Key Health and Safety Information found in NYS Guidance

Health and Safety

Focused on preventive actions, schools and districts will be required to perform health checks and screenings, per DOH guidance, and recognize signs and symptoms of illness in students and staff; develop plans to maximize social distancing; develop plans to manage and isolate ill persons until they can be sent home; instruct students and staff in proper hand and respiratory hygiene; require wearing appropriate face coverings; and develop cleaning and disinfection procedures for the school in accordance with CDC and DOH guidance.

The health and safety of the children and adults in our schools is paramount. Health and safety con­siderations must always come first in every decision made and every action taken by our schools and districts.

Whether instruction is provided in-person, remotely, or through some combination of the two, schools have an important role to play in educating and communicating with school communities about the everyday preventive actions they can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Prevention is accom­plished by following the recommendations of health authorities in the following areas:

1. Health Checks;
2. Healthy Hygiene Practices;
3. Social Distancing;
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Cloth Face Coverings;
5. Management of Ill Persons; and
6. Cleaning and Disinfection.

In each of these categories, schools should note those recommendations that are essential as they represent the minimum standards. Additional considerations are based on best practice or recommen­dations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New York State Depart­ment of Health (NYSDOH) and should also be reviewed and included as feasible in reopening plans. Schools and districts must continually monitor the CDC and DOH websites to keep current with the latest COVID information and guidance.

***Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements***

* + Districts/schools must review and consider the number of students and staff allowed to return in person. These factors should be considered when determining resumption of in person instruc­tion:

-Ability to maintain appropriate social distance

-PPE and cloth face mask availability

-Availability of safe transportation

-Local hospital capacity – consult your local department of health.

* + Districts/schools must engage with school stakeholders and community members (e.g., admin­istrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and affiliated organizations, such as unions, alumni, and/or com­munity-based groups) when developing health and safety reopening plans.

* + District/school plan should identify the groups of people involved and engaged throughout the planning process.

* + District/school plan must include a communications plan for students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information.

* + District/school plan has a written protocol developed in collaboration with the district or school’s director of school health services to instruct staff to observe for signs of illness in students and staff and requires symptomatic persons to be sent to the school nurse or other designated per­sonnel.

* + District/school plan has a written protocol for daily temperature screenings of all students and staff, along with a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff and periodic use of the questionnaire for students.

* + District/school plan requires that ill students and staff be assessed by the school nurse (regis­tered professional nurse, RN) or medical director and that if a school nurse or medical director is not available, ill students and staff will be sent home for follow up with a healthcare provider.

* + District/school plan has written protocol requiring students or staff with a temperature, signs of illness, and/or a positive response to the questionnaire to be sent directly to a dedicated isola­tion area where students are supervised, prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.
  + District/school plan has written protocol to address visitors, guests, contractors, and vendors to the school which includes health screening.

* + District/school plan has a written protocol to instruct parents/guardians to observe for signs of illness in their child that require staying home from school.
  + District/school plan has written protocol and appropriate signage to instruct staff and students in correct hand and respiratory hygiene.
  + District/school plan has written protocol to ensure all persons in school buildings keep social distance of at least 6 feet whenever possible.
  + District/school plan has written protocol detailing how the district/school will provide accommo­dations to all students and staff who are at high risk or live with a person at high risk.
  + District/school plan has written protocol requiring all employees, adult visitors, and students to wear a cloth face covering whenever social distancing cannot be maintained.
  + District/school plan has written protocol regarding students taking mask breaks.
  + District/school has plan for obtaining and maintaining adequate supplies of cloth face coverings for school staff, students who forget their masks, and PPE for use by school health profession­als.
  + District/school plan has written protocol for actions to be taken if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school.
  + District/school plan has written protocol that complies with CDC guidance for the return to school of students and staff following illness or diagnosis of confirmed case of COVID-19 or following quarantine due to contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Return to school will be coordinat­ed with the local health department.
  + District/school plan has written protocol to clean and disinfect schools following CDC guidance.
  + District/school plan has written protocol to conduct required school safety drills with modifications ensuring social distancing between persons.
  + District/school has written plan for district/school run before and aftercare programs.
  + District/school must designate a COVID-19 safety coordinator (administrator) whose responsibili­ties include continuous compliance with all aspects of the school’s reopening plan, as well as any phased-in reopening activities necessary to allow for operational issues to be resolved before activi­ties return to normal or “new normal” levels.

Full New York State Education Department document link: <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>