



CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE RE-OPENING OF SCHOOLS

June 2020

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Planning for the re-opening of schools

Schools are currently scheduled for re-opening in phase 4 of the NYS plan for re-opening the state.

NYSED has not developed a plan or guidelines for reopening schools in September

Three options – many questions

- Onsite with all students
- Hybrid model – fewer students on site during the day - students will spend part of the day/week on site and part of the time receiving remote instruction. (How will you accommodate this model and have teachers providing on site instruction and remote learning to students who are home on the same day?)
- Remote Learning only -school buildings do not open up in the fall – you may want to consider having this option available for your families that will not send their child back to school until a vaccine is developed.

* Please remember that you may have very limited notice to implement remote learning – advanced planning for this possibility is critically important for all schools.

Physical Space

Pre-clean and sanitize school buildings before re-opening

Water system will need to be cleaned and sanitized – (concerns about Legionnaires Disease)

Ventilation system – evaluate quality of A/C filters – increase ventilation and fresh air if possible

Establish a single point entry into the school building – this will ensure that everyone entering the school has been screened.

Establish a protocol to monitor the entrance to the school building.

Evaluate physical space in classrooms – how many children and staff can be in a classroom if you need to attempt to establish social distancing?

OCFS or DOHMH may implement emergency regulations to limit the number of children on site at any given time based on square footage of classroom space.

Remove excess furniture in classrooms to allow for social distancing

Do you need to identify additional space in your building or outside of the building to allow for social distancing if you are required to do so by OCFS or DOHMH?

Do you have out-door space to have class activities?

Encourage teachers to keep windows open if possible, to improve airflow and increase ventilation.

Can you establish hand washing/cleaning locations – possibly near entrance to the school?

Establish a location for staff to access hand sanitizer and cleaning products

Will every classroom have a hand washing station?

How frequently will students wash their hands each day?

Need to place signs/reminders about COVID-19, good hygiene, social distancing, around the school. DOH may supply them or can be found on CDC website.

Can you make child friendly reminder about washing hands posters/signs?

Will you need to mark floors to demonstrate 6 feet apart? How far is 6 feet apart?

Develop child friendly circles or other creative ways to help your children understand. It could be a game for the students during part of the day. (Remember you are helping your families if you help their children understand what they are able about social distancing)

Designate an isolation rooms for staff and students who are ill. The rooms should be well ventilated if possible and have a door that can be closed to protect others from exposure.

Keep in mind that the nurse's office may not work as an isolation room. If other children who are not ill have medical needs, you do not want them to be exposed to the virus.

Identify a location for all PPE's and cleaning supplies – these can be potentially life threatening to our students and must be properly secured.

Bathrooms – major concern location - you will need to develop procedures for the use of bathrooms – consider establishing a bathroom schedule if possible?

Ensure proper hygiene and hand washing schedule

Physical distancing waiting in hallways if needing to do good waiting?

One- way arrows on the floors – In and out

Establish a Daily Cleaning Schedule and Plan

Who will be responsible for making sure this is done each day?

Who will do the cleaning?

Develop a cleaning log

CDC Guidelines – approved cleaning materials, supplies – ensure that your school has a sufficient supply – be prepared for shortages?

Who will be responsible to ensure the school has an adequate supply of approved cleaning materials?

Develop a log for monitoring supplies and when to re-order them.

Before School, Each Day

During School - how will this be accomplished safely?

After School - comprehensive cleaning

What items will be cleaned – furniture, materials, adaptive equipment, toys, computer devices, screens – create a master list of all items and frequency of cleaning

Determine if there are any items in the classrooms/therapy rooms etc. **that cannot be cleaned** – consider putting them in storage or disposing of them.

You may want to consider removing the rugs?

Priority for cleaning multiple times a day – Commonly touched items - any items or object that is touched by multiple people every day – ex. doorknobs, light switches, handles, computers, (create a list)

Consider giving a set of toys and materials to each student - labelled by name

Try to avoid materials that are shared by many students – consider developing a set of therapist materials for each student

Therapy equipment – it should be cleaned after use by each student

Entry into the Building – Who will you screen each day?

Before you allow anyone into the building will you screen them for COVID-19?

Arrival of Staff and children?

Will you allow any visitors into the building? Parents, SED, School Districts, NYCDOE, NYC DOHMH, OCFS.

If so, will you screen all visitors? Who will do those screenings? Unpredictable times

Will you allow food deliveries? - if not staff will need to have a place to keep food and eat their lunch.

Controlling entry into the building - Establish a single point of entry into the school building to make sure that every person is screened.

Develop screening procedures and protocols:

Develop a protective screening area – screening etc. for staff conducting temperature screening

Temperature check/screening for staff?

Which staff will do the screening each day?

What type of thermometer will be used? (temporal scanner) – CDC recommends that it be cleaned after each child or staff person is screened.

Where will the screening take place? – if outside the building – develop alternative plan for inclement weather.

How will staff be screened? {Temperature and questionnaire?}

Before entry into building -they may need to arrive earlier than normal.

Who will conduct screening?

Screening questions – will you request that staff complete every day before reporting to work?

CDC Questions:

- Any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 14 days?
- Tested positive for COVID-19 past 14 days
- Any contact with an individual with a confirmed or suspected of case of COVID-19?

Develop a daily log with temperature check information and questionnaire results for each person.

Develop protocols for staff who fail the screening – (questionnaire or temperature screen)

Temperature above 100.0 F

Staff who report to work and are visibly sick or ill. Will they be sent home immediately? If staff need to be sent home in the morning before work how will you plan to have enough coverage? Schools may not know until staff arrive that morning.

Important to look at staffing ratios/substitute staff etc. on a daily basis

Notification requirements – Department of Health, SED, OCFS, DOE School District – there may be specific mandated protocols.

Temperature check/screening for children?

Do you plan to take the temperature of all children before they enter the building?

Any other times during the day?

Who will conduct the screening? If only one-person designated to do screening - plan for what happens when she/he is absent or home sick? (Consider designating and training multiple staff on proper testing procedures)

Staff will need PPE's and protective area to screen the children.

What equipment will be needed?

How will the children be screened?

Where will children wait to be screened – if outside the school plan alternative location for inclement weather

If children need to wait in line with staff - social distancing considerations.

How will you protect staff if they take children off the bus before they have been screened?

Staggered bus arrival times so all the children do not arrive at same time

Late bus arrivals – who will be available to screen children?

Develop a policy and protocols for children who fail the temperature screening

If child is sick where will they wait for their parents to pick them up – Isolation room?

Who will be responsible to stay with the child? (Staff may be concerned about being exposed)

School will need to provide PPE's to staff person staying with the student.

Who will call the parent?

What if parent is unable to come right away?

Daily contact log – for parent contacts regarding COVID-19 concerns?

Notification requirements? - Develop protocols and alerts to all families especially for children who are medically fragile or at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Will you help parents develop self-screening protocols for their children each day?

Consider developing a check list for parents to help them monitor potential symptoms and know when to keep their child home from school. (fever above 100.0F, chills, cough, sore

throat, difficulty breathing, gastrointestinal symptoms, abdominal pain, unexplained rash, fatigue, headache, new loss of smell or taste and any muscle aches or signs of an illness)

Will you contact parents each day to check on children who are absent?

Who will parents notify if their child tests positive or is exposed to the virus? – classroom teacher/nurse.

Consider establishing a single point of contact for families to call.

Important to make sure that all information shared with families is accurate and follows agency/school guidelines.

Do you conduct a temperature screening of children and staff during the school day?

Who will do that screening?

Do you establish a log of these temperature recordings?

What happens if a child has a temperature?

Which staff person will stay with the child if they need to go to the isolation room?

Do you provide them with hazard pay?

The staff will need to have PPE's.

Who will contact the parent? What will they be told?

What if it is near the end of the day when child is found to have a fever and the parent tells you to put the child on the bus?

Do you put the child on the bus and potentially expose the other children?

If child needs to stay at the school/ who will stay with the child during that time?

Coverage issue – school needs to manage the discharge of the other students?

Notification requirements?

Develop protocols and procedures on how the school will alert families especially families of children who are medically fragile or at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 about any potential cases.

Decide what information will be shared with families and staff and provide training for all staff on these protocols. Keep in mind that you must comply with FERPA and HIPPA.

Schools will need to comply with any requirements established by local DOHMH, OCFS or SED or other government agencies.

Consider monitoring staff and child absence and any pattern of increases. Assign staff to contact families and determine why child is absent – track all reported cases.

How will staff be contacted if they are absent? – establish protocols so that staff alert will school immediately if they test positive or are potentially exposed and are self-quarantined.

Contact Tracing – Limiting risk of spread in school?

If a staff person or child tests positive for the virus or has been exposed – what will you do?
How will you prepare the school for this possibility?

The school should have the ability to contract trace at least within the school and develop procedures and protocols around this important tool to reduce the spread of the virus.

There are contract tracing trainings – you can consider identifying staff who may take on this role?

Significant changes to daily school routines

Keep two goals in mind – work to control the things you can and to limit risk. There will be elements of social distancing and other recommendations that will be nearly impossible to implement for the students that you serve.

Prepare for the possibility that you will be providing both onsite education for some students and remote learning for others on the same day.

Schools may also have to deal with staggered schedules and lateness of bus arrivals given the expected challenges for transporting students.

Plan for fewer students to be on site at any given time to allow for social distancing.

Plan on keeping one group of students together with their teacher all day – this will help limit greater school-wide spread of the virus.

Consider providing each individual child with their own set of toys and materials and label them.

Give each child their own storage bin or cubby for their belongings that is labeled with their name on it.

Attempt to discourage sharing of toys, books, materials, and devices if possible.

Evaluate all class activities to determine if they assist with the goal of social distancing goals.

Evaluate the set-up of the classroom with the goal of minimizing group activities.

Individual play stations?

Fire Drills? How will these be conducted with social distancing in mind?

Consider assigning one therapist to specific classes.

Can therapy be provided in individual classrooms?

Have therapists use same supplies for each class avoid sharing supplies with other classes etc. if possible.

Therapists may need additional time built into their schedules to allow for cleaning of equipment between students.

Speech therapist may need clear masks for working with children.

Personal Protective Equipment – (PPE's)

Employers are expected to provide employees with all PPE.

It will be critically important to begin assessing how much PPE will be needed for your staff at the school site and to put mechanisms in place to purchase the equipment and ensure that you have a sufficient supply on hand at any given time..

It is likely that all staff will be required to wear masks given that it will be very difficult for schools to implement social distancing.

Based on the age of your children there may be an expectation that they also will be wearing masks if they can tolerate them. (Masks can be worn by children over the age of 2) If this is required you will need to have a supply of children's masks on site for the children.

There are recommendations in some re-opening plans that any child who becomes sick at the school or who presents with a fever should wear a mask to prevent spread of the virus if they will tolerate it.

If staff work with children that are not be able to practice good hygiene they may need to wear gloves that the school must supply (guidance on when to use or on a limited basis may be provided by SED or local DOH)

Hand sanitizer should be available for staff use through out the school day.

Nurses will need to have PPE's that include masks, gloves, plastic shields, gowns, and booties.

Staffing

Establish a point of contact for staff - Designate a specific staff person who will be responsible for responding to staff concerns/questions etc. about the virus.

Encourage your staff to stay home if they are sick or if they have been exposed to someone who has the virus for 14 days.

Evaluate employee sick time to allow for staff to stay home if they feel sick or ill.

Temporarily suspend any practices of sanctioning staff for taking time off during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Educate staff on the importance of informing the school immediately if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they test positive for the virus.

Evaluate staffing needs based on re-opening of school sites – 1:1 aides, additional substitute staff, and assess if any of your current staff may not be willing to return to school due to concerns about the virus.

Assess all staff certifications, licenses, and medicals to be sure they are current and have not expired during the COVID-19 emergency and period of school closure.

Arrange for professional development for all staff based on the COVID-19 and the re-opening of schools.

Review all relevant policy, procedures, and protocols that are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evaluate job descriptions to see if they need to be revised due to changes in role or additional duties.

Professional Development – Preparing for the Re-opening

- COVID-19 – What teaching staff need to know
- The proper use of PPE's
- How to clean properly based on CDC guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Good hygiene practices
- Social distancing
- Notification requirements
- Contact tracing
- Teachers – providing quality remote instruction

Transportation - How can schools help prepare

Educate your parents about screening their children each day before sending them to school. Check for symptoms of the virus and temperature.

Schools should prepare for the possibility of increased numbers of parents who may transport their children to school.

Bus drivers and matrons will need professional development to prepare for re-opening of school and transporting children.

Bus companies will need significant lead time to start services again

NYC will need to establish new contracts with bus companies and school districts across New York State will need to also recontract with bus companies.

Bus drivers and matrons will be wearing PPE's and may be overly cautious regarding children

Drivers may have screening protection at the front of the bus.

Bus drivers/matrons could take a child's temperature prior to allowing them on the school bus

Car seats should be used by only one child – labeled with her/his name

Fewer students on each bus – may be transporting one child per seat

There may be more routes and buses may be arriving on a staggered schedule

School buses should only transport students from one school and routes should not pick up children from multiple schools.

Windows may need to be opened on the bus to increase ventilation

RESOURCES

Re-Opening New York State– Moving New York Forward

<https://forward.ny.gov/>

New York State Education Department COVID-19 Guidance

<http://www.nysed.gov/coronavirus>

The Urgency and Challenge of Opening K-12 Schools in the Fall of 2020 – JAMA, Christopher C. Morpew, PhD and Joshua M. Sharfstein, MD

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2766822>

Maryland’s Recovery Plan for Education

<file:///C:/Users/CCnE/Documents/MAryland%20COVID-19%20School%20Reopening%20Plan.pdf>

MASSACHUSETTS CHILD AND YOUTH SERVING PROGRAMS RE-OPEN APPROACH

Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety June 1, 2020

https://eelead.force.com/resource/1591036172000/Min_Req

Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Centers for Disease Control Interim Guidance

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools-h.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

A PLAN TO SAFELY REOPEN AMERICA’S SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES – American Federation of Teachers

https://live-aftorg.pantheonsite.io/sites/default/files/covid19_reopen-america-schools.pdf

FEDERAL RESOURCES – OSEP Funded Programs

Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center – COVID-19 Resources for Early Childhood Programs- <https://ectacenter.org/topics/disaster/coronavirus.asp>

National Center for Systemic Improvement – COVID-19 Resource Hub for K-12 Schools
Resources for Supporting Students with Disabilities

<https://ncsi.wested.org/>

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

<https://www.transitionta.org/>

National Center on Accessible Educational Materials

<http://aem.cast.org/>

National Center for Pyramid Model Interventions - Emergencies and National Disasters: Helping Children and Families Cope – great materials for children

<http://aem.cast.org/>

TIES Center - the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies

Information on distance learning for students with significant cognitive disabilities

<https://tiescenter.org/>

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports

<https://www.pbis.org/>

Center for Parent Information and Resources

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/cv19-coping/>