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County COVID-19 cases rise as school returns

By JAKE MOORE intern@bgdailynews.com
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New COVID-19 Cases in Warren County by Week

A visualization of the county's new COVID-19 cases throughout the summer of 2022, per the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services' weekly COVID-19 reports.

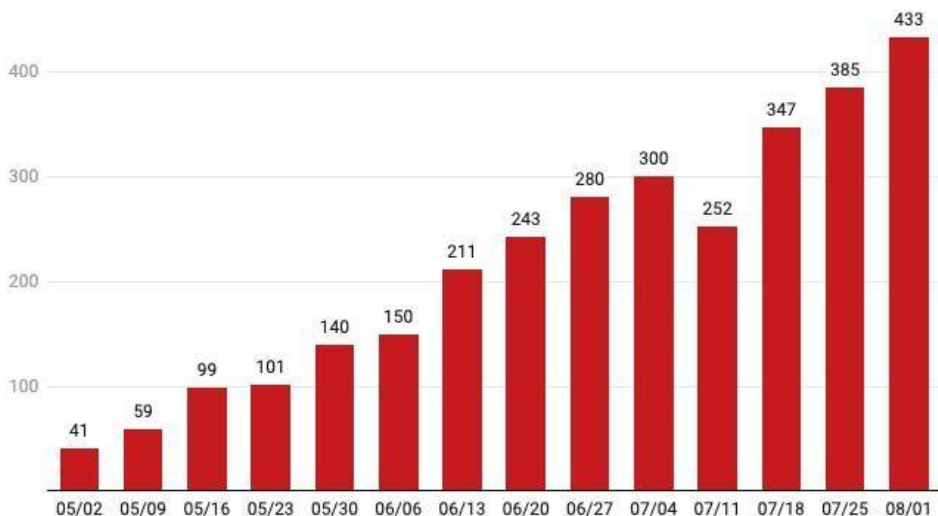


Chart: Jake Moore, Bowling Green Daily News · Source: chfs.ky.gov · [Get the data](#) · Created with [Datawrapper](#)

August heralds the return of students to the classroom. First-day COVID-19 guidelines will be somewhat relaxed across Warren County, where positive cases have been increasing as the summer marches on.

The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services said 433 new cases were recorded Aug. 1. For comparison, 41 cases were reported May 2, the end of the spring semester.

The report said 1.2% of intensive care unit space in Warren County and the surrounding region is being used for COVID-19 patients, the lowest percentage across the state.

Dennis Chaney, vice president of ancillary services at Med Center Health of Bowling Green, said there were 14 patients hospitalized last week as a result of issues concerning COVID-19.

Leslie McCoy, the Bowling Green Independent School District's director of communications, said the district will not have a mask requirement to start the school year.

Students and faculty who test positive must isolate for five days and will also need to wear a mask for five days after they have returned to school. With the district's partnership with Graves Gilbert Clinic, schools will be able to test for flu, strep and COVID-19.

Warren County Public Schools will also be mask-optional once students return. Lauren Thurmond, the system's communications coordinator, said schools will provide "as much distancing as we can."

David Oliver, director of environmental health and safety at Western Kentucky University, announced in a universitywide email Wednesday that WKU does not anticipate starting the year with a mask requirement or by limiting indoor capacities.



“Additionally, we will not collect vaccination status information as we did last fall,” Oliver said in the announcement.

The WKU Department of Health and Safety is offering free KN95 masks for those who request them at covid.help@wku.edu. Vaccinations and booster shots are available at the campus’ Graves Gilbert Clinic.

The Kentucky Department of Public Health shows Warren County in the “yellow” community level, meaning residents are recommended to follow the medium level of COVID-19 guidance. This includes staying up to date with vaccinations, considering mask use in indoor congregational settings and for high-risk persons to always wear a mask indoors.

The department has also released updated isolation protocols for those exposed to COVID-19. Those that test positive and experience symptoms should isolate for 10 days. Those who test positive but do not exhibit symptoms

should isolate for five. Anyone who makes close contact with a positive case does not need to quarantine unless symptoms develop.

Chaney said those at high risk for severe illness should consult with their medical provider to determine proper mask use and other precautions.

“No. 1 is being vaccinated, staying current with recommendations for boosters, and obviously regardless of our vaccination status to get tested if we start to develop symptoms,” Chaney said.

He recommended those seeking a booster shot to make use of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s booster shot tool at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) to determine when they should receive one.