# Back to School RI:

# *Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools*

**Released June 19, 2020**

**Updated August 25, 2020**

**An Important Update to Our Educators, Parents, Students, and the Rhode Island Community:**

On behalf of Governor Gina M. Raimondo, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), and the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), we wanted to once again thank you for your commitment to helping us ensure we are fully prepared for a safe and successful return to school in September.

It is hard to believe how much has changed since we first announced the closure of schools this past March. We continue to address the realities associated with COVID-19 and how we all have adjusted to new ways of doing things, while helping to minimize the spread of the illness. We have come together to collectively plan a return to school that is very important for our students, those who support and teach them, and our state.

From the very beginning we have said that we would always be guided by the science, research, and the latest data from local and national experts, with a dedication to the health and safety of all Rhode Islanders.

With this in mind, we have updated the **Back to School RI**: ***Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools***, first released in June. This document outlines what is new, including best practices and the most current information. We are thankful to our education and community leaders who have reached out with advice and thoughtful questions to help shape this recent guidance.

As we rapidly approach the September 14 in-person return to school for students, we stand together to support and guide you in this critically important endeavor. And we are prepared to further adapt along the way.

In closing, thank you for your hard work, creativity, and perhaps most importantly, the determination needed for a safe and successful school reopening.

Sincerely,

Nicole E. Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH
Director
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Angélica Infante-Green
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# Rhode Island's Approach to Reopening Schools:

## Vision and Context

Since Governor Gina Raimondo and Commissioner Angélica Infante-Green announced that school buildings are closing in Rhode Island on March 13, 2020, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), along with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) and community and school leaders have been preparing for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year (SY20-21). The core principles for this process are to provide the highest quality educational experiences for all children while implementing the best strategies to ensure the health and safety for our students and the entire educational community.

Understanding of COVID-19 and related best practices is constantly evolving through better data, research, and examples from other countries. With that in mind, RIDE and RIDOH are committed to leveraging the latest public health information and best education practices to deliver innovative solutions and partnerships that ensure a safe reopening on all Pre K-12 schools. RIDE is providing three documents to help school systems plan for reopening for the 2020-21 school year:

| Document | Purpose |
|---|---|
| Guidance Document | This guidance document provides information on the requirements that school systems will use to plan for reopening. This document is intended to guide school systems as they develop in-depth plans in preparation for next school year. |
| Planning Template | A planning template that all public schools are required to complete and submit to RIDE, using information provided in this guidance document. |
| Playbook for Schools | Updated: The Outbreak Response Protocols: Prek-12 includes information on: the criteria that makes an individual a probable case, determining close contact in schools, and protocols to respond to a symptomatic person in schools. |

**In recognition of the uncertainty, the State has required all schools to prepare for different scenarios, in accordance with the guidelines established below. RIDE and RIDOH will continue to update this document, and others, as more public health information and guidance become available.**

Public schools were required to submit their plans to RIDE by July 17, and RIDE has given feedback to each school on an ongoing basis through July 28. Each Local Educational Agency (LEA) was required to make its plan available to families and post it on their schools' website no later than July 31.

While this document is written for public LEAs, private schools were also required to complete school reopening plans that are in alignment with the provided guidance and template documents to ensure the health and safety of their school community. Private schools have been offered the ability to have their plans reviewed by RIDE staff and they should be able to produce plans upon request by RIDOH if a positive case or outbreak occurs. Each private school is also required to have its plan available on its website by July 31.

## Guiding Principles

To support all stakeholders in reopening schools, RIDE will continue to follow five guiding principles for the planning, decision-making, and execution of returning to school:

1) **We will put safety first.** We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.
2) **We will be transparent.** We will share what we know and what we do not know. We will be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.
3) **We will be equitable.** We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators, especially those most impacted by educational inequities and COVID-19. We will remember that equitable does not mean equal, and we will strive to give students, families, educators, and communities what they need, knowing that our communities have been hit by the virus at different magnitudes.
4) **We will listen.** We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to understand the realities on the ground and develop and share creative solutions.
5) **We will be decisive.** Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We will need to be flexible and nimble, and we will adapt quickly as variables on the ground change.

## Preparing for Multiple Reopening Scenarios

Given the uncertainty of the spread of the disease and impact on the State and its different communities, schools have prepared for multiple reopening scenarios ranging from limited to full in-person instruction. **For planning purposes, LEAs were required to submit a plan that covers each of three specific scenarios:**

- **Limited In-Person**: In this scenario, vulnerable populations are prioritized. Additionally, some elementary students or students in transition grades return for in-person instruction.
- **Partial In-Person**: Updated 8/25/20: In this scenario, elementary grades, transition grades, and vulnerable populations should be prioritized for in-person learning. Elementary students in stable groups/pods should still be back in-person every day. Middle schools in stable groups/pods may also return five days a week in-person. If stable groups/pods cannot be maintained (high school and possibly middle school), then 50% of the students should be participating in in-person learning at any given time. The remaining students should be participating in distance learning.
- **Full In-Person**: Updated 8/25/20: In this scenario, schools resume 100% in-person instruction for all students. If an LEA cannot bring all students back in-person every day, they can select to bring their middle and high school students back in a rotating, hybrid schedule so that all of their students return back in-person, just not every day. On the days that students are not in-person, they will be participating in distance learning. Students in

elementary school must be prioritized to be back in-person every day in the full in-person and partial in-person scenarios.

**Planning for each scenario must incorporate some distance learning**; Updated 8/25/20: LEAs will have to determine a plan for high quality distance learning for students who are unable to return in-person, those that must remain home for short periods of time due to illness or quarantine, and those whose parents choose to keep them home for distance learning.

## Ongoing Communication and Support

To support LEAs in the development and implementation of plans, RIDE maintained a point-of-contact structure that allowed every LEA in Rhode Island to have a designated individual who responded to questions and provided direct support.

RIDE initiated regional LEA leader meetings to share ongoing information. RIDE continued to host meetings and webinars with LEA leaders to discuss common areas of need. RIDE has also provided support during the review and ongoing development of plans beyond the initial submission deadline by hosting regional meetings with LEA leaders that provided information, responded to and gathered questions, and addressed concerns.

In addition to direct outreach, RIDE will continue to provide ongoing supplemental information to assist school systems in successful planning. This will include planning frameworks, FAQ documents, detailed guidance to support instruction, mental health resources, transportation, and other critical areas that must be addressed prior to reopening.

Critical to successful communication will be the role school systems play in engaging their various stakeholders to develop, communicate, and implement their reopening plans. RIDE released guidance on how school systems should initiate system-wide Reopening Schools Committees. Additionally, RIDE released guidance on how school systems should form these committees, which can be found here. The committee should consider the following:

- Determine a leader with single-point accountability, meaning there is one person who is ultimately responsible.
- Ensure a diverse group of perspectives and skill sets are represented. Key stakeholder groups may include, but are not limited to, central office staff, Director of Maintenance, Head of Human Resources, Special Education Directors, Technology Director, Principal(s), Certified and Non-certified Staff, Union Presidents, parents, School Committee Chairperson, Director of Food Services, a behavioral health worker, and a school nurse.
- Include a representative from each school in the district, or, at minimum, at least one from each educational level (i.e., elementary, middle, high).
- Consider additional stakeholder groups that need to be consulted with, but not necessarily serve as standing members of the committee (e.g. transportation, before/after school care).

Each LEA plan had to include information in its reopening plans about how the LEA will communicate new protocols to families, students, and staff. Plans also had to include information about how training will be provided to all students and staff prior to school reopening and throughout the school year. This targeted education will be needed for all groups to ensure that students, families, and

educators know what is expected of them as they successfully return to the school community. In addition, signs and other information inside and outside school buildings can be a helpful tool in reminding all individuals of required procedures.

## Reopening Decisions

Updated 8/25/20: The state will provide information about the reopening scenario based upon the 5 Metrics for Reopening. LEAs may reopen in varying scenarios based upon their community outbreak level. In coordination with RIDOH, the Governor and Commissioner will make a decision by the end of August and it will be communicated accordingly.

# School Reopening Guidance:

## About the School Reopening Guidance

This document provides a roadmap for reopening Rhode Island schools. Each section outlines critical information to assist in the development of plans for reopening.

In each of these sections, guidance and requirements to safely operate schools for the different reopening scenarios that schools might face are outlined. It identifies policies that are required to safely reopen and gives recommendations for implementation that may differ based on each LEA's context. For some areas, the requirements will be consistent for all different in-person learning scenarios, while other areas will have different requirements and recommendations based on how much in-person learning will occur. For those areas, plans will need to include how they would implement the different requirements.

This guidance document is based on the most up-to-date public health recommendations given the evidence. It does not, however, constitute medical advice, and will be revised in real time as the epidemic evolves.

**As more health information has become available, RIDE has updated this guidance accordingly to keep all stakeholders informed.**

## Distance Learning

**Distance learning means any curriculum, materials, and teaching occurs during the school day but not in the school building.** This can include physical materials, online materials, and digital platforms. Distance learning curriculum and activities will continue to meet the expectations of grade-level standards and will be designed to meet the needs of all students, including multilingual learners and those who are differently abled.

Distance learning must be part of the plans for reopening in each reopening scenario. At all points along the continuum, a hybrid of in-person and distance learning may take place, and schools must be prepared for this reality.

Updated 8/25/20: LEAs will have to determine a plan for high quality distance learning for students who are unable to return in-person, those that must remain home for short periods of time due to illness or quarantine, and those whose parents choose to keep them home for distance learning. Some possible examples are: live instruction where teachers are recorded while they are teaching for students to watch in real time and/or later in the day, designated virtual or distance learning teachers, and through a purchased distance learning vendor.

## Class and Group Size Limits

Schools will fundamentally look different when students and staff return this fall. Class sizes may be reduced, opportunities for students to socialize will be more limited, and new health measures and cleaning protocols will need to be implemented. The information below outlines class and group size limits, organized by each in-person reopening scenario and with differentiated information for elementary, middle, and high schools, as appropriate.

LEA plans included approaches to meeting the requirements for each scenario below. LEAs also considered how to maximize and prepare space in buildings to meet health and safety requirements.

### Full In-person Reopening Scenario

- Elementary and Middle Schools: These students will be required to maintain stable groups of up to 30 (analogous to the pod method for summer camp and childcare). This capacity includes both students and staff. Stable groups help to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. It is still expected that individuals within stable groups maintain as much physical distance as possible. Stable groups are designed to spend all or most of the day together as a group. Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod.
    - Updated 8/25/20: It should be noted that if middle schools function like a high school, and cannot maintain a stable group, then high school guidelines may be used instead.

  High Schools: Recognizing that it is more difficult to establish and maintain stable groups in a high school schedule, more than one approach is possible. Stable groups are recommended and should be maintained whenever possible (i.e., students should stay in the same classroom and teachers should rotate rooms whenever possible). If stable groups are not possible, high school students must maintain six feet of physical distance.

Groups in Larger Spaces: Updated 8/25/20: For all grades, the number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space. When more than one stable group is in the same space, the stable group should remain together and there should be 14 feet between the stable groups. In high schools, occupancy will be based on 6 feet of physical distance between individuals. It is also recommended to maintain 14 feet of distance between tables in cafeterias, treating the table as a stable group/pod.

For outdoor spaces, there is also no set maximum group size. The number of students/staff allowed is again based on the physical distancing requirements within stable groups and between stable groups.

For all grades, the use of partitions or other dividers to create separation between students or groups is recommended. Any partition being used is most effective if it is taller than the height of students and teachers. Separation reduces the risk of transmission across groups.
Updated 8/25/20: If partitions are used, they are in addition to, not in lieu of cloth face coverings and social distancing. The presence of partitions may not be a substitute for physical distance of 6

feet in determining close contacts of a confirmed case. Case investigations take into account the height of the partition, symptoms of the infected person, and distance between others and the infected person. In most instances, those who have been within 6 feet of a confirmed case for greater than 15 minutes will be deemed a close contact regardless of the presence of partitions.

**Staff:** Updated 8/25/20: Every effort should be made for social distancing, regardless of whether or not you are in a stable group. All staff must wear face masks.

## Partial In-person Reopening Scenario

- **Elementary**: These students will be required to maintain stable groups of up to 30 (analogous to the pod method for summer camp and childcare). This capacity includes both students and staff. Stable groups help to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. It is still expected that individuals within stable groups maintain as much physical distance as possible. Stable groups are designed to spend all or most of the day together as a group. Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod. Elementary students should be prioritized for in-person learning every day.
- **Middle and High Schools:** Middle and High Schools can select which of the following requirements they will follow:
  - Stable groups (up to 30 people) should be maintained whenever possible (i.e., student groups should stay the same and teachers rotate whenever possible); or,
  - Updated 8/25/20: If not able to maintain stable groups, approximately 50% of the students in a middle or high school can be present in person at any one time. LEAs may wish to prioritize certain groups or grades to be in-person every day (ex. vulnerable groups, transition grades, CTE programs), while others are participating in a hybrid model.

**Groups in Larger Spaces:** Updated 8/25/20: Same as full in-person.

**Staff:** Updated 8/25/20: Same as full in-person.

## Limited In-person Reopening Scenario

- **Elementary**: These students will be required to maintain stable groups of 15 or fewer in classrooms. This capacity includes both students and staff. Stable groups help to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus. It is still expected that individuals within stable groups maintain as much physical distance as possible. Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod.
- **Middle and High Schools:** Middle and High Schools can pick which of the following two requirements they follow:
  - Smaller stable groups (maximum of 15) should be maintained whenever possible (i.e., student groups should stay the same and teachers rotate whenever possible);
  - If not able to maintain stable groups, approximately 25% of the students in a high school can be in person at any one time.

Groups in Larger Spaces: Updated 8/25/20: Same as full in-person but with fewer number of students in schools to begin with.

Staff: Updated 8/25/20: Same as full in-person.

## Classroom Layouts and Use of School Spaces

Guidance in this section is the same for all three in-person reopening scenarios. It is important to follow and maintain physical distancing strategies and cleaning protocols. LEA plans will outline the designs that will be used in the LEA to ensure safe movement around buildings, cleaning protocols, classroom layout options, and the meal procedures and spaces that will be implemented.

- General Spacing and Movement: Stable groups must occupy consistent space as much as possible. This means each stable group uses the same classroom every day, the same entrance every day (if possible), the same hallways, bathrooms, and other areas of the school building. When shared space is used by multiple stable groups or by high school students who are not in stable groups, disinfecting must occur in between the times when stable groups or groups of high school students use the space. Equipment and materials in shared spaces and in classrooms should not change from one student to another. Whenever possible, shared objects should be limited to sharing within that stable group and disinfected between users.
- Classroom Layout: LEA Plans must include a design for general classroom layouts at elementary, middle, and high schools. The spacing of desks/tables should be separated 6 feet as much as possible. The largest classes should be held in the largest spaces. Schools should encourage converting non-traditional spaces into classrooms to create additional classroom spaces and encourage activities to be held outdoors whenever possible.
    - Assigned seating: During partial and limited in-person reopening scenarios, students must have assigned seats while in stable groups or smaller high school groups. Even during a full in-person reopening of school, teachers should have seating charts with assigned student seats.
    - Facing the same direction: To the extent possible, students should be seated so all students are facing forward, and not facing each other, to prevent the possible transmission of the virus. At a round table, this may mean sitting in a half moon shape to allow for physical distancing and students to face forward.
- Hallways: During reopening in the fall, outlining a plan for hallway use and minimizing congestion will be an important step in the planning process. LEA plans must include strategies such as staggered passing times or one-way traffic in hallways. Plans must include how lockers may be used to ensure continued social distancing.
- Bathrooms: During all reopening scenarios, bathrooms must be cleaned and disinfected frequently in line with CDC guidance.

  When possible, stable groups should be assigned to use the same bathroom which is cleaned and disinfected between uses by different groups. For example, each first-floor bathroom may be assigned to a specific set of students and each second-floor bathroom to a different set of students.

Updated 8/25/20: Plans should include protocols or strategies to ensure students don't congregate in the restrooms and that they wash their hands before exiting the bathroom.

- Dining/Cafeterias: For elementary and middle schools that have stable groups in place, lunch should take place in the same space as class activities when possible—likely in a classroom. When possible, outdoor dining is also encouraged.
    - LEA plans may propose an alternative to providing lunch in the same space as classroom activities. If the LEA proposes an alternative that would permit stable groups to share a larger space, cleaning and disinfecting must occur between stable-group use. If more than one stable group utilizes the same larger space for meals at the same time, a minimum distance of 14 feet must be maintained at all times between stable groups. When possible, outdoor dining is also encouraged.

Updated 8/25/20: LEAs do not really fit into the current general Reopening RI occupancy categories. There is not one set number for maximum allowable gathering size for indoor venues at schools. Thus, the number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space. When more than one stable group is in the same space, the stable group should remain together and there should be 14 feet between the stable groups. In high schools, occupancy will be based on 6 feet of physical distance between individuals. It is also recommended to maintain 14 feet of distance between tables in cafeterias, treating the table as a stable group/pod.

When possible, students should sit at least six feet apart and use partitions to create barriers between groups.. The use of partitions or other dividers to create separation between groups is recommended but does not substitute for physical distancing. Any partition being used is most effective when it is taller than the height of students. Separation reduces the risk of transmission across groups. If physical distancing can be maintained, barriers are not needed.

For outdoor spaces, there is also no set maximum group size. The number of students/staff allowed is again based on the physical distancing requirements within stable groups and between stable groups.

## Cleaning Surfaces and School Areas

Consistent cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation practices reduce the potential transmission of the virus. Schools are required to adhere to CDC guidance for schools regarding the cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces and spaces, and to the general CDC guidance on the process of cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting surfaces.

Updated 8/25/20: LEAs should utilize RIDE's Facility and Physical Plant Guidance when making decisions regarding HVAC systems.

Surfaces that are frequently touched throughout the day should be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected multiple times per day or, for shared objects, between use. Coronavirus can survive on hard surfaces from hours to days. More aggressive cleaning routines are required to ensure a safe return to school for all. As it is more difficult to clean, sanitize, and disinfect porous surfaces (i.e.,

soft or plush materials), schools are advised to avoid using these items. Examples include bean bag chairs and stuffed animals.

Please see the below guidance that is applicable to all in-person reopening scenarios:

- **Frequently touched items:** Frequently touched surfaces, classroom objects, desks, and other equipment need to be cleaned frequently. For example, staff may choose to disinfect the classroom doorknob after daily drop-off, when children transition back to the classroom from another space or outdoor play, and after daily dismissal. If a school rotates groups through the gym or outdoor playground, the play equipment must be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected between uses by different groups. For situations where groups of students move between classrooms, such as in high schools, cleaning of the desks must take place between classes.
- Updated 8/25/20: Materials: The less sharing the better. School procedures should encourage students to only use their own materials. If materials such as books must be shared, they should be disinfected between student uses.
- **Hands-on Class Spaces**: Libraries, computer labs, art rooms, and other hands-on classrooms should be cleaned in between class periods. In high schools, where students may travel to different classrooms, desks and other objects should be cleaned between class periods.
- **Handwashing:** Schools must ensure that employees, students, and visitors have access to soap and water and/or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol at all times. Frequent handwashing must be practiced. Gloves are not required, except for custodial staff who are cleaning and in specific situations where more protective equipment is needed.
- **Water Usage:** Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (water fountains, ice machines, coffee pots) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize poor water quality, risk of Legionnaires' disease, and other diseases associated with stagnant water. If unable to ensure necessary cleaning of water systems, they should be temporarily shut off. Bottled water may be provided to students and staff. Water fountains that require physical contact (i.e. need to press a button to operate) are not recommended at this time. Contactless water-filling stations can be used. However, when possible, identify alternate methods for supplying drinking water.
- **Disinfectants:** Disinfectants are strong chemicals, and accidental exposure to these toxins can cause significant harm to anyone's health. It is essential that when using disinfectants, school facilities staff follow the manufacturer's directions and keep the products out of reach of students.
    - With the increased use of disinfectants, it is important to ensure ventilation systems operate properly and are able to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible. Keep windows and doors open and use fans and other methods when possible.
    - Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or children. For example, if a window is at the height where a child may access it and the window does not have screen, or a child has an identified allergy or asthma and symptoms may worsen with increased outdoor airflow, the window should not be open.

## Face Coverings

Updated 8/25/20: **As of July 29, 2020, the Governor, Commissioner, and RIDOH have decided that face coverings are required for all staff and K-12 students, at all times, even in stable group settings, and even when socially distanced (6+ feet apart).** Cloth face coverings are proven to mitigate virus transmission.

- Visitors are required to wear face coverings when inside a school building or interacting with students outdoors.
- Updated 8/25/20: Students must wear face coverings even when they are outdoors, and even in outside space that allows them to be 6+ feet apart.
    - If a mask break is needed, best practice is to be outside ensuring that students are and remain greater than six feet apart.
- Updated 8/25/20: When necessary and if available, educators may use clear face coverings to improve communication.
    - Face shields do not replace the requirement to wear a face covering.
- Cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than age two; anyone who has trouble breathing; or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Protective face coverings are not required for certain individuals, per CDC guidance, or for anyone for whom use of such face covering would be damaging to his or her health; who is developmentally unable to use such face covering, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a face mask; when a face covering would inhibit an activity of daily living (e.g. eating); or when a face covering would itself negatively impact the safety of an individual or lead to an increased risk of harm to others (e.g. near open flames).

Schools will need to procure extra face coverings for students and/or staff who do not have their own or who may forget them at home.

Updated 8/25/20: We urge schools to establish local policies around wearing face coverings. These policies should include information and education about the importance of wearing masks, that doing so is both for students' own protection and for the protection of others. Still, we recognize that some students will test the rules. In these cases where a student refuses to wear their face covering, we first recommend providing the student with a face covering if they do not have one. Next, clearly defined protocols should go into effect if the student still refuses to wear one. We cannot emphasize enough that policies must recognize a student's individual medical circumstance, not ostracize or punish a student, not add to trauma, or remove a student from access to learning.

Updated 8/25/20: Per new CDC guidance, bandanas and neck gaiters are not recommend. Cloth face coverings need to be at least two layers thick and should also fit snugly around the nose, mouth, and chin.

## Screening Students and Staff

Screening protocols for students and staff need to be developed and communicated to all parents, students, educators, and staff prior to beginning in-person instruction. Parents must screen students at home using a self-attestation form or an App. All students must stay home if they fail the screening prior to leaving for school. If a student screens positive for any COVID-19 symptoms, the student's parent/guardian should seek medical advice from the student's healthcare provider and inform the school of the student's absence.

Updated: LEAs are encouraged to work with their school communities to establish a reasonable system for collecting this information daily, supporting parents to submit the information since it provides an important check each day. However, students do not need to be isolated or sent home if the information is not collected, but LEAs should follow up with families to help them to understand the importance of providing this daily information.

- **Students:** Families will screen students at home using a self-attestation form or a web-based application (i.e. Crush COVID RI or self-attestation form). All students must stay home if they fail the screening prior to leaving for school. Families should consult with their physician and inform the school of the student's absence. If a student screens positive for any COVID-19 symptoms, the student's parent/guardian should seek medical advice from the student's healthcare provider and inform the school of the student's absence.
- **Staff:** Staff are required to complete a self-attestation form or web-based application such as Crush COVID RI prior to arriving at school or are required to be screened before entering the school building. When using self-attestation as a screening method, employers must request forms. If a staff member screens positive for any COVID-19 symptoms, the person should not come to, or enter, school, should inform a supervisor, and should seek medical advice from a healthcare provider.
- **Additional screening**: In addition to at-home screening, schools may also opt for on-site verbal symptom screening and/or temperature checks. For more information about temperature checks, visit the CDC website. This is highly recommended if a positive case is found within a school setting.

## School Schedules

Determining school schedules, including procedures for drop-off and pick-up times and handling visitors, plays an important role in navigating COVID-19 as schools reopen.

**LEAs must submit a sample schedule with the plan of how to approach all three in-person reopening scenarios.** Sample schedules should be for all different age groups and settings. Scheduling should consider policies around drop off, pick up, meals, passing times (such as between classes), and physical distancing protocols. Schools should consider drop-off and pick-up protocols that encourage physical distancing and limit gatherings of large groups in confined spaces.

Schedules for elementary, middle, and high schools will vary based on the details of reopening. School schedules will be different across schools, since each school has its own unique program type, physical space, and student and staff considerations.

Updated 8/25/20: Schools may wish to employ a staggered start to reopening to try out the reopening process and protocols while fewer students and staff are present. For instance, grades PreK-2 come back in-person week one, while the remaining grades begin with distance learning. Each week additional grades or populations are brought back for in-person learning until the school reaches its in-person scenario (limited, partial, or full). This type of start is comparable to a staggered kindergarten start.

### Full In-Person Reopening Scenario:

- Drop-off and pick-up procedures must follow CDC guidelines, including maintaining 14 feet of distance between stable groups and physical distancing of six feet whenever possible for any other individuals outside of a stable group.
- Staggered arrival times, assigning entrance and exit doors to stable groups, and assigning different drop-off points are examples LEAs can use when planning. Having school staff bring children to pick-up points, instead of parents entering buildings, is also recommended.

### Partial In-Person and Limited In-Person Scenarios:

Guidelines are the same for these scenarios, but plans must detail how those guidelines will be implemented given the other requirements of the scenario.

- If fewer students are able to return to school or stable group sizes are smaller, LEA plans must still address schools' schedules for all the same areas outlined above.
- Priority for in-person schedules should be for vulnerable populations and Prek-5 attending in-person every day in the partial model. LEAs may also wish to prioritize transition grades (i.e. kindergarten, 5th/6th depending on the district, and 9th grade) and special populations.
- Schools may consider a range of potential options when determining in-person school schedules:
    - Utilize schedules that alternate when groups of students are attending school in-person to help allow more students to experience some time engaging with in-person activities.
    - Consider alternating days or weeks, although this is not recommended for younger students. Schools might also consider specifying only certain grades for returning in person.
    - Establish morning and afternoon sessions, as long as cleaning and disinfecting can take place between sessions.

## School Visitors

To reduce the risk of exposure, limiting visitors in schools is generally encouraged. Schools may encourage only one parent/guardian to visit a building when possible and continue to utilize virtual communication options with families.

- **Full In-person re-opening scenario:** Visitors may enter the school building, but limits should still be considered. A 30-day log of all visitors is required, and must document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times. All visitors must wear face coverings.
- **Partial and Limited In-person Reopening Scenarios:** Visitors are not allowed, to the greatest extent possible.
    - Visitors necessary for drop off or pick up must wear face coverings.
    - Visitors must only enter and exit the school building via only one location.
    - A 30-day log of all visitors is required, and must document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times. It is recommended that the same adult drop off and pick up the child each day.
    -

## Busing and Student Transportation

**It will be necessary for all LEAs to consider multiple solutions for student transportation, and no one solution will work statewide given the unique circumstances of each district and school.** Each LEA will need to outline how it is going to address the transportation needs of its community.

For use of traditional school buses, the following required guidance must be followed for each of the three in-person reopening scenarios. To ensure student compliance with the health-and-safety guidelines for buses, additional bus monitors are strongly recommended for every bus.

Updated 8/25/20: RIDE released updated transportation guidance on 8/14/20.

Updated 8/25/20: In All Reopening Scenarios:

- All students on buses are required to wear masks (with the exception of children younger than age two and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance).
- Students using the bus are scheduled as a stable group, and the bus group is considered its own stable group.
- Hand sanitizer must be available and used when entering and exiting the bus.
- Students are screened for symptoms when getting on the bus. Options for screening include screening by parents prior to students boarding the bus.
- All students have assigned seats on the bus and ride the same bus to and from school.
- Students are seated to physically distance as much as possible with a maximum occupancy of 50% of vehicle seating capacity (not to exceed 36 passengers).
- Students should— to the greatest extent possible— refrain from talking on the bus, in order to minimize respiratory droplets.
- Students on the bus all sit facing forward.
- Since each bus is its own stable group, the same group of students is assigned to the bus every day. Locations for drop-off and pick-up are the same every day, with the same group of

students every day. As much as possible, drivers and staff helping with busing should be the same for each bus, each day.

- Bus windows should always remain fully open in order to improve air flow and ventilation; all passengers should dress for inclement weather so that windows can remain open regardless of weather concerns,
- LEA plans must include specific considerations for differently abled students and specific protocols identified on a student's Individual Education Program (IEP).
- Along with mask-wearing, physical distancing at bus stops and during drop-off and pick-up is strongly recommended. All measures must be taken to physically distance to the greatest extent possible.
- Signs should be posted on buses to remind students of protocols. Reminders about screening prior to boarding buses should also be posted for families.
- Drivers, monitors, and other staff must be screened daily. Face coverings are required for all drivers and staff.
- High-touch surfaces such as handrails should be cleaned and disinfected between bus runs. All buses should be disinfected at the end of each day.
- To ensure student compliance with the health-and-safety guidelines for buses, additional bus monitors are strongly recommended for every bus.

### Updated 8/25/20: Calculation Tool for Busing and Student Transportation Vehicles

When a passenger is confirmed to have COVID-19 (tests positive), close contacts of the person will need to quarantine for 14 days. On a bus, close contacts of a confirmed case are those who were seated in the same row as, two rows in front of, and two rows behind the infected person. In addition, anyone within 6 feet of the individual for greater than 15 minutes is a close contact and will need to quarantine.

It may be possible to arrange seating to minimize the number of close contact passengers who will need to quarantine in the event of a passenger testing positive. A spreadsheet tool has been developed to calculate the minimum number of riders who would need to quarantine for different seating arrangements. The tool shows two examples of seating arrangements for the same occupancy.

To use this tool:

- Determine the occupancy of the bus. The maximum occupancy is of 50% of vehicle seating capacity (not to exceed 36 passengers).
- Enter the number of people in each seat. Household members should sit together in the same seat.
- Seat people to allow for maximal space between riders.
- Column Q calculates the minimum number of close contacts who would need to quarantine if there were an infected person in that row. This is the sum of: (# people seated in the row

with the infected) + (# people seated in the 2 rows in front of the infected person) + (# people seated in the 2 rows behind the infected person).

For a given occupancy, the tool can be used to compare the average number of close contacts for different seating arrangements

## Updated 8/25/20: Best Practice Summary for Busing and Student Transportation

### Reduce Demand

- Request students not requiring busing use alternative transportation
- Allow parents early drop off and late pick up from school
- Eliminate busing for any student that lives within a given radius of school
- Set up public-health compliant structures for walking school busing (supervised walking groups that are masked and socially distanced)
- Provide bike racks and locks to encourage biking for middle and high school
- Identify public transportation options

### Increase Capacity

- Adding more runs for each bus by staggering school start and end times
  - Increasing from 2 runs to 3 increases total capacity by 50%
  - Increasing from 2 runs to 4 increases total capacity by 100%
  - Increasing from 3 runs to 4 increases total capacity by 33%
- Considerations when calculating the total capacity of busses:
  - Number of available busses
  - Number of runs each bus will make
  - Number of students the bus can hold given existing guidelines
  - Number of siblings/family members on each bus
  - Utilizing a central pick up/drop off location to reduce the number of bus stops allowing for increase bus runs

### Other Ideas

- LEA's must survey families for the number of bus riders in their house
- Monitor number of daily riders via rider log
- Create method for families to communicate any change in busing need
- Use paraprofessionals as crossing guards and/or bus monitors

- Load students picked up first in the rear to reduce isle exposure
- Load students dropped off first in the front to reduce isle exposure
- Have hand sanitizer available, clean/sanitize bus after each run
- Parents screen students daily for symptoms
- Assign seating/RSVP- register for seats
- Increase ventilation on busses (windows down, fans)
- Group students by pod when applicable

## Specific School Activities (Recess/Field Trips/Athletics/Before and After School Programming)

### Recess

Requirements for recess are applicable under all scenarios for reopening. Stable groups must remain consistent during any recess activities. This means the same classroom groups participate in recess activities as a stable group. If recess takes place in a large space, more than one stable group may share the space as long as 14 feet of physical distance can be maintained between groups and the size of the combined groups does not exceed the State's maximum group size.

Updated 8/25/20: For outdoor spaces, there is also no set maximum group size. The number of students/staff allowed is based on the physical distancing requirements within stable groups and between stable groups. All shared recess equipment is cleaned between stable groups who use it. Schools may elect to limit recess activities until appropriate mitigation measures can be taken.

Updated 8/25/20: You should also refer to the CDC guidance on the cleaning of outdoor playgrounds. Additionally, the CDC guidance says: *Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.*

Handwashing is required before and after recess. All shared recess equipment is cleaned between stable groups who use it. Schools may elect to limit recess activities until appropriate mitigation measures can be taken. Additionally, schools may elect to include movement breaks within the school day that allow students to remain 6 feet apart and masked, while still getting exercise and movement.

### Field Trips

In-person field trips will not be allowed during these initial reopening phases. Virtual field trips are encouraged.

## Athletics

Further guidance on fall athletics will be provided later this summer. For the most recent rules, please visit ReopeningRI.

## Band and Chorus

It is recommended that activities during which respiratory droplets are likely to be expelled such as chorus and any group band rehearsal or performance involving wind or brass instruments be suspended or occur virtually. If schools choose for them to happen in-person, students and staff should be at least 14 feet apart, and the chorus size should not be greater than the stable group size for high schools. It is recommended to establish student groups that are consistent with class or bus groups whenever possible.

Updated 8/25/20: Other considerations may be given for certain instruments where students can wear face coverings while playing (e.g., violin, guitars, ukuleles, mandolins, etc.). The CDC guidance also states:

- When students are not singing or playing an instrument that requires the use of their mouth, they should wear a cloth face covering in music class (unless class is outdoors and distance can be maintained).
- Social distancing helps protect students in music class.
- While students are singing or playing an instrument that requires the use of their mouth, use visual cues to keep them at least 14 feet apart. If it's safe and weather permits, consider moving class outdoors where air circulation is better than indoors and maintain at least 14 feet distance between students.

## Before and After School Programming

LEA Plans addressed all school-related, before and after school programming. Stable group sizes and group size limits also apply to before and after school programming. In all reopening scenarios, physical distancing rules will be in place for both younger and older students. Stable groups will also need to be established for activities, ensuring that students are in the same group for all activities.

It is recommended to establish student groups that are consistent with class or bus groups whenever possible. As with the school day, the use of face coverings are required even while continuing to maintain as much physical distance as possible.

Updated 8/25/20: Even though before and after school programming may necessitate additional pods for which students are members, the benefits may outweigh any added risk. LEAs and schools should review the programming available to make determinations about the benefit of the program and to weigh the risk of increasing the number of pods in which a student may be a member. Ultimately, LEAs and schools may decide to postpone or cancel some activities.

Requirements for drop off or pick up for activities are the same as those used for drop-off and pick-up at school.

Updated 8/25/20: It should be noted that if the program is licensed by the Department of Human Services (DHS), then the program needs to follow the DHS regulations and guidelines. If the program

is not run by DHS, but is located at the school and sponsored by the school, the program must follow the same health and safety guidelines the school is following.

## Supporting Vulnerable Groups in Returning to In-Person Activities

### Educationally Vulnerable Group of Students

**An educationally vulnerable group is any sub-population of students that is more at risk of lagging academic performance with the continuation of distance learning.** This includes students who are:

- Differently abled;
- Multilingual learners;
- Homeless or living in temporary housing;
- Migrant;
- At-risk of leaving school;
- Live in poverty or whose families face other challenges; and/or,
- Directly affected by COVID-19.

For all in-person reopening scenarios, LEA plans must address what returning to school will look like for these vulnerable populations and include additional supports being provided for both in-person and distance learning scenarios.

**People at Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19**:

Updated 8/25/20: RIDE recommends using the CDC definition of staff and students who ***are*** at a higher-risk when creating local policies and practices. This includes anyone who is age 65 or older and/or meet the other criteria listed here. LEAs may wish to expand their definition to include staff and students who ***might be*** at an increased risk as well.

LEA plans must address steps that will be taken to support these medically vulnerable groups in returning to school buildings as well as continuing to support working and learning from home when necessary. Families and staff members should consult with healthcare providers and school administrators as part of planning to return to school.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for School Nurses

School healthcare professionals should follow CDC guidance on infection control and use of PPE. When in close contact with, or treating, a patient suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 recommended PPE includes N-95 respirator (or face mask if N-95 is unavailable), eye protection (goggles or face shield), gloves, and gown. Due to the shortages of gowns nationwide, a substitution may be necessary (i.e. lab coat). Additional information regarding PPE can be found at these links:

- Strategies to Optimize supply of PPE
- PPE supply tracking

It is also important to conserve PPE when it is in short supply. For more information, please review RIDOH's document regarding PPE conservation.

NOTE: In addition to the nurse's office, schools will need PPE for professionals whose work involves close proximity to students or hands-on personal assistance to students. Schools will also need face masks and coverings for students and/or staff who may not have their own.

## Responding to Staff or Students who are Sick

In conjunction with RIDOH, RIDE has developed a "Playbook," regarding how schools should address symptomatic students and staff, and how to respond to a positive COVID-19 case and/or outbreak at their schools. The Outbreak Response Protocols: Prek-12 was released on 8/7/2020. For planning purposes, please use the information contained in the Playbook.

As soon as possible, all items touched by the staff member or student who is ill at school must be removed, cleaned, and disinfected. Any common surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected as well. If possible, items should be moved, windows should be opened, or other measures should be instituted to increase ventilation while cleaning. Additional guidance can be found here

- CDC/EPA Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance
- CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

# Appendix: Synthesis of School Reopening Guidance – Updated 8/25/20

This appendix includes the same information that is found in the main body of this document. It represents it visually so that it is easy to compare the requirements of schools across the three different scenarios. Districts were required to submit plans that describe how they will meet the requirements in the below table in each given scenario.

## Overview of School Reopening Scenarios –

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| High Level Overview | General population resumes distance learning from home to prioritize in person for some elementary OR transition grades.<br>Prioritize in-person reentry for educationally vulnerable subgroups (i.e. differently abled students and multi-lingual learners). | Elementary grades reenter in person every day. Prioritize in-person reentry for educationally vulnerable subgroups (i.e. differently abled students and multi-lingual learners). May also prioritize transition grades.<br>Remaining groups begin the school year with distance learning | Schools resume 100% in-person operations, with physical distancing protocols still required based on current health information<br>Distance learning is integrated with in-person programs and utilized as necessary |

## Distance Learning –

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Distance Learning | Same as full in-person learning. | Same as full in-person learning. | LEAs will have to determine a plan for high quality distance learning for students who are unable to return in-person, those that must remain home for short periods of time due to illness or quarantine, and those whose parents choose to keep them home for distance learning |

## Class and Group Size Limits –

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Elementary and *Middle School<br><br>**for Middle Schools operating with a stable group/pod model* | Only allow in-person options for elementary that can guarantee staying in the same stable group of 15 (includes students and staff)<br>Even if in a stable group, all students and teachers should try to maintain six feet of physical distance as much as possible.<br>Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod. | Elementary students should be prioritized for in-person learning every day.<br>Allow in-person options for elementary or middle that can guarantee staying in the same stable group of 30 (includes students and staff).<br>Even if in a stable group, all students and teachers should try to maintain six feet of physical distance as much as possible.<br>Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod. | Elementary and middle schools are required to maintain stable groups of 30 (includes students and staff).<br>Even if in a stable group, all students and teachers should try to maintain six feet of physical distance as much as possible.<br>Each class/pod will be expected to physically distance (14 feet) from every other class/pod. |
| Middle School* and High School<br><br>**for Middle Schools that function like a high school, and cannot maintain a stable group* | Middle and High schools can pick which of the following two requirements they follow:<br><br>1) Smaller stable groups (15 maximum) should be maintained whenever possible (i.e. student groups should stay the same and teachers rotate whenever possible); or,<br><br>2) If not able to maintain stable groups, only approximately 25% of the students in a middle or high school can be in person at any one time.<br>Students must maintain six feet of physical distancing and require face masks to be worn. | Middle and High schools can pick which of the following two requirements they follow:<br><br>1) Stable groups (30 maximum) should be maintained whenever possible (i.e. student groups should stay the same and teachers rotate whenever possible); or,<br><br>2) If not able to maintain stable groups, only approximately 50% of the students in a middle or high school can be in person at any one time. LEAs may wish to prioritize certain groups or grades to be in-person every day, while others are | Stable groups are highly recommended and should be maintained whenever possible (i.e. student groups should stay the same and teachers rotate whenever possible).<br><br>Students must maintain six feet of physical distancing and require face masks to be worn<br><br>The number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space. |

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| | The number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space. | participating in a hybrid model.<br>Students must maintain six feet of physical distancing and require face masks to be worn.<br>The number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space. | |
| Non-classroom Settings | Same as partial in-person. | Stable group should be maintained in all settings.<br>Students must be 6 feet from each other.<br>In large spaces (I.e. gyms, auditoriums, etc.), stable groups must be at least 14 feet from other stable groups<br>Encourage activities outside whenever possible. | Stable group should be maintained in all settings.<br>Students must be 6 feet from each other.<br>In large spaces (I.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, etc.), stable groups must be at least 14 feet from other stable groups.<br>Encourage activities outside whenever possible. |
| Staff | Same as full in-person. | Same as full in-person. | Staff are expected to physically distance from each.<br>Staff that are not assigned to a stable group should maintain six feet of physical distance whenever possible and must wear a face mask. |

## Classroom Layouts and Use of School Spaces

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Spacing and Movement | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Stable groups are required to occupy consistent space as much as feasible (i.e., each stable group uses the same classroom for all classes).<br>If any shared space is used, cleaning and disinfecting must happen between consistent stable groups. |
| Hallways | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Plans must include how congestion with locker, hallways, and stairs will be minimized.<br>Options could include:<br>- Staggered timing for class transitions; and,<br>- Signs in hallways to delineate one-way traffic.<br>Plans should include a sample schedule that makes sure that that extra time to accommodate one-way traffic flow is included and how lockers may be used to ensure continued social distancing. |
| Bathrooms | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person. | Bathrooms must be cleaned and disinfected frequently, in accordance with CDC guidance.<br>When possible, stable groups should use the bathroom at the same time and bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected in between groups. This is most important for younger grades.<br>Encourage identifying specific bathrooms for specific stable groups to use (i.e. first floor bathroom is only for use of |

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| | | | a specific set of classes… second floor for a different set… etc.).<br>Discourage congregating in bathrooms |
| Dining: Elementary & Middle School (if using stable group/pod model) | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Lunch should occur in the same consistent space that stable group is in (i.e. lunch in the classroom).<br>Plans may propose an exception to the location of the lunch for stable groups to allow it to occur in a different space. If it occurs in a shared space:<br>- Cleaning and disinfection must occur in between stable groups in that space.<br>- If multiple stable groups are in one, larger shared space 14 feet of physical distance must be maintained between groups<br>Whenever possible, encourage outdoor dining. |
| Dining:<br>Middle School (if functioning like a High School) & High School | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | The number of people in school spaces depends on the number of students/staff that can fit in the space and still abide by the physical distancing requirements and fire code occupancy for the space.<br>In addition:<br>- Sit six feet apart and consider using partitions to create barriers between groups;<br>- If multiple stable groups are in one, larger shared space 14 feet of physical distance must be maintained between groups; and, |

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| | | | - Same groups should be having lunch at the same time.<br>Whenever possible, encourage outdoor dining. |

## Cleaning Surfaces and School Areas

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cleaning/ Disinfecting | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Based on CDC guidance<br>For spaces that are shared, ensure cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces (ex: desks, chairs, doorknobs) between uses.<br>For classes not in stable groups/pods, cleaning and disinfecting of desks must happen between classes.<br>While students should be encouraged to use their own materials, if they must be shared, they should be disinfected between student uses. |
| Hygiene and Handwashing | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Plan must include provisions to ensure frequent handwashing, in accordance with CDC guidance. |

## Face Coverings

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Face Coverings (Overall) | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person. | Face coverings are required for all staff and students at all times, even in stable group settings, and even when socially distanced (6+ feet apart).<br>Schools should acquire additional masks for students and/or staff who may forget not have their own.<br>Schools should establish local policies around wearing face coverings, including the benefits and the safety risks for not doing so. Policies must recognize a student's medical circumstance and not remove a student from access to learning. |
| Facing Coverings for Differently-abled Student Classrooms | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Schools will need extra masks and face shields as PPE for staff who are likely to be exposed to student respiratory droplets and other secretions due to the physical contact or closer physical proximity required to meet some student's needs. |

## Screening Students and Staff

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Screening | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Parents to screen children at home (using Crush COVID RI app or a self-attestation form), and keep child at home if child fails screening.<br>RIDOH may recommend in person verbal symptom screening in schools experiencing confirmed cases of COVID-19. |

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| | | | Staff are required to be screened before entering the school or self-assessment through app if in-person screening is not possible.<br><br>LEAs are encouraged to work with their school communities to establish a reasonable system for collecting this information daily. |

## School Schedules

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Overall Student Schedules | Plans should address issues of scheduling.<br>For older students who do not maintain stable groups, options could include:<br>- Alternative days or weeks in person;<br>- Having specific grades come back in person while others remain distant; and/or<br>- Have one group come in the morning and separate group in the afternoon, with cleaning and disinfecting in-between.<br>For students not participating in-person, they should be participating in distance learning.<br>Plans are required to include a sample schedule for all different age groups and settings, including how time will be incorporated for changing between classes. | Plans should address issues of scheduling.<br>Priority for in-person schedules should be for vulnerable populations and Pre K-5 attending in-person every day in the partial model. LEAs may also prioritize transition grades and special populations.<br>For older students who do not maintain stable groups, options could include:<br>- Alternative days or weeks in person;<br>- Having specific grades come back in person while others remain distant; and/or<br>- Have one group come in the morning and separate group in the afternoon, with cleaning and disinfecting in-between.<br>For students not participating in-person, they should be participating in distance learning. | Schools may wish to employ a staggered start to reopening to try out the reopening process and protocols while fewer students and staff are present.<br>Plans should address issues of scheduling.<br>Scheduling should consider drop off, pick up, lunch, and other physical distancing protocols.<br>Plans are required to submit a sample schedule for all different age groups and settings, including how time will be incorporated for changing between classes. |

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| | | Plans are required to submit a sample schedule for all different age groups and settings, including how time will incorporate time for changing between classes. | |
| Pick up/Drop off | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person. | Plans need to include procedures for drop off and pick up that are consistent with CDC guidelines.<br>Plans must include:<br>- Stable groups remaining consistent and 14 feet from other groups; and,<br>- Physical distancing between students |

## School Visitors

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Visitors | No visitors, whenever possible, beyond pick up and drop off. | No visitors, whenever possible, beyond pick up and drop off. | Maintain a visitor log for at least 30 days, documenting the name, contact phone number, and arrival/departure time of each individual. |

## Busing and Transportation

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Busing and Transportation | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person. | All students on buses are required to wear masks (with the exception of children younger than age two and anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance). |

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| | | | Students using the bus are scheduled as a stable group, and the bus group is considered its own stable group.<br><br>Hand sanitizer must be available and used when entering and exiting the bus.<br><br>Students are screened for symptoms when getting on the bus. Options for screening include screening by parents prior to students boarding the bus.<br><br>All students have assigned seats on the bus and ride the same bus to and from school.<br><br>Students are seated to physically distance as much as possible with a maximum occupancy of 50% of vehicle seating capacity (not to exceed 36 passengers).<br><br>Students should— to the greatest extent possible— refrain from talking on the bus, in order to minimize respiratory droplets.<br><br>Students on the bus all sit facing forward.<br><br>Since each bus is its own stable group, the same group of students is assigned to the bus every day. Locations for drop-off and pick-up are the same every day, with the same group of students every day. As |

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| | | | much as possible, drivers and staff helping with busing should be the same for each bus, each day.<br><br>Bus windows should always remain fully open in order to improve air flow and ventilation; all passengers should dress for inclement weather so that windows can remain open regardless of weather concerns,<br><br>LEA plans must include specific considerations for differently abled students and specific protocols identified on a student's Individual Education Program (IEP).<br><br>Along with mask-wearing, physical distancing at bus stops and during drop-off and pick-up is strongly recommended. All measures must be taken to physically distance to the greatest extent possible.<br><br>Signs should be posted on buses to remind students of protocols. Reminders about screening prior to boarding buses should also be posted for families.<br><br>Drivers, monitors, and other staff must be screened daily. Face coverings are required for all drivers and staff. |

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| | | | High-touch surfaces such as handrails should be cleaned and disinfected between bus runs. All buses should be disinfected at the end of each day.<br><br>To ensure student compliance with the health-and-safety guidelines for buses, additional bus monitors are strongly recommended for every bus. |

## School Specific Activities

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Recess | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Stable groups must be consistent during recess.<br>Handwashing should happen before and after recess.<br>For outdoor spaces, there is no set maximum group size. The number of students/staff allowed is based on the physical distancing requirements within the stable groups and between stable groups. |
| Field Trips | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Planning field trips is not recommended at this time, consistent with CDC guidance. This could change as we learn more during the summer and throughout the year.<br>Virtual field trips are encouraged. |
| Athletics | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Further guidance on fall athletics will be provided during the summer |

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| | | | months. For the most current guidance, please reopeningri.com |
| Band and Chorus | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | It is recommended that activities such as chorus and any group band rehearsal or performance be suspended or done virtually.<br><br>If schools choose for it to happen in-person, students and staff should be at least 14 feet apart.<br><br>Chorus or band size should not be greater than the stable group size.<br><br>It is recommended that these activities be done virtually.<br><br>Other considerations may be given for certain instruments where students can wear face coverings while playing. |
| Before and After School | Before and after school programing can only happen if maintaining physical distancing protocols or same stable group. | Before and after school programing can only happen if maintaining physical distancing protocols or same stable group. | Plans need to include how schools and districts will address before and after school programming. Recommendations include ensuring physical distancing for older students and for younger groups, ensuring they are in the same group for all activities (I.e. try to have kids in groups during this time that is consistent with their class or bus grouping).<br><br>Even though before and after school programming may necessitate additional pods for which students are members, the benefits may outweigh any added risk |

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| | | | Mask wearing is required |

## Supporting Vulnerable Groups in Returning to In-Person Activities

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Educationally Vulnerable Students | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Plans should include how schools will ensure additional supports for educationally vulnerable students. |
| Medically Vulnerable Students and Staff | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Plans should include how schools will ensure additional supports for medically vulnerable populations.<br>RIDE recommends using the CDC definition of staff and students who ***are*** at a higher-risk when creating local policies and practices. LEAs may wish to expand their definition to include staff and student who ***might be*** at an increased risk as well |

## PPE for School Nurses

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| PPE for School Nurses | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Equip school nurses with the same PPE recommended for any healthcare provider who is in close contact with patients suspected to have COVID-19, in accordance with CDC guidance which may be found here.<br>The ideal PPE is a KN-95 mask or N-95 respirator, face mask, face shield, eye protection, gloves, and gown. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | If an N-95 respirator is not available, use a face mask (i.e. surgical mask).<br>Due to the shortage of gowns nationwide, some innovative substitution may be necessary (i.e. lab coats).<br>It is also important to conserve PPE when it is in short supply. Please see this guidance document for recommendations on PPE conservation. |

## Responding to Staff or Students who are Ill

| Section | Limited in-Person Learning | Partial In-Person Learning | Full In-Person Learning |
|---|---|---|---|
| Response to Ill Student | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Please see The Outbreak Response Protocols: Prek-12 for addressing symptomatic students and staff. |
| Response to Ill Staff Member | Same as full in-person | Same as full in-person | Please see The Outbreak Response Protocols: Prek-12 for addressing symptomatic students and staff. |