

# Black Hawk County School Reopening Guidelines

Updated: 08/04/2020



## Introduction

The intent of this document is to aid Black Hawk County school districts with a reopening plan to in-person education during the COVID-19 pandemic of fall 2020. This document is meant to supplement guidance developed by the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Education, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and other professional agencies. It is the recommendation of the Black Hawk County Health Department that school districts make every effort to implement all control measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in their schools; with an understanding if a control measure is determined to not be feasible by the school district at this point in time, that implementation occurs to the extent of the school district's ability. This guidance will be updated as necessary.

## General Guidelines

### Screening

- Daily temperature screening and symptom monitoring is recommended for all staff members working in school buildings. Staff that report cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or fever greater than 100.4° F should be excluded from work and be tested for COVID-19.
  - Staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work after an exposure if there are staffing shortages, as long as the staff member remains asymptomatic.
  - Exposed staff that continue to work will need to take their temperature and screen for symptoms at the start and end of each day, and wear a mask at work. If symptoms develop, they must isolate immediately.
- Daily screening of all students when entering school buildings should be conducted if feasible. If daily screening of students is not feasible for the district, the district may consider asking families and parents to conduct daily self-checks prior to coming to school. Families should be educated on the symptoms of COVID-19, and that children should not be sent to school if they report cough, shortness of breath, new loss of taste or smell, or fever (either measured or subjective). Children who report COVID-19 symptoms should be excluded from school and parents should call their medical providers.
- Visitors entering the school should be reduced or eliminated as much as possible. Temperature screening and symptom monitoring is recommended for all visitors before entering the school building.
- Students and staff should remain home when sick. Students and staff with any high-risk symptoms or two or more low risk symptoms should stay home and are advised to seek an evaluation by a health care provider.

High Risk Symptoms	Low Risk Symptoms
New cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell	Fever, headache, muscle and body aches, fatigue, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea

## Face Coverings

- Instruct and reinforce on the use of cloth face coverings.
- Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.
- Face coverings should be worn by staff, visitors and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult.
  - Face coverings may be challenging for younger students or those with special needs in all-day settings.
  - Face shields may be used in situations as described in the next bullet, however face shields should not be used to completely replace face coverings for all students or staff.
- For situations where reading facial cues, reading lips, or other direct observation of the mouth are necessary for communication between staff and the student, a face shield or face covering with a clear window may replace a traditional face covering.
- 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.
- Cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:
  - Children younger than 2 years of age
  - Persons who have trouble breathing or are unconscious
  - Persons who are incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

## Social Distancing

- A physical distance of 6ft between students should be kept throughout the school day. In instances where 6ft distance cannot be maintained, as much distance as feasible should be maintained between students or groups of students; and use of face coverings reinforced.
- Physical distancing can be aided by various administrative controls to reduce the number of students in each class such as:
  - Staggering schedules to reduce the number of students in common areas at one time
  - Utilizing additional spaces to allow more space for each student
  - Utilizing a mix of in-person and virtual learning to reduce the number of students in the building at one time.
  - Consider hosting smaller classes in larger rooms if feasible to increase spacing.
- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings where possible, and for in-person events limit group sizes, and promote social distancing of at least 6ft between people.
- If feasible, provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times
- Suggested strategies and learning models based on the level of community transmission occurring within the county are outline in the Return-to-Learn Models section below.

## Hygiene

- Teach and reinforce washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, following CDC guidance on when and how to wash your hands. If soap and water are not readily available, instruct and reinforce use of a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (if applicable or age-appropriate) using CDC guidance.
- Additional time should be built into the schedule to allow for handwashing, particularly before and after meals, and before and after use of shared equipment.
- Discourage sharing of items particularly items that are difficult to clean or disinfect and items such as electronic devices, books, pens, and other learning aids.
- Students should have ready access to hand sanitizer (if applicable or age-appropriate) in settings where soap and water is not available, such as in classrooms or on school buses.

## Contact Tracing

- Public health will conduct a case investigation and identify close contacts for each person that tests positive for COVID-19.
- Public health investigates cases (persons who test positive for COVID-19) by calling the person who tested positive for COVID-19 infection or, in the case of minor, their parent or guardian, to direct them to isolate and ask a series of questions about their illness, risk factors and most importantly, who they have been in close contact with (persons within 6ft of the case for more than 15 minutes) during the time in which they could have spread illness to others.
- People with symptoms of COVID-19 can spread the virus from 2 days before symptoms started until 10 days after their symptoms started, and they have been fever free for 24 hours, and all other symptoms have improved.
- People without symptoms of COVID-19 (who test positive for COVID-19 infection) can spread the virus from 2 days before they are tested until 10 days after they are tested.
- Public health investigators will call the identified close contacts to direct them to self-quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure to the COVID-19 infected person.
- Each school district or school building should identify a COVID-19 liaison to assist public health in identifying close contacts within the school building. The COVID-19 liaison may be an individual or office, who has access to student schedules and attendance records and abides by rules of confidentiality.
- Public health will notify the COVID-19 liaison to provide names of students, faculty or staff testing positive for COVID-19. Public health will then ask for assistance identifying close contacts based on attendance, class schedules, and extracurricular activities.
- Students and staff who are identified as close contacts to a case should be notified to self-isolate at home for 14 days following the exposure. Notification will be coordinated with public health, and should be made in such a way so that the person who tested positive is not identified.

## Exclusion from School

- Students and staff ill with COVID-19 symptoms or have been identified as close contacts to a COVID-19 case should be excluded from school.

- Teachers and staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages. As long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 that test positive by PCR **OR** who decline testing should self-isolate at home until:
  - At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started **AND**
  - Fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved.
- Students and staff with severe, advanced immunosuppression should isolate until:
  - 20 days post symptom onset or date of test **AND**
  - Fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 by PCR and did not have any symptoms should self-isolate at home until:
  - At least 10 days have passed since the day they were tested **AND**
  - No symptoms since the day of testing.
- Students and staff with symptoms of COVID-19 who test negative by PCR **AND** are not a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home until 24 hours after their symptoms resolve.
- Students and staff with symptoms of COVID-19 who test negative by PCR **AND** are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home until:
  - 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19
  - Staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages. If so staff who test negative by PCR can return 24 hours after their symptoms resolve.
- Students and staff who are a close contact to a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home until:
  - 14 days after their last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19
  - Staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages. As long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 by serology should not be excluded unless they also meet one of the categories above.
- Students and staff who are tested for COVID-19 should self-isolate at home while waiting for their test results.
  - Staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages. If so, staff may continue to work while awaiting test results as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Previously diagnosed students and staff with COVID-19 have since recovered and remain asymptomatic:
  - Retesting is **NOT** recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset (or date of test if asymptomatic persons) for the initial COVID-19 infection

- Quarantine is **NOT** recommended in the event of close contact with an infected person during the three month time period, as long as the previously diagnosed person remains asymptomatic (i.e., has not developed symptoms of a new illness)
- In persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptom onset (if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by a provider) they should be clinically evaluated as appropriate and re-testing should be considered if there is not an alternative diagnosis.
  - The symptomatic person should be isolated again, if symptoms developed within 14 days after close contact with a new COVID case.

## Critical Workers

- CDC defines critical infrastructure workers as:
  - Federal, state, & local law enforcement
  - 911 call center employees
  - Fusion Center employees
  - Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector
  - Janitorial staff and other custodial staff
  - Workers – including contracted vendors – in food and agriculture, critical manufacturing, informational technology, transportation, energy and government facilities
- Teachers and staff may be considered critical personnel and can be allowed to return to work if there are staffing shortages. As long as they remain asymptomatic. Ideally, K-12 teachers and staff identified as close contacts of COVID-19 exposed persons should quarantine at home for 14 days after their last exposure.
- However, if K-12 schools are in a staff and teacher shortage, K-12 schools could choose to allow exposed teachers and staff to continue working in accordance with the recommended safety measures described in the [CDC guidance](#).

## Cleaning

- Schools should develop a plan for routine cleaning with a focus on frequently touched surfaces, common areas, shared surfaces, and shared equipment.
- When using disinfectants, the manufacturers' instructions must be followed, including duration of dwell time, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), if indicated, and proper ventilation.
  - The use of EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 is recommended.
  - When possible, only products labeled as safe for humans and the environment should be selected.
- Routine cleaning should be conducted at least daily, and as frequently as feasible. Shared surfaces and equipment should be cleaned after each use and time for cleaning should be built in to student's schedules.
- When a person who is positive for COVID-19 has been in a school building, staff should close off areas used by the person identified with COVID-19 and wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.

- If it is not feasible to wait 24 hours, staff should wait as long as possible before beginning cleaning and disinfection. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

## **Return-to-Learn Models**

- The recommended return-to-learn model and any closures of school buildings or districts will depend on the circumstances in the surrounding community, as well as the level of absenteeism in the school.
- The consideration for change return-to-learn models or closing school buildings will be based on the following criteria:
  - The 14-day average percent positivity for the county
    - Data available at: [www.blackhawkcovid19.com](http://www.blackhawkcovid19.com)
  - Percent absenteeism in the school
  - Healthcare resources capacity
- Only the Departments of Education and Public Health can make the determination and authorization to move to 100% online or remote learning for a school building or district.
  - The application for temporary permission to provide primarily continuous/remote learning is submitted by schools through the CASA system.
- Schools will be required to provide the following information as part of the application:
  - Evidence of consultation with local/county public health determining that the area meets the requirements established by IDPH.
  - If the application for temporary permission is approved:
    - How will the district or accredited nonpublic school ensure that all students with IEPs are provided with FAPE during the time the district/school is providing services primarily online?
    - How will the district or accredited nonpublic school ensure that students who require mental health or health services still have access to these services during the time the district/school is providing services primarily online?
    - How will the district or accredited nonpublic school ensure that students with 504 plans continue to receive services?
    - How will the district continue to provide meals to students?
    - How will the district provide access to instructional materials and services for students who do not have access to the internet?
    - What process will you use to communicate with parents/families on educational services and changes in delivery models?

Community Transmission	Suggested Strategies	Return-to-Learn Model(s)
<p><b>None to Minimal</b></p> <p>0-5% positivity in county on average over the past 14 days</p> <p><i>* Healthcare resources remain stable</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home if you are sick or exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19</li> <li>• Practice frequent hand-washing</li> <li>• Stay 6 feet from others as much as possible</li> <li>• Use face coverings when able to do so safely and correctly</li> <li>• Maintain frequent cleaning schedule using EPA-approved cleaning products</li> <li>• Monitor absenteeism among teachers, staff, and students</li> </ul>	<p>On-Site Learning following DOE, IDPH and CDC guidance.</p> <p>Hybrid Learning as necessary based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent or guardian preference</li> <li>• Student quarantine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimal to Moderate</b></p> <p>6-14% positivity in county on average over the past 14 days</p> <p><i>* Healthcare resources remain stable</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue above strategies</li> <li>• Reduce group events/gatherings</li> <li>• Limit inter-school interactions</li> <li>• Ensure student and staff groupings/cohorts are as static as possible and that interactions among groups of students and staff are limited</li> </ul>	<p>On-Site Learning following DOE, IDPH and CDC guidance.</p> <p>Hybrid Learning as necessary based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent or guardian preference</li> <li>• Student quarantine</li> </ul>
<p><b>Substantial Controlled</b></p> <p>15-20% positivity in county on average over the past 14 days AND 10% absenteeism among students expected for in-person learning</p> <p><i>* Healthcare resources remain stable</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue above strategies</li> <li>• Consider regular health checks for any on-site students/staff if feasible</li> <li>• Cancel school events/gatherings</li> <li>• Close communal spaces (e.g., cafeterias, media centers)</li> </ul>	<p>Hybrid Learning as necessary based on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent or guardian preference</li> <li>• Student quarantine</li> </ul> <p>Temporary Continuous/Remote Learning for an entire school building or district for up to 14 days may be requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please contact the Department of Education by submitting your information via the CASA system.</li> <li>• Only the Departments of Education and Public Health can make the determination and provide temporary authorization to move to 100% online or remote learning.</li> </ul>

Community Transmission	Suggested Strategies	Return-to-Learn Model(s)
<p><b>Substantial Uncontrolled</b></p> <p>&gt;20% positivity in the county on average over the past 14 days with healthcare resource capacity concerns</p>	<p>State and local education and public health officials should work closely together to make decisions on school operations</p>	<p>Temporary Continuous/Remote Learning for an entire school building or district for up to 14 days may be requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please contact the Department of Education by submitting your information via the CASA system.</li> <li>• Only the Departments of Education and Public Health can make this determination and provide temporary authorization to move to 100% online or remote learning.</li> </ul>

**Situation Specific Guidelines**

Classrooms

- A physical distance of 6ft between students should be maintained as much as possible, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained, students should wear face coverings. For situations where groups of students are seated at tables, each group of students should be 6ft apart from one another.
- Desks should face in one direction to avoid direct face to face contact between students. For furniture where students are seated in groups, such as tables or lab benches, having students seated on one side or opposite corners from one another can reduce face to face contact.
- Limit to the extent possible sharing of surfaces, supplies or equipment, including students passing materials back and forth to one another.
- Students should be assigned seats for all classes. Students that have multiple classes in one room should not change seats between classes.
- Students working in small groups should be limited as much as possible. If students need to work in small groups, the groups should:
  - Consist of students seated near each other
  - Consist of the same students with no alternation between groups
  - Maintain 6ft distance from one another.
- The movement of students between rooms should be limited when possible, and rooms should be cleaned between groups of students. Potential methods to help limit the movement of students include:
  - Teachers rotating rooms rather than students

- Specialty teachers traveling between rooms rather than students go to the special use of block scheduling rather than traditional scheduling
- Restructuring elective courses into small groups to have multiple courses in one room.

### Cafeteria and Meals

- A physical distance of 6ft between students should be maintained as much as possible, and when a 6ft distance cannot be maintain between students, a 6ft distance should be maintained between tables.
- Students should wash their hands before and after meals.
- When possible, provide grab-and-go or individually plated meals.
- Self-service or buffet-style meals should not be used, or if this is not an option, a staff member should serve food rather than students serving themselves.
- Disposable silverware and dishes should be used when possible and these items should be distributed to students rather than in a communal space for students to self-serve.
- The number of students gathered together at one time should be a limited as possible. Methods to reduce the number of students gathered at one time include:
  - Staggering meal periods
  - Serving meals in classrooms
  - Utilizing additional spaces for meals.
- Cafeterias and other meal spaces should be cleaned between groups of students, and cleaning times should be accounted for in student's schedules.

### Buses and Transportation

- A physical distance of 6ft between students on the bus should be maintained as much as possible, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained students should wear face coverings. Some methods to aid social distancing on buses include:
  - Considering additional routes
  - Seating siblings together
  - Re-examining transportation zones
  - Staggering arrival and dismissal times.
- Students and drivers should be assigned to one route, and students should have assigned seats on the bus.
- Schools should reduce or eliminate busing students between school buildings as much as possible.
- Buses should be cleaned at the end of each route.

### Physical Activity

- Physical education classes and recess schedules should be reorganized to allow for smaller classes sizes and as much physical distancing as possible.
- Physical education and recess should be held outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting.

- The use of shared equipment should be reduced or eliminated as much as possible, and when shared equipment is used it should be cleaned between classes. Playground equipment, particularly high touch surfaces, should be cleaned between groups of students.
- Games and activities that require close guarding, or contact between players should be avoided.
- Schools should consider eliminating the use of locker rooms, and have students participate in their street clothes. Parents should be advised that student clothing should be appropriate for the weather, allow full movement, and safe participation in physical education. If locker rooms are used they should be cleaned between groups of students, and students should be assigned lockers that allow for physical distancing between other students.
- Students should wash their hands before and after physical education or recess.

### Student Health and Nursing

- Health offices should have separate spaces for students ill with COVID-19 symptoms, and students ill with other symptoms or with routine medical needs, such as daily medications. The COVID-19 area should have adequate ventilation, a separate entrance than the general health office, and consideration should be given to spaces with an exterior door so students do not need to walk through the building to exit.
- Students with COVID-19 symptoms should remain in the COVID-19 area of the health office until they are picked up, and should wear a face covering as long as it does not impair their breathing.
- The COVID-19 area should be cleaned after each student or group of students leave, and at least daily.
- Schools should implement plans to reduce the number of unnecessary visits to the health office, and reduce the overall flow and congestion in the office. Some methods include:
  - Training additional staff in basic first aid
  - Implementing a scheduling system for the health office
  - Having staff call ahead before sending students to the health office.

### Shared Spaces (Hallways, Restrooms, Libraries, etc.)

- The number of students in common spaces at one time should be limited as much as possible. Some methods to reduce the number of students in common spaces at one time include:
  - Staggering passing periods between classes
  - Having teachers rotate rooms rather than students
  - Scheduling and staggering restroom breaks.
- Staff should monitor students in hallways to ensure students are following social distancing guidelines and are not congregating.
- Remove unnecessary furniture to discourage students from congregating, or place furniture to align with social distancing guidelines.
- Consider making hallways one-way to reduce close contact between students.

- Consider eliminating the use of lockers, or assigning lockers along with staggered passing periods between classes to allow for social distancing between students at lockers. Lockers should also be included in daily cleaning.
- Consider additional cleaning of restrooms during the school day, and at least at the end of each school day.

### Music and Other Specialty Classes

- Specialty classes such as music, art, computers or laboratory classes may require additional considerations.
- When possible, the classwork for these classes should be done in the students' primary classroom rather than students traveling to a specialty room. When a specialty room is necessary the room should be cleaned between classes.
- For music classes, each class should be kept as small as possible to allow for additional distancing of 10 to 12ft between students, particularly for band and choir classes. Larger spaces such as gymnasiums and auditoriums or outdoor lessons should be considered when feasible. Students should wear face coverings while signing, or playing instruments that are not played with their mouth.
- Instruments and other equipment should not be shared between students, and equipment should be cleaned after each use if it is shared.

### Athletics

- Please follow the guidance from the appropriate athletic association, such as the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Association, related to COVID-19 procedures for athletic teams. If additional questions arise, please contact the Black Hawk County Health Department.

### Coping and Resilience

- Consider providing information for staff as well as age-appropriate education about COVID-19 for students.
- Encourage staff and students to take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media if they are feeling overwhelmed or distressed.
- Promote staff and students eating health, exercising, getting sleep, and finding time to unwind.
- Encourage staff and students to talk to people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
- Consider posting signage on mental health resources such as school counselors or Your Life Iowa.