

Packing-Up, Picking-Up, and Returning School Items during COVID-19

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As the 2019-20 school year comes to a close, school districts should develop plans for allowing teachers and staff to safely return to school to pack up personal belongings, and for students to return school-issued items and retrieve personal belongings during the COVID-19 pandemic. The organized return and retrieval of materials is important to help protect the health of students, staff, and families. School districts and administrators should work with their local or tribal health department to determine the best options for their local circumstances. These recommendations were developed by the Department of Public Instruction in consultation with the Department of Health Services. They are not mandatory and seek to provide local districts with different ideas and options as they map out their own plans.

Recommendations for packing-up classrooms and personal belongings

- Develop a schedule for teachers and staff to limit the number of people present in the building at one time and to allow for appropriate physical distancing.
 - For buildings with less than 50,000 square feet, limit the number of people inside to 25% of the total occupancy limit established by the local municipality.
 - For buildings greater than 50,000 square feet, limit the number of people inside at one time to 4 people per 1,000 square feet of floor space. For example, if your building is 10,000 square feet, 40 people are allowed in your building at one time.
- Stagger the schedule to ensure that teachers do not report to school at the same time as other teachers with adjacent classrooms.
- In order to limit contact among people, create a plan for staff entering and exiting the building, which may be different from your normal entrances and exits. Space out staff when entering and exiting the building to ensure that no one will come within 6 feet of another person.
- Where possible, install handwashing stations or stock hand sanitizer at all entrances and exits.
- Teachers and staff should remain in their own classroom or office while packing up, and avoid contact with others in the building. Teachers and staff should avoid large gatherings of people outside of their cars in parking lots.
- Playgrounds should remain closed.
- Teachers and staff should not bring their young children with them to school while they are packing up.
- It is considered best practice for teachers and staff to wear cloth face coverings any time they are on school grounds and not alone in their classrooms. School administrators should

work with anyone who is not comfortable wearing a cloth face covering to develop a safe alternative.

- If schools allow teachers and staff to use the school bathroom during their shifts, ensure good ventilation to the bathroom and prop open the door to the hallway. Consider installing no-touch doors, faucets, soap and paper-towel dispensers, etc., to limit the number of surfaces touched in the bathroom. Bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected thoroughly before and in between shifts.
- Teachers and staff should obtain approval from school administrators before bringing others to school to help them move large or heavy objects. Helpers should stay in the same room as the staff member.
- Teachers and staff should pack student belongings, including all items left behind in lockers, desks, and common spaces, into bags, sorted by classroom. Work with individual students and families who do not feel comfortable with staff packing up their personal belongings to develop a safe alternative. Students should not be allowed into the school building under any circumstances, including to pack up their personal belongings.
- Anyone handling student items should practice safe hand hygiene by washing or sanitizing hands before and after handling items.
- Notify teachers and staff about where and how school-issued materials, such as books, technology, and musical instruments, will be inventoried and stored. If school-issued items were left behind in lockers, such items should be added to school inventory and not sent home to students.
- Wait at least 72 hours between organizing student materials and returning items to families. To minimize ongoing health risks related to the presence of COVID-19, develop a scheduled curbside pick-up and drop off process. **There should not be any student or parent access to the building.**
 - For families arriving at school to pick up belongings by car, teachers and staff should place bags of belongings in the trunk of the car. Families should not get out of the car or roll down windows while on school premises.
 - For families without cars, develop safe alternative methods for reuniting students with their belongings, such as placing labeled bags on tables in the school parking lot or dropping off items outside students' homes while maintaining appropriate physical distance.
- Administrators should inform neighbors and the community of the dates when school cleaning and student pick-up will occur so that neighbors do not mistakenly suspect a large, unsanctioned gathering is taking place on school grounds.

Recommendations for students to safely return school-issued items

- Schools should send instructions to families on how to safely pack and label school-issued items in a disposable bag. Consider providing disposable bags to families who may not have them at home.
 - For families arriving at school to drop off school-issued items, families should put items in the in their trunk and open the trunk so that teachers can remove school-

issued items (and simultaneously return student belongings, if appropriate) without interacting with families.

- For families who may be walking to school or are not picking up personal items, schools should provide a designated drop-off location for returning school-issued items.
- All school-issued items should be placed in a common area and left untouched for 72 hours. After 72 hours, staff may inventory and store items.

Recommendations for administrators overseeing employees during this process

- Inform employees to continue to practice good hygiene, as follows:
 - 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.
- Advise employees who feel sick to stay at home, and to contact and follow the advice of their medical provider.
- Work with your local and tribal public health department to develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following an employee positive test result.

Recommendations for closing the school building if there is a risk of a COVID-19 outbreak

- 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, schools may consider or be directed to close for a short time (1-2 days) for cleaning and disinfection.
- If a community is designated as a [significant mitigation community](#), schools should anticipate closing and should work with local health authorities on appropriate next steps.