

## COVID 19: Schools Returning to On-Site Instruction

Zenith continues to support our customers as we all work to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. To help address the unique needs specific to returning to on-campus instruction, our team of experts have specifically selected the resources in this document to assist school administrators while planning and preparing to safely operate. This information will help K-12, non-public, and higher learning institutions protect students, teachers, staff, and their families. We support your efforts to prevent the spread of illness while conducting the essential business of educating others as communities throughout the United States reopen.

Our experts are available to help you find creative solutions to manage and educate personnel during these challenging times. Safety and Human Resource experts are also ready through Zenith Solution Center<sup>®</sup> to answer questions specific to your unique situation.



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# GENERAL GUIDANCE and CONSIDERATIONS

## 1. General Measures

Establish and continue to communicate with local and state authorities to determine current requirements and safety measures in your community.

- Collaborate with other schools and school partners in your region, including county office of education and/or local school board administration.
- Regularly review updated guidance from local and state agencies.
- Establish written worksite-specific COVID-19 Prevention Plan at every facility, perform a comprehensive risk assessment of all work areas and tasks. Designate a person at each school to implement the Plan.
- Promote healthy personal hygiene practices.
- Face coverings in accordance with CDC guidelines and your city, county, and state municipalities.
- Increase cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
- Implement distancing inside and outside classroom.
- Limit sharing materials, desks, and supplies
- Train all staff and educate families.
- Check signs and symptoms students, staff, and visitors.
- Plan for when a staff member, child, or visitor becomes sick.
- Consider suspending or modifying use of site resources that necessitate sharing or touching items. Examples: Drinking fountains, playground equipment, common classroom supplies.

## 2. Personal Hygiene Practices

- Teach students and remind staff to use tissue to wipe their nose and to cough/sneeze inside a tissue or their elbow.
- Students and staff should wash their hands frequently throughout the day, including before and after eating; coughing or sneezing; attending classes where they handle shared items, such as outside recreation, art, and shop; and before and after using the restroom.
- Students and staff should wash hands for 20 seconds with soap. Soap products do not need to be marketed as “antimicrobial” to be effective.
- Staff should model and practice handwashing. For example, for lower grade levels, use bathroom time as an opportunity to reinforce healthy habits and monitor proper handwashing.
- Students and staff should use fragrance-free hand sanitizer when handwashing is not practicable. Sanitizer should be rubbed into hands until completely dry. (Note: Frequent handwashing is more effective than the use of hand sanitizers.)
- A minimum of a 60% ethyl alcohol-based hand sanitizer is preferred and should be used when there is the potential of unsupervised use by children. Isopropyl hand sanitizers are more toxic when absorbed into the skin and should be avoided.
- Children under age 9 should only use hand sanitizer under adult supervision. Call Poison Control at 800-222-1222 if accidentally consumed.
- Consider portable handwashing stations throughout a site and near classrooms to minimize movement and congregations in bathrooms.
- Develop routines enabling students and staff to regularly wash their hands at staggered intervals.
- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, tissues, no-touch trashcans, face coverings, and hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethyl alcohol for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer.
- Recommend that all students and staff be immunized each autumn against influenza unless otherwise advised by treating physician due to personal medical conditions.

### 3. Face Coverings

- All faculty, staff, and students should wear [face coverings](#) in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- Face coverings should have two or more layers of breathable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps.
- Hands should be washed before putting on and after taking off face coverings. Face coverings should not be touched while being worn.
- Answers to frequently asked questions about [Cloth Face Coverings for Children During COVID-19](#).
- Refer to your local city, county, and state municipalities for guidelines involving face coverings.
- Employers should provide and ensure staff use face coverings in accordance with CDC.
- Equip buses and entry points to the school with extra, unused face coverings for students and staff who may have forgotten to bring one.

### 4. Teacher and Staff Safety

- Take temperatures and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms daily.
- Maintain safe physical distancing.
- Use face coverings.
- Provide options such as remote work for staff at higher risk or staff who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk.
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet separation at staff meetings, training, and other activities that cannot be conducted virtually.
- Minimize gatherings in staff rooms and break rooms.

### 5. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation

- Staff should [clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces at school and on buses at least daily and, as practical, frequently throughout the day by trained custodial staff.
- Buses should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily and after transporting any individual who is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Drivers should be supplied with disinfecting wipes and disposable gloves.
- Limit use of shared objects and equipment such as toys, games, art supplies, and other common classroom materials.
- When choosing disinfecting products, use those approved on the [EPA approved list “N”](#) for use against COVID-19. Always follow product instructions, guidelines, and proper personal protective equipment.
- Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene: A [CDC Toolkit](#) to aid school administrators in informing and promoting practices with students, teachers, staff, and the community. It includes:
  - Posters and handouts in English and Spanish.
  - Detailed guides in English and Spanish.
  - Information to reduce the spread of germs at schools.
  - Importance of everyday actions.
  - Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in classrooms, offices, and common spaces.
- Make available and encourage use of handwashing stations or hand sanitizer.

## **6. Physical Distancing and Avoiding Sharing**

- Maximize space on buses between fellow students and between students and driver. Also, open windows to the greatest extent possible.
- Minimize contact between students, staff, and families at drop off, pick up and during the school day.
- Stagger arrival and drop off times and locations.
- Implement health screenings of students and staff upon arrival at school.
- To reduce possibilities for infection, keep students in the same space and in small groups as much as is practicable. This includes for recess and lunch breaks.
- Consider ways to keep teachers with one group of students for the whole day. For secondary schools, plan for ways to reduce mixing among groups and minimizing contact.
- Maximize space in classrooms so that desks are six feet apart between each student and teachers. Minimize face-to-face seating and use partitions between desks as practicable.
- Activities that involve singing must only take place outdoors, and adequate distancing should be observed.
- Implement procedures for turning in assignments to minimize contact.
- Limit nonessential visitors to the school.
- Establish more ways to enter and exit campus. Stagger recess and lunch breaks to reduce congregating in hallways.
- Serve meals outside or in individual classrooms to reduce congregating in cafeterias. Avoid buffet or family-style meals.
- Keep children's belongings separated by supplying individual containers/cubbies and labeling the container.
- Have adequate supplies to further reduce the need to share materials.

## **7. Training Staff and Families**

- Train all staff and provide educational materials to families on the following COVID-19 safety actions:
  - Enhanced sanitation practices.
  - Physical distancing guidelines.
  - Proper use, removal and washing of face coverings.
  - Screening practices.
  - How COVID-19 is spread.
  - COVID-19 specific symptom identification.
  - The school's plan and procedures to follow when children and adults become sick at school.
  - The school's plan and procedures to protect workers from COVID-19 illness.
- Consider conducting training and education virtually, or if in-person, ensure safe physical distance is maintained.

## **8. Recognizing COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms**

- Actively encourage staff and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home. Develop policies that encourage sick staff and students to stay home.
- Implement screening procedures for all staff and students entering the facility.
- Conduct visual wellness checks of all students or establish procedures for parents to monitor at home. If checking temperatures, use a no-touch thermometer.
- Document/track incidents of possible COVID-19 exposure and notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately.
- Policies should not penalize students and families for missing class.

## **9. When Someone Is Sick**

- Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.
- Establish procedures to arrange for safe transport home or to a healthcare facility as appropriate when an individual is exhibiting the following COVID-19 symptoms:
  - Fever.
  - Cough.

- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Chills.
- Headache.
- Muscle pain.
- Additional [CDC defined symptoms](#).
- Notify local health officials immediately of any positive case of COVID-19. Follow health officials' guidelines.
- Close off areas used by individual suspected of being infected with the virus and do not use until adequately cleaned and disinfected.
- Advise sick staff members and students not to return until they have met [CDC criteria](#) to discontinue home isolation.
- Ensure students, including those with disabilities, have access to instruction when out of class as required by federal and state laws.

## 10. Maintaining Healthy Operations

- Monitor staff absenteeism and have a roster of available trained back-up staff.
- Monitor the types of illnesses and symptoms among students and staff to help isolate them promptly as needed.
- Designate a staff liaison or liaisons to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. These individuals should be known to your employees and families.
- Maintain a communication system that allow staff and families to self-report symptoms and receive prompt notifications of exposures and closures.
- Consult with local health departments if routine testing is being considered by a local agency.
- Support students who are at higher risk of severe illness or who cannot safely distance from household contacts at higher risk by providing virtual learning or independent study.

## 11. Considerations for Reopening

The American Academy of Pediatrics has [outlined](#) why and how schools should safely bring children back to the classroom. The guide offers additional considerations and possible solutions to help control the spread of the virus from classroom changes to buses, hallways, playgrounds, and more. Listed below are additional resources from the CDC, American Association of Administrators, Federation of Teachers, and other reputable sources:

- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, [School Reopening Planning](#).
- American Association of School Administrators', [Guiding Principals for Reopening Schools](#).
- American Federation of Teachers, [Guidelines for Safely Reopening](#).
- Considerations for K-12 School Administrators regarding [Testing for COVID-19](#) in school settings.
- OSHA's, [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#).
- Resources from the National Association of School Psychologists on [helping children cope](#) with changes resulting from COVID-19.
- CDC [information](#) outlines symptoms, testing, and what to do if you are sick.

Several jurisdictions and agencies have posted a framework, criteria, and guidance for the reopening of in-person learning. Here are a few examples:

- Cal/OSHA COVID-19, [Industry Guidance for Schools and School-Based Programs](#).
- [Florida Department of Education Resources](#), including [#COVID-19 Stops With Me](#) toolkit with fliers and presentations.
  - Current Emergency Orders.
  - Approved Reopening Plans.
- San Diego County Office of Education posted:
  - [School Reopening Plans](#).
  - [Staying Mentally and Emotionally Healthy](#).
- Sweetwater Union High School District, [Reopening Schools Plan for Distance & In-Person Learning](#).
- Riverside County Office of Education, [Planning Guidebook for the Safe Opening of Schools](#).
- Eastern Camden County Regional School District, [A phased approach to reopening](#).



# RESOURCES FOR ACADEMIC SECTORS

## 1. Higher Learning

Institutes of higher learning pose additional challenges for preventing COVID-19 infections. Student housing, social situations, recreational activities, shared dining, and students from diverse geographic areas are unique considerations for exposure. The following can help prepare for and address these risks:

- [Guiding Principles for Reopening Campus](#) (University of Arizona).
- [Reentry Plan: Returning to Classrooms](#) (University of Arizona).
- The Path Back to Campus: [Test, Trace, Treat](#) (University of Arizona).
- CDC's Guidance for [Colleges, Universities, and Higher Learning](#):
  - [Testing, Screening, and Outbreak Response](#) at Institutes of Higher Learning.
  - [Case Investigation and Contact Tracing](#).
  - Other [Considerations](#).

## 2. K – 12

Thoughtful consideration and planning must go into reopening schools. The resources below include guidelines for operation, screening and testing, infection response, and considerations for employee health. There are also links to mental and emotional health resources, including how to speak to students to reduce anxiety and help them with coping and understanding:

- American Academy of Pediatrics: Guide to [In-Person School During COVID-19](#) (also in Spanish).
- National Association of School Psychologists: [Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19](#), including resources in 10 different languages.
- CDC offers guidance on various relevant topics, including:
  - [Operational Considerations for Schools](#).
  - [Operating schools during COVID-19](#).
  - [Schools and Child Care Programs](#).
  - [Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff](#).
  - What [School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools](#) need to know about COVID-19.
  - [Cleaning, Disinfection and Hand Hygiene](#) in schools.
  - [Guidance for Child Care Programs](#) that remain open.
  - Guidance on the [Use of Masks in Schools](#)
  - Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for [SARS-CoV-2 Testing](#)
  - [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms](#)
- [Example](#) from Escondido Unified School District:
  - Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan.
  - Safe School Reopening Plan (also in Spanish).




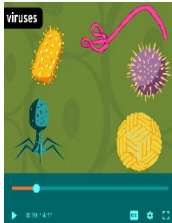
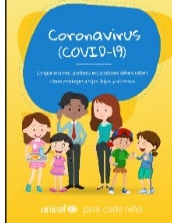

### 3. NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The following resources, some of which are specific to independent schools, include valuable information about reopening, guidelines for operation, screening and testing, infection response, and employee health. There are also links to mental and emotional health resources:

- National Association of Independent Schools [Comprehensive Guidance](#) and Reopening Considerations.
- National Association of Independent Schools [Community Resource Guide](#) for all things related to COVID-19, including in-depth articles and webinar recordings.
- Independent Schools Guide: A robust [collection of resources](#) of specific for independent schools.
- American Academy of Pediatrics [guide to returning safely back to school](#) (*also in Spanish*).
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials [School Reopening Planning](#).
- National Association of School Psychologists: [Helping Children Cope](#) With Changes Resulting From COVID-19, including resources in 10 different languages.
- National Association of Episcopal Schools COVID-19 Updated: [What Episcopal Schools Need to Know](#).
- San Diego County Office of Education [Resources for Staying Mentally and Emotionally Healthy](#).
- Vaccination Communication Strategies from National Institutes of Health: Applying Behavioral and Social Science to Address Vaccine Hesitancy and Foster Vaccine Confidence.
- Centers for Disease Control offers guidance on various relevant topics, including:
  - [Operational Considerations for Schools](#).
  - [Operating schools during COVID-19](#).
  - [Schools and Child Care Programs](#).
  - [Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff](#).
  - What [School Nutrition Professionals and Volunteers at Schools](#) need to know about COVID-19.
  - [Cleaning, Disinfection and Hand Hygiene](#) in schools.
  - [Guidance for Child Care Programs](#) that remain open.
  - Guidance on the [Use of Masks in Schools](#).
  - Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for [SARS-CoV-2 Testing](#).
  - [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms](#).
- [Example](#) from Escondido Unified School District:
  - Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan.
  - Safe School Reopening Plan (*also in Spanish*).
- Child Care Facilities [Social and Physical Distancing Guidance and Healthy Practices](#) collaborations by the California Department of Social Service and Department of Education.



# GENERAL RESOURCES for STAFF, STUDENTS, and FAMILIES

<p><b>Checklist for K-12 School Administrators</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Pandemic Flu Checklist for K-12 School Administrators</a>  <a href="#">Child Care and Preschool Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist</a></p> 
<p><b>Pre-K and Child Development Considerations</b></p>	<p>Guidance for Child Care Programs that remain open as outlined by the CDC  <a href="#">Childcare Guidance</a></p>
<p><b>COVID-19 Vaccination Communication</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive guide from the National Institutes of Health about foundational considerations and <a href="#">Applying Behavioral and Social Science to Address Vaccine Hesitancy and Foster Vaccine Confidence</a></p>
<p><b>Calming Meditations</b></p>	<p>Combat anxiety associated with isolation, separation, and other COVID-19 related mental health effects with free meditations, movement exercises, music, and <a href="#">Calm Kids</a> resources</p>
<p><b>Symptomatic Decision Tree</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Decision Tree</a></p>
<p><b>COVID-19 Prevention Flyer</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Prevention Flyer</a></p>
<p><b>Wellness &amp; Family</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Helping Children Cope with Coronavirus Response</a>  <a href="#">10 Tips for Talking About COVID-19 With Your Kids (PBS)</a>  <a href="#">Dealing with Coronavirus Anxiety: Expert Tips</a>  <a href="#">Optum San Diego Access &amp; Crisis Line (24/7)</a>  <a href="#">Effects of COVID-19 on College Students' Mental Health</a></p>  
<p><b>U.S. Department of Education Resources</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Resources for schools, students, and families</a> including CARES Act Emergency Relief, remote learning resources, resources for learning at home, waivers and flexibility, flexibility under the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program</p>
<p><b>Students With Special Needs &amp; Behavioral Challenges</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Autism Friendly Bridge Back to School Learning Resource</a>  <a href="#">Help for Autistic Children During COVID-19</a></p> <p>Abstract study on <a href="#">Separation Problems and Anxiety</a> related to returning to school during a pandemic and <a href="#">Association of Aggressive Behavior</a></p> 
<p><b>Exposure and Contact Tracing Flyer</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Florida Department of Education Exposure and Contact Flyer</a></p>
<p><b>COVID-19 Fact Sheets, 30+ Languages</b></p>	<p><a href="#">In Collaboration with Harvard Health Publishing: Fact Sheet</a></p>
<p><b>Suicide Prevention During and After the Pandemic</b></p>	<p><a href="#">San Diego County Suicide Prevention During a Pandemic</a></p>
<p><b>Teen Mental Health Care Tips and Apps for phones</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Guide to Mental Health</a></p>
<p><b>NEED MORE HELP?</b></p>	<p><a href="#">Zenith Solution Center</a> – <i>Ask the Safety Expert</i> and <i>Ask the HR Expert</i></p>