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[General](#)

Q: What guidance for school operations during the 2020-2021 school year is available?

A: Working with the Louisiana Department of Health, LDOE has [provided guidance and best practices](#) for reopening schools in a safe manner for 2020-2021. This guidance consists of a Public Health guidance, best practices, planning template and to aid schools in developing reopening plans.

Q: Who should school systems contact for further information surrounding the released [School Reopening Guidance](#)?

A: School systems should email LDOECOV19support@la.gov for questions surrounding the released [School Reopening Guidance](#)

Q: Will private and parochial schools be required to follow the state and/or parish guidelines? Are the private schools working with the state and/or parish public school system to align the plans for all children in the Fall?

A: The LDH guidelines and LDOE school reopening resources were developed in concert with Louisiana's Department of Health and adopted through the Resilient Louisiana Commission (RLC) structure. They are intended for use by both public and non-public schools. The purpose of the RLC was to bring together the best public sector and private sector expertise to prepare and guide the state through the ongoing aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q: Who should school systems contact for answers to specific questions related to their system or school site?

A: School systems should consult with their [Regional Office of Public Health](#) officials for further guidance and answers to specific questions. Outreach to Regional Medical Directors should come from Superintendent level leadership or equivalent.

Updated: July 1, 2020

Maximum Group Size

Q: What is the maximum group size allowed in Phases 2 and 3?

A: 25, including adults for Phase 2 and 50, including adults for Phase 3.

Physical Standards

Q: What physical standards are required for schools to reopen?

A: School systems should plan for adequate social distance measures through adaptation of physical standards. LDH and [LDOE reopening guidance](#) provides a series of best practices for maintaining social distance measures.

Q: Are schools allowed to host large group assemblies or gatherings?

A: The best practice recommendation is that assemblies are limited to maximum group sizes and with appropriate physical distancing in place. For younger students unable to maintain physical distance, maintain static groups. All attendees should wear a face covering.

Athletics/Extracurricular

Q: What guidance has been provided for athletics and extracurricular activities?

A: The [released guidance from LDH and LDOE](#) allows for non-contact sports and activities to take place during Phases 1 and 2. Contact sports and activities are allowed to resume in Phase 3. For a complete list of athletics guidance, please see the [LHSAA released guidance](#).

Q: Can band and choir occur during Phase 2 and 3?

A: Band and choir should not occur indoors during Phase 2 and 3, but may occur if they take place outside with proper social distancing measures in place. School systems should consult the [School Reopening Guidance](#) for details regarding social distancing measures.

Symptom Monitoring

Q: Are temperature checks required for students prior to entry into K-12 facilities?

A: Students should be screened upon arrival to the school facility. Any student registering a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher should not be admitted to the facility and parents or guardians should be contacted to pick up their student.

Q: What thermometer should school systems use for taking temperatures?

A: School systems should consult p. 15 of the [School Reopening Guidance](#) for guidance on obtaining thermometers. School systems should use a touchless thermometer whenever possible.

Q: Do temperature checks have to be taken prior to entry into the facility or can temperature checks occur in a homeroom classroom?

A: Temperature checks may be taken prior to entry into the facility or within a homeroom classroom by a homeroom teacher. Any student registering a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher must have their parents or guardians called and sent home until they are fever free.

Q: What steps should a school system or school site take if a positive COVID case is reported by a student or staff?

A: If a school becomes aware of a presumptive positive or positive case of COVID-19, the child should not attend school until determined to be non-infectious by their doctor. Parents may be notified by the Office of Public Health if their child may have been exposed to the case of COVID-19, along with any next steps. If it is determined that a school was the focus of infection for COVID-19, the school superintendent, in consultation with the Office of Public Health, will determine if the school should remain open or close for a period of time. A positive case of COVID-19 does not necessarily warrant classroom or school closure.

Environmental Cleaning and Personal Hygiene

Q: Will students and staff be required to wear masks?

A: Adults and secondary students (3rd grade and older), as able, should wear cloth masks to the maximum extent possible, most importantly at entry and exit, and during transitions within the school building. Individuals with severe breathing difficulties should not wear masks. Facial coverings may be homemade or disposable level one (basic) grade surgical masks.

Q: Do adult faculty and staff have to wear facial coverings?

A: All faculty and staff should wear facial coverings to the maximum extent possible while on a K12 campus or facility.

Q: Can students and staff remove facial coverings for speech therapy and other educational instruction?

A: Yes, students and staff may remove facial coverings if necessary to carry out educational instruction, however they should practice social distancing measures of staying 6 feet apart and wash hands before and after activities.

Q: Should school systems close shared water fountains in K-12 facilities?

A: School systems should close shared water fountains, but may keep bottle filling stations open. School systems should consult p.10 of the [School Reopening Guidance](#) for further information.

Transportation

Q: What is the maximum number of students allowed on transportation buses?

A: Transportation should follow the guidelines outlined in the [Department of Public Health guidance](#) for each phase of reopening.

Q: Are buses required to have hand sanitizer available?

A: As a best practice recommendation, all passengers should engage in hand hygiene upon entering the bus. Hand sanitizer should not exceed 80 percent alcohol concentration and containers should be securely closed, secured against shifting and protected from damage

Q: Are students required to wear facial coverings on a bus?

A: All adults (as able) should wear a facial covering while engaged in the transportation of students. Students (3rd grade and older) should wear facial coverings to the maximum extent possible while being transported. Additionally, K-2 students should be encouraged to wear facial coverings when possible on school transportation.

Q: Is it necessary to keep the windows down on a bus if it is air conditioned?

A: Yes, windows should be down on transportation to maintain maximum air flow. School systems should consult the [School Reopening Guidance](#) for further information regarding mitigation efforts on transportation.

Additional Operational Considerations

Q: If school employees or students contract COVID-19, will they have the appropriate amount of time to recover?

A: School systems may consider beginning the school year early and ending the school year later, as health and safety permit, in case future school facility closures disrupt learning time. Louisiana's 63,700 instructional minute requirement can be met through face-to-face instruction or remote learning options.

Q: Will school employees have more sick days this school year, and will they be paid for time missed?

A: School systems develop sick leave policies for employees and may choose to adjust them as needed, but are not required to do so. Schools and employees should continue to work closely with legal counsel to determine rights and responsibilities as this area becomes clearer in the months ahead. Individuals need to make the decision to attend in close consultation with their health care provider and school administrators.

Teaching and Learning: School Reopening Best Practices

Q: What trauma informed and/or mental health training will be provided to teachers and school administrators to support students as a result of the pandemic? How will the school system support the students' emotional well-being?

A: LDOE released the [Guide to Supporting the Well-Being of Students and Staff](#). The guide includes free or low-cost mental health screeners that can be used to identify students in need of mental health supports.

Q: Will instructional minutes be required for schools or students that choose virtual learning for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: The 63,720 instructional minute requirement is still in place for the upcoming school year. School systems can meet this requirement when creating their academic calendar. The requirement can be met through face-to-face instruction or through remote learning models where equitable instructional minutes are met through live teacher led lessons, recorded lessons, worksheet assignments, etc.

