

Interim COVID-19 Infection Control and Mitigation Measures for Schools
May 21, 2020

SARs-CoV2 virus continues to circulate. School districts should work with local health authorities to ensure a plan is in place to minimize health risks to the greatest extent possible.

Schools remain closed for pupil instruction and extracurricular activities through June 30, but for any activity that is not pupil instruction or a district determined extracurricular activity, schools should consult with their local health departments as to how to engage in that activity safely, or whether to engage in that activity at all.

Any decision about the use of the school should be made in consultation with local health authorities who can help assess the current level of mitigation needed based on the level of COVID-19 transmission in your community, the capacities of your local public health department and health care systems, and other relevant factors.

This interim guidance is being provided to support the planning you are undertaking. It was developed by the Department of Public Instruction in consultation with the Department of Health Services (DHS). These are not requirements but state-level guidance, meant to provide you with what is considered promising practices at the current time based upon what is currently known and understood regarding COVID-19. Promising practices and recommendations are based upon information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and DHS. It is understood that both CDC and DHS guidelines may change based upon new scientific information and epidemiological data and this guidance will be updated to reflect that information.

It is also understood that you have situations that may not fit with aspects of this guidance. Further, all COVID-19 guidance provided in this document is from the state. Additional restrictions or requirements may exist for you based on local health orders. It is recommended you work with your local health authority, insurance carrier, and legal counsel in determining the use of your facilities.

We will continue to listen to concerns from schools and are in the process of developing more detailed guidance on reopening schools.

INDIVIDUAL GUIDELINES

Continue To Practice Good Hygiene

- ✓ Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face.
- ✓ Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- ✓ Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.
- ✓ Strongly consider using cloth face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit.

People Who Feel Sick Must Stay At Home

- ✓ Do NOT go to work, school, or any other public place.
- ✓ Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.

EMPLOYER GUIDELINES

- ✓ All employers are encouraged to use federal, state, and local regulations and guidance, informed by [best practices](#) and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, to develop and implement appropriate policies regarding:
 - Physical distancing and protective equipment
 - Temperature checks and symptom screening
 - Testing, isolating, and contact tracing
 - Sanitation
 - Use and disinfection of common and high-traffic areas
 - Business travel
- ✓ Do NOT allow symptomatic people to work. Send them home if they arrive at work and do not allow them to return until cleared by a medical provider.
- ✓ Work with local public health staff, develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following an employee COVID-19 positive test result.

SCHOOL SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Physical Distancing

- ✓ Develop a continuum of strategies for implementation of physical distancing (keeping 6 feet distance between individuals).

- ✓ Identify all locations and times where students are in close contact with each other and create strategies to restructure those locations and activities.
- ✓ Create plans to limit symptomatic and asymptomatic spread.
- ✓ Consider the impact of physical distancing on school provided transportation.

Examples:

- Create a staggered schedule for students to attend school on different days (alternating days) or different parts of the day/morning.
- Place fewer than 50% students in the classroom to allow physical distancing.
- Create a staggered schedule for cohorts to start/end at different times to avoid contact.
- Develop a learning schedule in cohorts to minimize contact with a broader group of students.
- Stagger recess to avoid contact between cohorts.
- Cancel assemblies and other large gatherings.
- Teachers move- students and stay in the same rooms.
- If lunch is served consider eating in classrooms.
 - If lunch is served in classrooms make sure to take measures to ensure the safety of food allergic individuals.
 - Minimize risk of cross-contact of allergenic proteins in the classroom by reinforcing strict hand washing with soap and water after food contact, disinfection of surfaces after food contact is made, and implement blanket “do not share” food practices.
 [These strategies are consistent with those outlined in the CDC’s 2013 publication “Voluntary Guidelines for Managing Food Allergies in Schools and Early Care and Education Programs,” and synergize with the principles of hand hygiene and surface washing that also reduce infection spread.
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/foodallergies/pdf/13_243135_A_Food_Allergy_Web_508.pdf]
- Hold classes outside.
- Establish controlled entrances and exits (e.g. based on grade levels, students and teacher entry) and flows (e.g. one way traffic in tight corridors).
- Restrict access to places that allow larger gatherings (e.g. cafeteria, staff rooms, and libraries) and stagger use and disinfect between use, or close these entirely.
- Grid off sections for common spaces and lunch areas to help students separate and reduce seating to ensure greater than 6 feet of physical distance.
- Separate partitions in open spaces with high risk of interaction and contact (e.g. playground, blacktop).
- Change bus schedules to bring students in batches that align to cohorts (grade level, floors).
- Encourage use of safe bike/walking routes to summer school.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations, or put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible.

Recommendations for Screening

- ✓ If feasible, conduct daily health checks (e.g. temperature screening and/or [symptom checking](#)) of staff and students using the following questions:

- Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had muscle pain or chills?
- ✓ Conduct health screenings safely and respectfully in accordance with privacy laws and regulations. Confidentiality should be maintained.
- ✓ Conduct temperature screening as follows:
 - Best practice: School personnel should take temperatures of staff and students with a no-touch thermometer each day before they enter or re-enter school.
 - Minimum: Staff and parents or guardians of students should take their own temperature before entering or re-entering school daily. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Staff, students and parents/guardians should know who this person is and how to contact them.
 - Create communication systems for staff and families for self-reporting of symptoms and notification of exposures and closures.
- ✓ Direct any anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines.
 - Employers should maintain the confidentiality of this health information.
- ✓ If schools learn that a staff member or student has tested positive for COVID-19, consult [CDC guidelines](#) and contact the [local health department](#) to discuss the appropriate management of potentially exposed staff and students, and to determine whether school should immediately cease in-person gatherings, close for additional cleaning, or otherwise change protocols. Cooperate fully with any state or local health department contact tracing efforts. Staff, students, and their families' health may be at risk.

Recommendations for Students or Staff who Become Sick

- ✓ Work with administrators, school nurse, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms. Nurses and other healthcare providers should use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people.
- ✓ If a student becomes ill while at school:
 - School should provide an isolated space for the ill student to rest while waiting for the arrival of parent/guardian. Ensure the program has adequate space for a student to remain isolated.

- Program should contact the student's parent/guardian to pick up the student as soon as possible.
 - Staff person, wearing a cloth face covering and eye protection, should stay with the student while awaiting parent/guardian's arrival.
- ✓ Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick home or to a healthcare facility, if necessary.
- ✓ Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
- ✓ Notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- ✓ Advise sick students and staff members not to return until they have met CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- ✓ Contact the local health department to discuss the appropriate management of potentially exposed staff, students and community members. Work with local health department, as necessary, to inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID -19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and to follow guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms follow appropriate CDC guidance for home quarantine.

Handwashing and Hygiene

- ✓ Teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among students and staff.
- ✓ Teach and reinforce use of cloth face coverings among all staff. Face coverings are most essential in times when physical distancing is not possible. Staff should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to all staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
- ✓ Practice frequent handwashing and advise students, families, and staff to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.
- ✓ Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- ✓ Consider installing alcohol based hand sanitizing stations at entrances, common areas in the school, and classrooms.

- ✓ Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID -19 properly wash hands promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-11x17-en.pdf>

Student's Belongings

- ✓ Keep each student's belongings separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas, or have them take their belongings home each day to be cleaned.
- ✓ Discourage students from bringing extra toys or materials from home.

Face Masks and Cloth Face Covers

- ✓ Teach and reinforce use of [cloth face coverings](#). Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to [wash their hands](#) frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on [proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings](#).
- ✓ Note: [Cloth face coverings](#) should not be placed on:
 - Children younger than 2 years old
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
- ✓ Face masks should not be worn while engaged in physical activity.

Drinking Fountains

- ✓ Drinking fountains should not be used at this time. Students can be encouraged to bring their own water bottles labeled with their name from home, or schools can provide cups that are disposable or labeled with student's names.

Limit Sharing

- ✓ Keep each student's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- ✓ Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment etc. assigned to a single student) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- ✓ If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student.

- ✓ Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.
- ✓ Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

Recommendations for Cleaning and Disinfecting

- ✓ *Cleaning* is physically removing dirt, debris, and sticky film by washing, wiping, and rinsing.
- ✓ *Disinfecting* kills nearly all germs on a hard, non-porous surface when applied correctly. Prior to disinfecting, cleaning must be completed. **Note:** Disinfecting is different than sanitizing.
- ✓ *Sanitizing* is the reduction of bacteria to safe levels as set by public health standards. It is required for any surface that comes in contact with food.
- ✓ Discourage families from bringing materials/toys from home.
- ✓ The following should be disinfected at least daily:
 - Playground equipment
 - Door and cabinet handles
 - Sink handles
- ✓ Shared objects (e.g., toys, games, art supplies) should be cleaned in between uses.
- ✓ Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Use a trained HVAC technician to make any changes to your ventilation systems. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk (e.g., allowing pollens in or exacerbating asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- ✓ To clean and disinfect school buses, see CDC guidance for bus transit operators: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/rideshare-drivers-for-hire.html>
- ✓ Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.
- ✓ For additional cleaning and disinfecting information see the following:
 - DCF's publication: [Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting in Child Care Settings](#)
 - CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
 - CDC's website: [CDC's Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Home](#)

Recommendations for Food Service

- ✓ All food service workers should wear a face mask or cloth face covering.
- ✓ When possible, identify and implement operation changes that increase employee separation in accordance with physical distancing.
- ✓ Frequently wash and sanitize of all food contact surfaces and utensils.
- ✓ Workers must practice frequent hand washing and glove changes before and after preparing food.
- ✓ Serve food using gloves.
- ✓ Children should be seated with at least 6 feet of distance in between each other.
- ✓ Consider modifying meal times to provide adequate physical distancing. When possible, encourage students and staff to eat meals outside in smaller groups. Consider staggering meal times.
- ✓ Kitchen staff have no contact with the staff or students.
- ✓ Encourage staff to sit with and talk to children (from an appropriate distance of six-feet), serving as role models and offering support and normalcy.
- ✓ All kitchen/cafeteria/dining areas should be cleaned and disinfected after use and prior to a new group of students entering for meals.

Recommendations for Gym/Fitness Centers/Locker Rooms/Bathrooms

- ✓ It is recommended that when in the community, if physical distancing is not possible, face masks should be worn by children and adults.
 - However, face masks should not be worn while engaged in physical activity.
- ✓ Carry a towel. If students or staff using equipment get the urge to sneeze or cough, they should use the towel to cover their nose, mouth and then wash their hand and face thoroughly before resuming activity.
- ✓ According to Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and other credible health resources, COVID-19 is not spread through sweat. Still, items touched by many people in a gym (like barbells, weight machines and aerobic fitness equipment) must be regularly disinfected because respiratory droplets can settle on them. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- ✓ Consider using a checklist or audit system to track how often cleaning is conducted.

- ✓ Identify staff members who will be responsible for ensuring regular cleaning and disinfection.
- ✓ If students do not wipe/disinfect equipment after exercise, consider providing “ready to clean” tags that students can place on equipment after use, signaling staff to ensure equipment is disinfected before the next use.
- ✓ Establish “before and after” workout and locker room handwashing or sanitizing for all students and staff. Provide handwashing stations or provide hand sanitizer if handwashing is not feasible.
- ✓ Minimize sharing of equipment as much as possible and disinfect shared equipment between use.
- ✓ Enforce use of personal towels and exercise clothing. Both should be taken home each day and laundered before reuse at school.
- ✓ If fans such as pedestal fans or hard-mounted fans are used in the facility, take steps to minimize air from fans blowing directly from one person toward another.
- ✓ Increase cleaning frequency for restrooms, showers and locker rooms, and consider design changes:
 - Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles if feasible. Consider adding a foot pull to the door if one is not already in place. Place a trash can by the door if the door cannot be opened without touching the handle, so restroom users can cover the handle with a paper towel and easily dispose of it afterward.
 - For single-occupancy restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles.
 - Post signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing.
 - Post signs asking students and staff to wash hands before and after using the restroom.
 - Provide paper towels and disconnect or tape off hand air dryers.
 - Only allow shower and locker room use if partitions are in place or signs have been posted to specify physical distancing requirements. If partitions or proper distancing are not possible, these facilities should remain closed.
- ✓ Water shoes should be worn in locker rooms and showers.
- ✓ Ensure physical distancing for equipment layout and activities.
 - Consider spacing equipment at least six feet apart, with greater distancing for treadmills and other high-exertion aerobic fitness equipment.
 - Equipment can be arranged in an “X” pattern to provide greater distancing.

- Physical barriers can also be helpful to create distancing or segregate exercise areas.
- Use tape, markers, paint and signage to mark safe distancing for members.
- Limit the number of student and staff in the facility at one time. Only those individuals that are actually exercising (or supervising students) should be inside the facility.
- Basketball courts and other areas where physical contact sports occur should be closed.

Closing Summer School and Programs

- ✓ Check state and local health department notices daily about transmission in the area and adjust operations accordingly.
- ✓ In the event a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is determined to have been in the building and poses a risk to the community, schools may consider or be directed to close for a short time (1-2 days) for cleaning and disinfection.
- ✓ Where a community is deemed a significant mitigation community, schools should anticipate closing and work with local health authorities.