



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

Back to Work Safely: Guidance for K-12 Schools

Guidance Document, 2nd edition

Version 1 | July 6, 2021



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Overview

Schools are important parts of the fabric of local communities. Not only do schools provide safe and supportive learning environments for students—they also employ teachers and other support staff and enable parents, guardians, and other caregivers to work while children learn. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in widespread school building closures, and many schools transitioned to distance, virtual, or hybrid learning. As schools begin to reopen or plan to reopen, questions remain concerning the safety of students and staff. Thus, there is a need for guidance on reducing the risk of transmission for teachers, other school staff, and students. This document is intended to provide guidance and considerations for schools that accept students from kindergarten through the twelfth grade (K-12). While the scope of these guidance documents does not cover workplace testing or vaccination guidance, please refer to state, local, and federal guidance on these topics, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s COVID-19 [testing](#) and [vaccine](#) webpages.

As some restrictions have lifted and continue to be lifted, many uncertainties still remain. K-12 schools are faced with difficult questions that must be addressed as they reopen, resume normal operations, or continue normal operations, such as:

- How can we best protect the health and safety of our employees (i.e., teachers and staff) and students?
- What communication is needed to keep everyone informed of the preventive steps being taken?
- What steps can we take to minimize the risk of disease transmission?
- What training is needed for our teachers and school staff?
- What health and safety measures do we need to take regarding new virus variants?

- What do we do if an employee or student has tested positive for or is suspected to have COVID-19?
- What do we do if an employee or student is sick or not following guidelines?
- How do we handle high-traffic crowd management throughout the school, including during student arrival and departure and between classes?
- How do we deal with cleaning and disinfecting high-contact surfaces, such as light switches, computer keyboards, and door handles, regularly during the day?
- What can on-site vendors do to minimize COVID-19 transmission?

In addition to the questions asked by schools, staff, students, and families are also thinking of ways that they can protect themselves.

The current scientific evidence indicates that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is spread primarily by airborne transmission, through exposure to respiratory aerosols or droplets in air that carry the virus. These respiratory aerosols and droplets are generated by the human respiratory system during normal activities, including breathing, speaking, shouting, singing, coughing, and sneezing. Exposure to these respiratory droplets in poorly ventilated or crowded indoor spaces is particularly of concern, and infection can occur through exposure to mucus membranes, such as the eyes, nose, and mouth. In addition, while not the primary route of exposure, people may also become infected from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus. It has also been shown that the virus can survive in aerosols for hours and on surfaces for days, depending on the type of surface. Measures can be taken to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 from person to person or by contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide clear and actionable steps towards the safe opera-



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tions of K-12 schools through prevention, early detection, and control of COVID-19. This document offers practical guidance for K-12 schools to implement multiple layers of risk mitigation strategies through the hierarchy of controls, a system used to minimize or eliminate exposures to hazards. The hierarchy of controls ranks hazard control approaches in order of most effective to least effective—through the elimination of a hazard, substitution of a hazard, use of engineering controls, use of administrative controls, and correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Specifically, to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19, the controls we focus on in this document are engineering controls, such as ventilation; administrative controls, such as physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, and personal hygiene; and PPE, such as gloves and face coverings. Aside from the hierarchy of controls, we also focus on mitigation strategies to use within restrooms, for food preparation areas, and on contact surfaces; employee and student wellness; training; waste and laundering; and communication. No single mitigation strategy will be sufficient to address COVID-19 health and safety risks; rather, a multilayered risk management approach of controls, which can include vaccines, is recommended to limit the spread of COVID-19.

It is important to continue to monitor the global (World Health Organization or WHO), federal (CDC), state, and local guidelines for changes or updates in recommendations, disinfection strategies, worker protections, and other COVID-19 risk management best practices. It is also important that K-12 schools consistently monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented mitigation strategies and alter their approaches as needed.

Any relaxation or modification of the recommendations herein (e.g., based on employee or student vaccine status) should be based on and comply with federal, state, and local requirements, as well as best practices.

The following document addresses aspects of K-12 schools that have not been previously evaluated in other AIHA guidance documents. Please refer to the “Resources” section for links to AIHA guidance documents concerning other areas that may have characteristics in common with and guidance applicable to K-12 campus life, including libraries, offices, child-care facilities, restaurants and dining halls, retail, ridesharing, small and medium sports and entertainment venues, gyms and workout facilities, and construction work.

What should School Leadership do to reduce risk for themselves, their employees, and their students?

School leadership (i.e., employers of school staff) are encouraged to continually monitor global (WHO), federal (CDC), state, and local guidelines for changes or updates in recommendations, disinfection strategies, worker protections, and other COVID-19 best management practices. These employers should also consider developing a knowledgeable team to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available and as knowledge evolves regarding SARS-CoV-2 transmission, vaccines, new virus variants, and other aspects of the virus.

School employers are also encouraged to complete a task-based risk assessment or job hazard analysis to best determine, by job task, where engineering or administrative controls can be implemented to reduce or eliminate virus transmission. Refer to the [OSHA Job Hazard Analysis document](#).

Due to the wide variety of geographic locations, sizes, physical layouts, and structures of school buildings and educational spaces, it may not be possible for all schools to implement all of the following guidelines. However, implementing as many as possible through a multilayered risk management approach can help reduce health risks and risk of transmission.



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Ventilation

- Keep heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems operational to maintain thermal comfort and maximize outdoor air based on system design.
 - Strive to maintain the relative humidity at 40-60%.
 - Refer to [AIHA's Indoor Environmental Quality document](#).
- If you need assistance on HVAC issues, ask an HVAC professional and see the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers' (ASHRAE) COVID-19 preparedness resources for more information.
 - AIHA occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) science professionals and industrial hygienists are also well-versed in general dilution ventilation. AIHA has a consultants list of such qualified professionals.
- Consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units with variable flow control or other ventilation-related engineering controls to accommodate differing room sizes and ventilation needs. Refer to [AIHA's Indoor Environmental Quality document](#) for more information. Consider whether the noise of these units when they are turned on is appropriate for the particular application.
- If fans, such as pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, are used, take steps to minimize air blowing from one person directly at another individual. If fans are disabled or removed, it is important to remain aware of and take steps to prevent [heat hazards](#).
 - Be mindful of using portable pedestal or overhead ceiling fans, as these may contribute to spread of the virus.
- Use natural ventilation by opening windows and doors to increase air flow, if possible.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting Practices

- Consider developing a standard operating procedure, checklist, or audit system to consistently train school staff and employees on enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices or to track when and how cleaning and disinfecting is conducted, including cleaning and disinfection of spaces previously occupied by someone confirmed to have had COVID-19. Refer to [AIHA's guidance document on workplace cleaning for COVID-19](#).
 - Make Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for cleaning and disinfection products available and ensure employees are aware of the hazards of use. Incorporate new hazards into the existing OSHA Hazard Communications Program.
 - Use disposable wipes or rags when available. Ensure reusable rags are maintained, handled, and cleaned per manufacturers' instructions. For more information, see the "Laundering" section below.
 - All items should be allowed to dry thoroughly after cleaning.
 - Establish a disinfection routine and ensure disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.
- Select appropriate disinfectants.
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a list of products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, [EPA List N](#).
 - Do not mix different EPA-registered chemicals together. The combination could be toxic by inhalation. Be particularly careful when using any products containing ammonia, sodium hypochlorite (bleach), or hydrogen peroxide.
 - Review product labels and SDS and follow manufacturers' specifications for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Allow for appropriate ventilation during cleaning and disinfecting.



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- Keep cleaning and disinfecting products out of the reach of children.
- Provide appropriate signage regarding cleaning and disinfecting measures being taken, if needed.
- Ensure any commonly used items and high-touch surfaces (e.g., pens, desks, and doorknobs) are cleaned and disinfected on a frequent or regular basis and after each use.
- Consider consulting an occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) science professional or industrial hygiene expert if additional advice is needed. AIHA has a consultants list of such qualified professionals.
- Toys, sports equipment, and other learning materials should be cleaned and disinfected frequently and before being shared with another student.
 - Set aside toys and materials that need to be disinfected; washing with soapy water is the ideal method of cleaning.
 - Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected should not be used. Rotate toys and learning materials throughout the day for disinfecting.
- Books and other paper-based materials are not considered at high risk for transmission and do not need additional cleaning or disinfection. Plastic coverings on books or other plastic or metal materials should be disinfected between use.
- Common areas, such as lobbies, should be cleaned and disinfected before and after students arrive and before and after students leave.
 - Disinfect all surfaces and commonly touched equipment, such as computer stations.
 - Seating, doors, restrooms, common areas, etc., should be disinfected at the end of each day.
- The school leadership should evaluate the school to determine the most appropriate application method for disinfection. Please refer to [EPA's guidance](#) on use of different methods for applying dis-

infectants to learn more.

- Currently, CDC does not recommend fogging, fumigation, or wide-area or electrostatic spraying as a primary method for surface disinfection in most cases. Refer to [CDC's COVID-19 webpage](#) on cleaning and disinfecting facilities.

Personal Hygiene

- Establish a “before and after” handwashing or sanitizing protocol for all students, teachers, and staff to perform before and after class or other work within the school.
- Provide handwashing stations or, if not feasible, touch-free automated hand sanitizer dispensers at high traffic locations (e.g., the main entrance of the school, at side entrances and exits, near elevators, and outside restrooms). These should contain hand sanitizer with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
 - If providing neither a station nor a dispenser is feasible, then at a minimum, consider providing hand sanitizer at high-traffic locations. This sanitizer should contain at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
 - Post signs at each hand sanitizer station to encourage proper use and illustrate proper hand sanitizing techniques.

Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing can help limit transmission. Schools should follow all local, state, or federal physical distancing requirements.
- Mark physical distancing increments on the ground outdoors, at the entrance to the school, so that students, teachers, and school staff can maintain appropriate distancing when entering.
- To the extent possible, classes should include the same group of students and teacher(s) each day; each group has its own room and own teacher, and the students only interact with their class-



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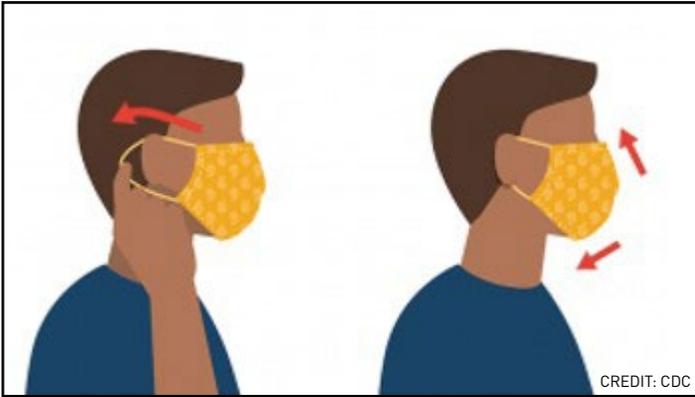
- mates. Consider offering specialized middle and high school classes virtually to limit mixing of student cohorts.
- Individual desks rather than communal tables should be used whenever possible.
 - Desks should be spaced 3-6 feet apart, depending on grade level, and should face the same direction if possible, rather than towards each other or the center of the classroom. If communal tables must be used, dividers, such as those made of Plexiglas, should be installed between students.
 - Consider outdoor learning, when feasible, or consider holding classes in larger venues, such as auditoriums.
 - Limit class density and minimize close contact for instructional programs involving group projects (e.g., poster painting, cooperative group instruction, and chemistry or biology labs).
 - Encourage one-way traffic through hallways. Place markings on the floor and signs to help communicate this traffic pattern to students, teachers, and school staff.
 - Proper face coverings should be worn by students, teachers, and school staff when they are in the classroom.
 - Visitors, including parents, should be restricted or prohibited from entering school buildings.
 - If administrative employees can work from home, they should be encouraged to do so.
 - Consider staggering school start times or start dates; young children should return first as there is limited evidence of transmission from young children to each other or adults.
 - Modify or adjust desks to minimize close contact (e.g., within six feet or less for a cumulative 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) of teachers and staff with other school employees and others, when possible.
 - Consider closing student lounges and cafeterias in order to limit student interactions to within their assigned group and classroom. Consider limiting or prohibiting the use of lockers.
 - Any activities that require students, teachers, and school staff to enter or be present in common areas should be staggered to reduce density and limit the mixing of different groups in common areas.
 - Use methods to physically separate staff and students in the school (e.g., classrooms, break rooms, and entrance and exit areas), when possible.
 - Use visual cues, such as floor markings and signs, to encourage physical distancing.
 - Space chairs and desks 3-6 feet apart, depending on the grade level. Use barriers, such as screens, when possible.
 - Be mindful that barriers can disrupt ventilation and airflow.
 - Post signs around the school as reminders to maintain physical distancing at all times.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings can help limit transmission. Schools should follow all local, state, or federal face covering requirements.
- Provide disposable or washable cloth face coverings to students, teachers, and school staff, if possible.
- Students, teachers, and staff should be frequently reminded not to touch their cloth or disposable face coverings and to wash their hands often.
- Train school employees and students on the proper way to maintain, wear (covering both their noses and mouths), handle, and clean or dispose of face coverings, as discussed by CDC. Refer to the graphic on the next page and to [CDC's guidance on how to wear masks](#).



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- Encourage teachers and school staff to wear cloth or disposable face coverings if using public transportation to get to work. Refer to [CDC's guidance on safe use of public transportation](#) during COVID-19.

Additional information on cloth face coverings can be found in [CDC's guidance for using masks](#) to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Restrooms

- Post signage limiting restroom occupancy, to allow for proper physical distancing, and to remind students, teachers, and staff to wash their hands before and after using the restroom.
- Minimize touchpoints when entering and exiting restrooms, if possible.
 - If the door cannot be opened without touching the handle, provide paper towels and a trash can by the door so that a paper towel can be used when touching the handle and then discarded.
 - Consider controlling access to bathrooms with a key so that disinfection measures can be better managed. If a key is used, consider disinfecting it after each use.
- If possible, allow doors to multi-stall restrooms to be opened and closed without touching handles.

- Place signs as reminders to close toilet lids (if present) before and after flushing.
- Use no-touch faucets, towel dispensers, soap dispensers, and waste receptacles when possible.
- Hand soap should be readily available for use by occupants.
- Provide paper towels in restrooms.
 - Refer to [AIHA's guidance document on using hand air dryers during COVID-19](#) for more information.
- If feasible, work with HVAC professionals to ensure that bathrooms are well ventilated and, if filtration is used, that proper filtration practices are being followed.
- Increase frequency and efforts to keep bathrooms clean and properly disinfected and maintain a record of sanitary work practices.
 - Take precautions when cleaning or maintaining showers, sinks, and toilets (i.e., avoid creating aerosols, close toilet lids before flushing, and use disposable gloves).

Waste and Laundering

- Single-use items and used disinfection materials can be treated as regular waste, following regular safety guidelines.
- Any reusable cloth materials should be washed and dried on the highest temperature setting allowable for the fabric.
- When handling dirty laundry, wear gloves and a mask and do not shake.
- Clothes hampers or laundry baskets, if used, should be cleaned according to manufacturers' instructions.
- Wash hands after handling dirty laundry.



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Training

- Provide awareness training to teachers and staff on cleaning and disinfection products used in the school following [OSHA's Hazard Communication Standards](#).
 - For employees who will use cleaning and disinfecting products, training should also include proper use, PPE, disposal, and relevant precautionary measures.
- Provide instruction and training to teachers and staff on how to correctly maintain, handle, wear, clean, and dispose of cloth or disposable face coverings.
- Provide appropriate training and education for all PPE, including disposable and reusable gloves.
 - **NOTE: If a school employer chooses to provide or the employee supplies their own N95 respirator, please fully consider all the potential OSHA requirements.**
 - Use videos and in-person visual demonstrations of proper PPE donning and doffing procedures, while maintaining physical distancing during these demonstrations.
 - Emphasize that care must be taken when putting on and taking off PPE to ensure that the employees or the item does not become contaminated.
 - PPE should be: (1) disposed of; or (2) properly disinfected and stored in a clean location when not in use.
 - Stress hand hygiene before and after handling all PPE.
 - Correct maintenance on handling, wearing, cleaning, and disposing of PPE.
- Make SDS for cleaning and disinfection products available and ensure employees are aware of the hazards of use. Incorporate new hazards into your existing [OSHA Hazard Communication Program](#).
- Implement and inform school employees of supportive workplace policies, as applicable.
 - Provide flexible sick leave policies consistent with public health guidance. Providing paid sick leave is important to encourage employees to stay home when sick.
 - Refer to [CDC's guidance for businesses and employers](#) regarding COVID-19 test results from school employees.
 - Offer school employees the flexibility to stay home to care for sick family members.
 - Implement human resources policies consistent with public health guidance and state and federal workplace laws. For more information on employer responsibilities, visit the [Department of Labor](#) and [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) websites.
 - Provide employee assistance programs and community resources to help school employees manage stress and receive support.
 - Offer special accommodations upon request for school employees at increased risk for severe illness, to allow them to perform their duties safely, while also protecting sensitive employee health information.
- Post signs and reminders at entrances and in strategic places to provide instructions on hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette. Include signs with images for non-English readers, as needed.
- Train school employees on new or modified working schedules, how they can stay up to date on new scheduling requirements, and how to make requests for schedule changes if a need arises.

Other Control Measures

- Students, teachers, and school staff should be encouraged to stay home if they are symptomatic.



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- School employers are encouraged to explore work-from-home options, staggered work shifts or hours, and other flexible approaches, as is feasible for school employees.
 - If employees commute to the school using public transportation, consider asking them to:
 - Use other forms of transportation, if possible.
 - Maintain physical distancing and wear cloth or disposable face coverings.
 - Commute at off-peak times, if possible.
 - Wash their hands before the trip and as soon as possible after arriving at the school.
 - Educate students, teachers, and staff to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms.
 - Although perhaps not necessary if handwashing protocols are rigorously followed, consider providing disposable gloves to school employees, especially for cleaning and disinfecting, removing waste materials, and cleaning the restrooms.
 - If gloves are worn, change them regularly; wearing gloves is not a substitute for handwashing.
 - If worn, inspect gloves frequently. Remove or replace any gloves that are torn, damaged, or contaminated.
 - Plan for employee absences by developing flexible attendance and sick leave policies, plan for alternative coverage, and monitor and track employee absences related to COVID-19.
 - Stay informed of local and state COVID-19 information and updates in your geographic area.
- Methods for communicating with teachers, students, families, and staff could include emails, texts, automated phone calls, websites, and signage.
 - Adopt a communication strategy that is customized to your school and emphasizes transparency.
 - Communicate to students, families, teachers, and staff what is being done to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., disinfection routines, health policies for staff, and health and safety measures in place).
 - Establish formal and informal routes of communication for students, families, teachers, and staff to express concerns, questions, comments, and feedback.
 - If the school is located in a multi-tenant location, with other businesses located within the same building, consider establishing a communication pathway with other tenants to inform each other of confirmed COVID-19 cases present in the building.
 - Communicate ventilation concerns and response with other tenants (e.g., HVAC systems can be shared by multiple tenants and therefore adjusting the system in one area may have negative effects in another area).

Employee and Student Wellness

Communication

- Communication AND training should be easy to understand; in languages preferred to be spoken or read by all teachers, students, families, and staff; and include accurate and timely information.
- Communicate to students, families, teachers, and staff the importance of being vigilant when monitoring personal health symptoms of contacting school leadership if or when they start to feel sick.
- Revisit your sick leave program to allow for time off and follow all HR policies and HIPAA or other regulatory requirements.
- Conduct employee and student temperature screenings and wellness checks before the start of each school day. **(NOTE: Comply with [OSHA's Access to Employee Medical and Exposure Records Standard](#) for confidentiality.)**



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- Temperature screening methods can include a manual thermometer (use non-contact infrared thermometers) or thermal camera meeting [FDA recommendations](#). Additional screening information and guidance can be found on [CDC's website](#).
- Assign a school employee to manage and conduct temperature screenings while following CDC guidelines. If this is not possible, employees can self-check their own temperatures.
- Screening should be done in a manner such that the privacy of employees and students are respected.
- Perform visual inspections for other signs of illness (e.g., flushed cheeks, rapid or difficult breathing without recent physical activity, fatigue, or coughing).
- Employees or students who have fevers of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted into the school campus.
- School leadership can consider incorporating a wellness questionnaire similar to [CDC's general screening survey](#). However, we encourage checking your regional health department websites. For example, there is a [personnel screening form](#) available on the San Francisco Department of Health's website.
- Refer to [CDC's guidance for businesses and employers](#) regarding school employees and students who have symptoms or signs of COVID-19 (i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath) or who have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- If an employee or student tests positive for COVID-19:
 - Follow federal, state, and local recommendations for reporting and communicating cases, while remaining compliant with regulations and guidelines pertaining to protecting private health information, such as confidentiality required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). See [OSHA for guidance on reporting workplace exposures to COVID-19](#).
 - Engage school leadership and HR immediately and enforce all applicable HR rules and regulations.
 - Follow federal, state, and local recommendations for any individuals that had close contact with the employee or student.
 - Use trained personnel to perform enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of any surfaces that the employee or student may have come into contact with.
 - Encourage the trained personnel to wear face coverings and gloves, dispose of their gloves after use, and wash their hands and faces when complete. Visibly dirty surfaces should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water PRIOR to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, use only EPA-registered disinfectants on [List N](#).
- Encourage employees and students who are sick to stay home. This includes:
 - People with flu-like symptoms or who live with someone with these clinical symptoms.
 - People with COVID-19, people who live with someone with COVID-19, or people who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- School leadership is encouraged to educate employees, students, and families on recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms.

School Start and End Times, Including Drop-Off, Pickup, and Bus Services

- School start and end times should be coordinated or staggered by class or group, or staggered by time or location such that contact with other classes and groups is limited. Students should be dis-



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couraged from congregating in common areas and physical distancing should be monitored by school employees and teachers.

- For younger children, consider limiting school employees' assistance with drop-off and pickup (i.e., to only the teacher assigned to their class group). This teacher or school employee should wear a proper face covering while assisting with drop-off and pickup.
- For younger children, when feasible, the same parent or designated person is encouraged to drop off and pick up the child each day.
- Discourage handshakes or other physical contact upon arrival and departure.
- Each school bus should be wiped down with disinfectant after each trip. This includes handrails, windows, window handles, walls, and seats. See CDC's guidance for [bus transit operators during COVID-19](#).
- School bus drivers should be trained on hand hygiene and coughing etiquette and should wear proper face coverings at all times.
- If possible, reduce bus capacity (ideally by 50%) and create distance between children on school buses (e.g., seat children one child per row and skip rows). See the graphic at the end of this document for more information. Children from the same household can be seated in the same row.
- Install and maintain hand sanitizer stations at the bus entrance, to be used by all students upon entering and exiting.
- Post signs on the bus reminding students of proper sneezing and coughing etiquette.
- Each bus should have tissues available for students and a touchless garbage can to dispose of tissues.
- Increase ventilation on the bus by keeping windows open when possible. If windows are closed, the air

conditioning and heaters should not be run unless absolutely necessary. The addition of air cleaners (e.g., HEPA filtration units) is recommended.

- Communicate proper bus etiquette to parents and students.

Cafeterias and Food Preparation

- There is currently no evidence to support transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with food preparation, as existing food safety requirements are already stringent and reduce the likelihood of food-borne disease transmission.
- Consider eliminating shared common areas for dining (i.e., cafeterias) and consider delivering or serving boxed meals and snacks directly to classrooms instead.
- To the extent possible, prepackaged boxes or bags should be used for snacks and meals provided by the school rather than "buffet" or other family-style food serving.
- Food preparation areas and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected on a daily basis, at a minimum, and after cleaning, cutlery and dishware should be stored to prevent contamination.
 - The outside of dishwashers should be cleaned at the beginning and end of each shift.
 - All silverware and dishware should be cleaned in the dishwasher, when available.
 - If silverware and dishes cannot be kept clean and covered, disposable options are recommended.
 - Install touchless water and beverage faucets when possible. Non-touchless water and beverage faucets should be disinfected throughout the day.
 - Water fountains, in which the users' mouth enters in close proximity to the beverage source, should not be used.



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- Ice machines that require a handheld scoop should not be used, as it is difficult to control potential contamination.
- Prior to and after meal or snack times, tables must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected.
- All students, staff, and employees must wash their hands before and after eating.
- Students, teachers, and school staff should not share utensils, food, snacks, or drinks.
- For younger students who require assistance with feeding, teachers and school staff should wash their hands and—although not necessary—they can put on disposable gloves. These gloves should be removed immediately after feeding the student and followed by the proper handwashing procedure.
- Wear a cloth or disposable face covering while using public transportation.
- Additional information on cloth face coverings can be found on [CDC's website](#). (**NOTE:** Cloth or disposable non-valved face coverings primarily protect other people but can also protect wearers. When wearing a face covering, ensure both your nose and mouth are covered. Use of a cloth or disposable face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.)
- Have extra face coverings on hand.

What should an Employee (Teacher or School Staff) do to reduce risk to themselves and students?

- School employees should evaluate their health continuously; if they are sick, have a fever or symptoms, or have someone sick at home, then they should remain home.
 - **NOTE: Employer HR policies, HIPAA guidelines, and other laws should be followed at all times.**
- Disinfect shared equipment and high-touch surfaces frequently, and at least after each use.
- Maintain a clean cloth or disposable face covering. Replace frequently, if needed, and replace after contamination.
 - When wearing a face covering, ensure both your nose and mouth are covered.
 - Change face covering if it becomes wet, damaged, or contaminated.
 - Wash your hands before touching your face covering.
- If you are an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, or who has come in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, follow [CDC's guidelines](#).
- At minimum, wash your hands after being in a public place; after touching your face covering; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; after using the restroom; after touching any common contact surfaces; and before eating. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands when you arrive at work, throughout the day during various activities (e.g., before and after preparing food, before and after administering medication, after handling garbage, and after using the bathroom or helping a child to do so), after touching your face covering, when you leave work, and when you arrive home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands. Immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).



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- Let your employer or school leadership know if you have concerns about personal protective equipment (PPE) or face coverings that may be provided to you and ensure that you are properly instructed on how to use them. The CDC has recommended sequences for donning and doffing PPE.

– **NOTE: If a school employer chooses to provide an N95 respirator, please fully consider all the potential OSHA requirements.**

Worker Rights

This document presents and supports workplace protections that are essential components of occupational health and safety systems and programs. These basic protections are worker rights, as well as essential ingredients of occupational health and safety systems.

What can Students or Family Members do to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19?

- Comply with instructions regarding COVID-19 precautions set forth by the school, including but not limited to physical distancing requirements and use of face coverings.
- Evaluate your own health and your family's health continually. If you are sick, stay home. If you have an elevated temperature, stay home. If someone in your house is sick, stay home. If you have allergies and uncontrollable sneezing, stay home.
- Check with the school, prior to attending, regarding any current requirements specific to COVID-19.
- Wash your hands before and after you leave the building, if possible, especially if touching common high-touch surfaces. If not feasible, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol when you enter and before you leave the building.
- If using buses or public transportation to get to and from the school, wash your hands when you enter and before you leave the building. If not feasible, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol.
- Maintain a distance of 3-6 feet (depending on grade level) from other students, teachers, and school staff when walking through the building, whenever possible.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in the trash. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands. Immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Learn more about [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#).

Resources

[AIHA: Effective and Safe Practices, Guidance for Custodians, Cleaning, and Maintenance Staff Guidance Document](#)

[AIHA: Employers' Guide to COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfection in Non-Healthcare Workplaces Guidance Document](#)

[AIHA: Joint Consensus Statement on Addressing the Aerosol Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and Recommendations for Preventing Occupational Exposures](#)

[AIHA: Reducing the Risk of COVID-19 Using Engineering Controls Guidance Document](#)

[AIHA: Worker Rights White Paper](#)

[AIHA: Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19](#)

[ASHRAE: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Response Resources from ASHRAE and Others](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – COVID-19 Testing Overview](#)



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AIHA | 3141 Fairview Park Dr., Suite 777 | Falls Church, VA 22042 | [aiha.org](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – General Business Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – How to Wear Masks](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – Protect Yourself When Using Transportation](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – Use Masks to Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

[CDC: COVID-19 – Vaccines for COVID-19](#)

[CDC: Facilities COVID-19 Screening](#)

[Department of Labor: Coronavirus Resources](#)

[EPA: Can I Use Fogging, Fumigation, or Electrostatic Spraying or Drones to Help Control COVID-19?](#)

[EPA: List N](#)

[FDA: Non-Contact Temperature Assessment Devices During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[OSHA: Access to Employee Medical and Exposure Records](#)

[OSHA: Hazard Communication Standards](#)

[OSHA: Heat](#)

[OSHA: Job Hazard Analysis](#)

[OSHA: Recording Workplace Exposures to COVID-19](#)

[San Francisco Department of Public Health: Attachment A-1 – Personnel Screening Form](#)

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: Coronavirus and COVID-19](#)

[U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#)



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Disclaimer

AIHA is not legally responsible and shall be held harmless from all claims, causes of action, and demands, whatsoever, any third party may incur on account of damage, loss or injury resulting from adhering to these guidelines.

These guidance documents were primarily developed for those smaller business that don't have readily available occupational health and safety resources, and designed to help business owners, employers, employees and consumers implement science-backed procedures for limiting the spread of the coronavirus. They are subject to any local, state, or federal directives, laws, or orders about operating a business and should only be used if they do not conflict with any such orders.

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