealth@cityofracine.org](mailto:publichealth@cityofracine.org)

**Environmental Health Division**  
262-636-9203  
**Community Health Division**  
262-636-9431  
**Laboratory Division**  
262-636-9571

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**RACINE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
SCHOOL BUILDING CLOSURE ORDER  
November 12, 2020**

WHEREAS, on December 2019, a novel strain of the coronavirus was detected, now named COVID-19, and it has spread throughout the world, including every state in the United States; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President proclaimed a National Emergency in response to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2020, the City of Racine first proclaimed a public health emergency to exist in the City of Racine as a result of the threat of the 2019 novel coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, millions of people around the world have tested positive for COVID-19, including more than ten million people in the United States, and more than 285,000 people in Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, as a novel disease with uncertain immunity and no vaccination currently available all of the population is at risk; and

WHEREAS, science shows that wearing a face covering can prevent the transmission of the respiratory droplets that spread COVID-19, physical contact and close proximity to other individuals may cause the spread of COVID-19, thereby endangering the public and placing undue strain on the healthcare system; and

WHEREAS, "physical distancing," meaning a distance of six feet is maintained between all individuals, is a public health tool that may be used to limit the spread of disease;

WHEREAS, it is essential to use all available tools as is reasonable and necessary to stop the transmission of COVID-19;

WHEREAS, COVID-19 continues to spread the southeastern Wisconsin region, necessitating updated and more stringent guidance from federal, state, and local governments and public health officials has made assembling groups of any size a threat to public health; and

WHEREAS, protecting the health and safety of City of Racine residents and employees is of paramount importance; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin State Law provides broad authority and power for local health officials to prevent, control, and suppress COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 252.03(1) provides that every local health officer “may inspect schools and other public buildings within his or her jurisdiction as needed to determine whether the buildings are kept in a sanitary condition”; and

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 252.03(1) provides that every local health officer “shall promptly take all measures necessary to prevent, suppress and control communicable diseases”;

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 252.03(2) provides that local health officers “may do what is reasonable and necessary for prevention and suppression of disease”;

WHEREAS, Wis. Stat. § 252.03(2) also provides that local health officers “may forbid public gatherings when deemed necessary to control outbreaks or epidemics”;

WHEREAS, Wis. Admin. Code DHS §145.06(6) provides that local health officers “may direct persons who own or supervise real or physical property ... and their environs, which present a threat of transmission of any communicable disease ... to do what is reasonable and necessary to abate the threat of transmission”; and

WHEREAS, based on the specific circumstances in the City of Racine and in the Villages of Elmwood Park and Wind Point, and my investigation of COVID-19 within the City of Racine and in the Villages of Elmwood Park and Wind Point, I have determined that this order is necessary to prevent, suppress, and control COVID-19 in the schools within the City of Racine and within the Villages of Elmwood Park and Wind Point;

WHEREAS, the Racine Public Health Department carefully reviews all public health recommendations from state and local organizations and consider all available state and local data in the consideration of relaxing restrictions.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Dottie-Kay Bowersox, director and health officer for the City of Racine, by the authority vested in me by the Laws of the State of Wisconsin, including but not limited to Section 252.03 of the Wisconsin Statutes, order the following:

1. Public and private K-12 school buildings within the boundaries of the City of Racine and the Villages of Elmwood Park and Wind Point shall be closed from November 27, 2020, through January 15, 2021, inclusive. This closure applies to all students, faculty, staff, and administrative personnel. Schools may continue to facilitate distance learning or virtual learning. Schools may continue to be used for Essential Government Functions, emergency services, building maintenance, and food distribution.
2. Duration. This Order shall become effective at 12:01 AM, November 27, 2020. This Order shall terminate on January 15, 2021, at 11:59 PM.

Signed:

 Date: 11/27/20

Dottie- Kay Bowersox  
Public Health Administrator  
City of Racine