



Public Health  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Fond du Lac County  
Health Department

# GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING K-12 SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released public health considerations for reopening schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations will help assure staff, parents, and students have an optimal process for supporting a positive and safe learning environment. Schools, working together with local health departments, have an important role in slowing the spread of diseases to help ensure students and staff have safe and healthy learning environments.

## What Schools Can Do to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19



Task Force

### 1. Develop a Task Force to Plan for a Safe Reopening

- Identify stakeholders and partners that should be part of the conversation for a safe reopening of the school district. This may include representation from the local health department, law enforcement, schools staff, school board members, health care providers, EMS, fire department, parents and guardians, students, and more.
- Task force members will help assemble a comprehensive operations plan to support a safe reopening of the school.



Operations Plan

### 2. Develop an Operations Plan Specific to COVID-19

- Create an operations plan which includes: screening for staff and students, messaging to staff, parents and students for staying home when sick, process to isolate an individual who is symptomatic, plans to support social distancing, increased cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, personal protective equipment (PPE) if necessary, and considerations for students and staff who are at higher risk for contracting the virus.
- The plan should also address the use of facilities for athletics, clubs or rental to groups. Visit the CDC for guidance on youth sports and recreational facilities. Additional guidance will be shared as it becomes available.



Inform and Educate

### 3. Inform and Educate All Staff, Students and Families on the Plan

- Train all employees on health and safety protocols.
- Inform and educate students and families about the plans and process that have been put in place to protect their health and the health of others.
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.
- Put communication systems in place for when a student or staff member is exposed to someone with COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19.



Healthy Hygiene Practices

### 4. Promote Healthy Hygiene Practices and Behaviors that Reduce Spread

- Display hand washing posters to encourage good hand hygiene and proper hand washing techniques.
- Encourage staff and students to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Have signs posted in visible locations to promote everyday protective measures and ensure adequate supplies are available to support healthy hygiene practices.

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6 ft apart

### Social Distancing

## 5. Plan for and Support Social Distancing

- Structure classes for virtual learning or a hybrid of virtual and in-person classes with staggered or rotating schedule of cohorts. Consider classes of smaller size for in-person activities where students and staff stay with the same class all day and allow for social distancing. This allows for easier contact tracing and illness identification.
- Rearrange student desks and common seating spaces to maximize the space between students.
- Limit non-essential visitors, volunteers, and field trips. Pursue virtual gatherings if possible.
- For communal spaces, minimize congregation in those areas if possible. Stagger use of those areas and clean and disinfect between each use.
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partition, in areas where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.
- Stagger scheduling for drop-offs and arrivals by locations or cohort.
- If you provide busing, work with transit operators regarding transportation changes to how many students are on a bus at a time, social distancing and increased cleaning.



### Food Service

## 6. Food Service

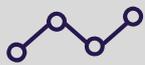
- Have children bring their own meals as feasible, or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria, while ensuring the safety of children with food allergies.
- [View additional food service considerations by the CDC.](#)



### Cleaning & Disinfection

## 7. Intensify Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation

- Increase [cleaning with approved disinfectant](#) and pay special attention to common areas such as door handles, light switches, playground equipment, sink handles, drinking fountains, counters, tables, chairs, bathrooms, and other shared objects.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting occur.



### Ongoing Monitoring

## 8. Develop and Implement Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring

- Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible. See [CDC screening methods](#).
- Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home.
- Plan for a back-up staffing plan in case of staff absenteeism.
- Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures.
- Monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices.
- Be ready to consult with the local health department if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area.
- Consider future needs for onsite testing at the school during the school year. Consult your local health department for more details.

### Sources and links for additional considerations:

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

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/bus-transit-operator.html>

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

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/2019-novel-coronavirus>