

Reopening New York

Checklist for Pre-K to Grade 12 School Reopening Plans

All types of public and private (both secular and non-secular) elementary (including pre-kindergarten), middle, and high schools must develop and submit plans for reopening and operating for the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Plans should reflect engagement with school stakeholders and community members, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/legal guardians of students, local health departments, local health care providers, and, where appropriate, affiliated organizations (e.g., union, alumni, and/or community-based groups). Each school district, BOCES, charter school, and private school must develop and submit a plan that, at minimum, covers the topics included in this document. See "[Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools](#)" for more information.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, schools are accountable for staying current with any updates to local, state, and federal requirements related to Pre-K to Grade 12 education and activities, and incorporating those changes into their operations.

Reopening Plan Core Health and Safety Principles

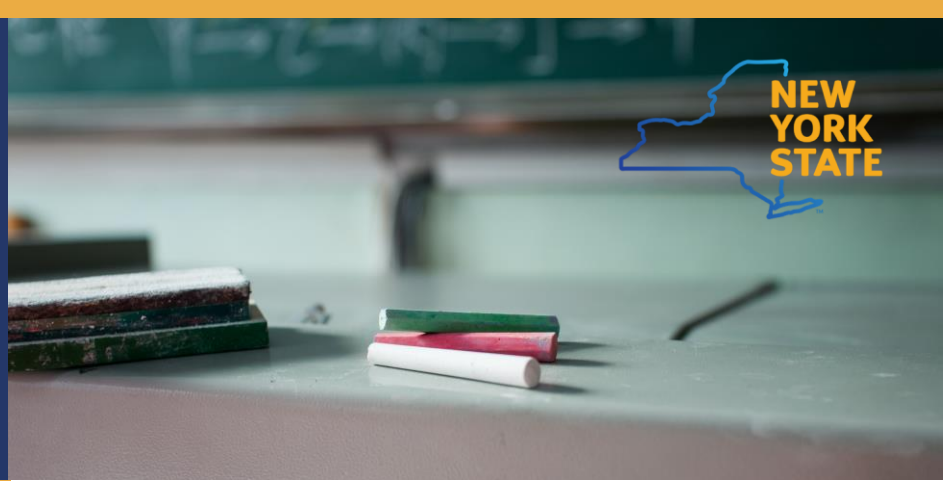
Core Principles and Definitions

- ✓ **Responsible Parties:** Responsible Parties shall be responsible for developing the plan, affirming to having read and adhere to this guidance, and meeting the standards set forth therein. For school districts and BOCES, the district superintendent, or another party as may be designated by the district superintendent, and for private and charter schools, the head of school, or another party as may be designated by the head of school, is the Responsible Parties. The designated party can be an individual or group of individuals responsible for the operations of the school or schools.
- ✓ **Face Coverings:** Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate PPE means, at least, an acceptable face covering, which is strongly recommended to be worn by all individuals at all times but is required to be worn any time or place that individuals cannot maintain appropriate social distancing. However, if face coverings are to be worn by all individuals at all times, Responsible Parties should allow students to remove their face covering during meals, instruction, and for short breaks so long as they maintain an appropriate social distance. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.
- ✓ **Social Distancing:** Responsible Parties must maintain protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Specifically, appropriate social distancing means six feet of space in all directions between individuals or use of appropriate physical barriers between individuals that do not adversely affect air flow, heating, cooling, or ventilation, or otherwise present a health or safety risk. If used, physical barriers must be put in place in accordance with United States Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines, and may include strip curtains, cubicle walls, plexiglass or similar materials, or other impermeable divider or partition.
- ✓ **Spaces:** To reduce social density, Responsible Parties should consider and assess additional and/or alternate indoor space(s) that may be repurposed for instruction or other required purposes in support of in-person instruction within the school facility, school grounds, municipal facilities, municipal grounds, or community (e.g., community centers), as well as outdoor space(s) where health and safety conditions (e.g., allergies, asthma) allow for such potential usage.

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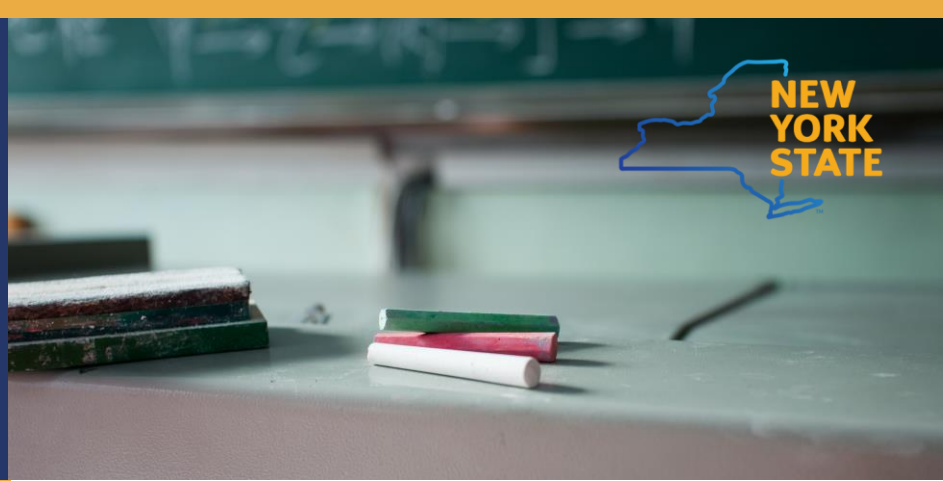
Core Principles and Definitions (cont'd)

- ✓ **In-Person Instruction:** To ensure equity in education, Responsible Parties should prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction at this time. However, based on the dynamic nature of local community transmission of the COVID-19 virus, a phased-in approach or hybrid model combining in-person instruction and remote/distance learning may be necessary at various times through the 2020-2021 school year. In planning for these approaches and models, school plans should indicate if certain students will be prioritized to return to in-person instruction first or more frequently based on educational or other needs (e.g., early grades, students with disabilities, English language learners), given requirements for equity, capacity, social distancing, PPE, feasibility, and learning considerations.
- ✓ **Cohorts:** Responsible Parties should “cohort” students, to the extent practicable, to limit potential exposure to the COVID-19 virus. Cohorts, particularly for younger students, are self-contained, pre-assigned groups of students with reasonable group size limits set forth by the Responsible Parties in their plans. Responsible Parties should enact measures to prevent intermingling between cohorts, to the extent possible (e.g., separation by appropriate social distancing, particularly if there are multiple cohorts in one area). Responsible Parties should make reasonable efforts to ensure that cohorts are fixed—meaning contain the same students—for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Faculty may instruct more than one cohort so long as appropriate social distancing is maintained.
- ✓ **Screening:** Responsible Parties must implement mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Specifically, all individuals must have their temperature checked each day. If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.0°F, the individual must be denied entry into the facility or sent directly to a dedicated area prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home. Responsible Parties must also use a daily screening questionnaire for faculty and staff reporting to school; and periodically use a questionnaire for students, particularly younger students, who may require the assistance of their parent/legal guardian to answer. Remote health screening (e.g., by electronic survey, digital application, or telephone, which may involve the parent/legal guardian) before any individual reports to school, is strongly advised.

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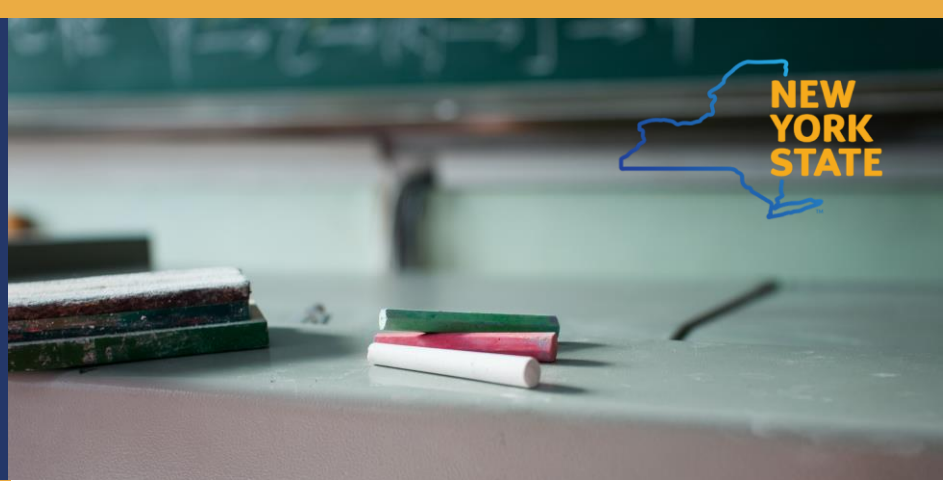
Core Principles and Definitions (cont'd)

- ✓ **Transportation:** Consistent with State-issued public transit [guidance](#), Responsible Parties must develop protocols and procedures, which include that individuals must wear an acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate social distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Responsible Parties should encourage parents/legal guardians to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.
- ✓ **Food Services:** Responsible Parties must continue to provide school breakfast and/or lunch to students who were previously receiving school meals, both on site and remote. For students on site, Responsible Parties must provide meals while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced. Responsible Parties may serve meals in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.
- ✓ **Ventilation:** Responsible Parties should increase ventilation with outdoor air to the greatest extent possible (e.g., opening windows and doors) while maintaining health and safety protocols, particularly for younger students.
- ✓ **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Responsible Parties must adhere to and promote hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by New York State Department of Health (DOH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Responsible Parties must train all students, faculty, and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Responsible Parties must maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection, as well as identify cleaning and disinfection frequency for each facility and area type and assign responsibility to staff.
- ✓ **Contact Tracing:** Responsible Parties must notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual within school facilities or on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff, and visitors. In the case of an individual testing positive, Responsible Parties must develop and maintain plans to support local health departments in tracing all contacts of the individual, in accordance with the protocols, training, and tools provided through the [New York State Contact Tracing Program](#). Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state law and regulations. Responsible Parties must cooperate with all state and local health department contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine efforts.

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Reopening Plan Core Health and Safety Principles

Core Principles and Definitions (cont'd)

- ✓ **Return to School:** Responsible Parties must establish protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, particularly students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. This return to school protocol shall include, at minimum, documentation from a health care provider following evaluation, negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result, and symptom resolution, or if COVID-19 positive, release from isolation. Responsible Parties should refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure](#)" regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

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Reopening Plan Checklist (minimum requirements)

Reopening

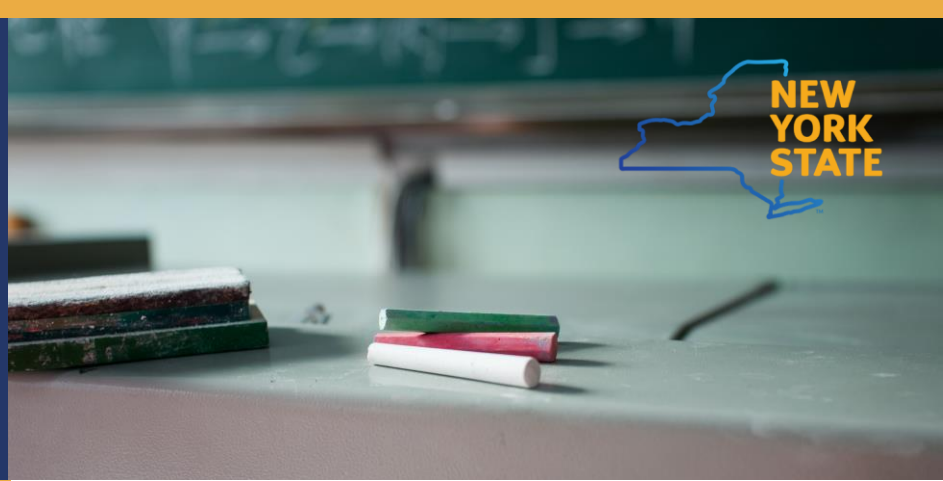
Protocols and procedures for restarting school operations including students, faculty, and staff returning to in-person instruction.

- ✓ **Capacity:** Phasing and quantity of students, faculty, and staff allowed to return in-person, considering factors such as ability to maintain appropriate social distance, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, local medical capacity, and availability of safe transportation;
- ✓ **Social distancing:** Protocols and procedures for students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing when on school grounds and in school facilities;
- ✓ **PPE and Face Coverings:** Protocols and procedures for students, faculty, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate PPE is used to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Plans for all students, faculty, and staff to have the required PPE (i.e., acceptable face coverings) before entering school facilities, grounds, or any other space owned or administered by the school or school district (e.g., school buses);
- ✓ **Operational Activity:** Determinations on how classes, shared spaces, and activities may be adapted in various phases of learning and operations (e.g., identify which, if any, students will be offered alternate approaches, such as alternative schedules or hybrids of in-person and remote learning; how additional and alternative—school and non-school—spaces can be used for, or in support of, in-person instruction; how such schedules could be administered to create overlap for students from the same household; how shared spaces, such as cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, and gymnasiums, will be modified and used; and if and how cohorts will be implemented). Policies regarding field trips, special congregate events, and visitors considering risks for COVID-19 transmission, as well as protocols and procedures for social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, which may include conducting virtual events;
- ✓ **Restart Operations:** Plans to safely reopen facilities and grounds, such as cleaning and disinfection, and restarting building ventilation, water systems, and other key facility components, as applicable;
- ✓ **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Protocols and procedures for school-wide cleaning and disinfection of classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, libraries, playgrounds, school buses, and all other school facilities, as well as training and promotion of hand and respiratory hygiene among all individuals in school facilities and on school grounds;

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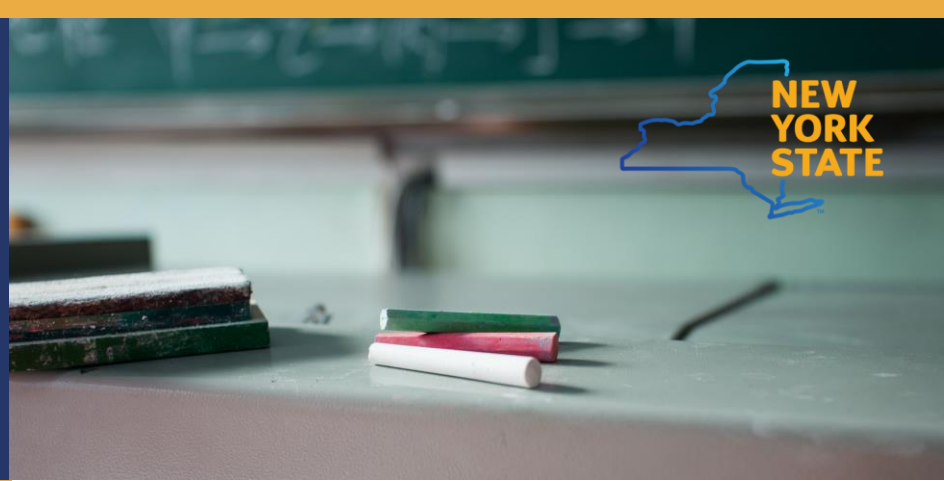
Reopening (cont'd)

- ✓ **Extracurriculars:** Policies regarding extracurricular programs and which activities will be allowed, considering social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., interscholastic sports, assemblies, and other gatherings). Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or members of the same household. Schools Responsible Parties should refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" to assist in development of these policies; however, interscholastic sports are not permitted at the time of publication of the guidance, and additional information on athletic activities is forthcoming;
- ✓ **Before and Aftercare:** Policies regarding before and aftercare programs, considering social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection requirements, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission. Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or group members of the same household;
- ✓ **Vulnerable Populations:** Policies regarding vulnerable populations, including students, faculty and staff who are at [increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness](#), and individuals who may not feel comfortable returning to an in-person educational environment, to allow them to safely participate in educational activities and, where appropriate, accommodate their specific circumstances. These accommodations may include but are not limited to remote learning or telework, modified educational or work settings, or providing additional PPE to individuals with underlying health conditions. Responsible Parties must also identify and describe any modifications to social distancing or PPE that may be necessary for certain student or staff populations, including individuals who have hearing impairment or loss, students receiving language services, and young students in early education programs, ensuring that any modifications minimize COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff, to the greatest extent possible;

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Reopening Plan Checklist (minimum requirements)

Reopening (cont'd)

- ✓ **Transportation:** Consistent with State-issued public transit [guidance](#), protocols and procedures, which include that individuals must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated), and that individuals should maintain appropriate social distancing, unless they are members of the same household. Protocols and procedures should include how school buses will be adapted to keep students and staff safe (e.g., how face coverings will be provided to students in need, how members of the same household will be seated together, how social distancing will be conducted on buses, whether bus schedules will be adapted to accommodate reduced capacity, whether any health screening will be conducted at home before students board buses, how parents/legal guardians will be encouraged to drop off or walk students to reduce density on buses);
- ✓ **Food Services:** Protocols and procedures for onsite and remote food services for students, considering appropriate social distancing and any modifications to service that may be necessary (e.g., providing meals in a combination of classrooms and cafeterias, staggering meal periods). Measures to protect students with food allergies if providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria. Protocols and procedures must also include how students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, how appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted, and how sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged. Additionally, protocols and procedures must account for cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area (e.g., cafeteria);
- ✓ **Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services and Programs:** Available resources and referrals to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens for in-person instruction (e.g., how they will identify and support students having difficulty with transitioning back into the school setting, especially given the changed school environment). Any training for faculty and staff on how to talk with, and support, students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, as well as information on developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty, and staff; and

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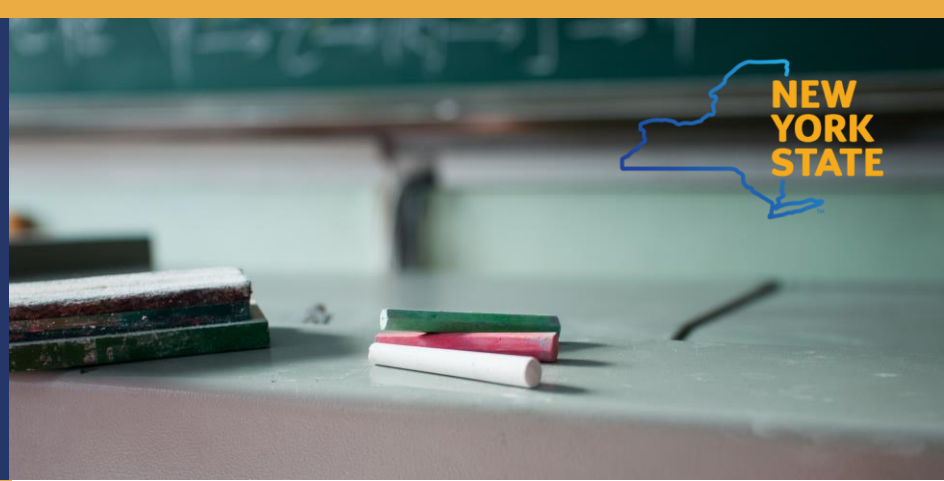
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Reopening (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication: Communications plans for students, parents/legal guardians of students, faculty, staff and visitors that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. Plans should describe how schools will communicate with students and families about preparing for the upcoming year, which should include adapting to social distancing requirements, properly wearing face coverings, and proper hand and respiratory hygiene. Consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media to disseminate information. Schools should develop communication plans in multiple languages, as necessary.
Monitoring <i>Protocols and procedures to track health conditions at schools.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Screening: Protocols and procedures for mandatory health screenings, including temperature checks, of students, faculty, staff, and, where applicable, contractors, vendors, and visitors to identify any individuals who may have COVID-19 or who may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Responsible Parties should consider limiting the number of visitors permitted on school grounds or in school facilities, and, if visitors are allowed, screening of such visitors; ✓ Testing Protocols: Process for the provision or referral of diagnostic testing for students, faculty, and staff for COVID-19, in consultation with local health department officials, when needed, which should include plans for testing of symptomatic individuals, close contacts of COVID-19 suspected or confirmed individuals, and individuals with recent international travel or travel within a state with widespread transmission of COVID-19 as designated through the New York State Travel Advisory, before allowing such individuals to return to in-person to the school; ✓ Testing Responsibility: Identification of who in the community is responsible for referring, sourcing, and administering testing (e.g., local health department testing site, physician offices, hospital system, etc.), particularly in the event that large-scale testing at the school is needed; and ✓ Early Warning Signs: Defined metrics that will serve as early warning signs that positive COVID-19 cases may be increasing beyond an acceptable level, as established by state and local health departments; define and deploy method(s) to monitor against such metrics.



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Containment

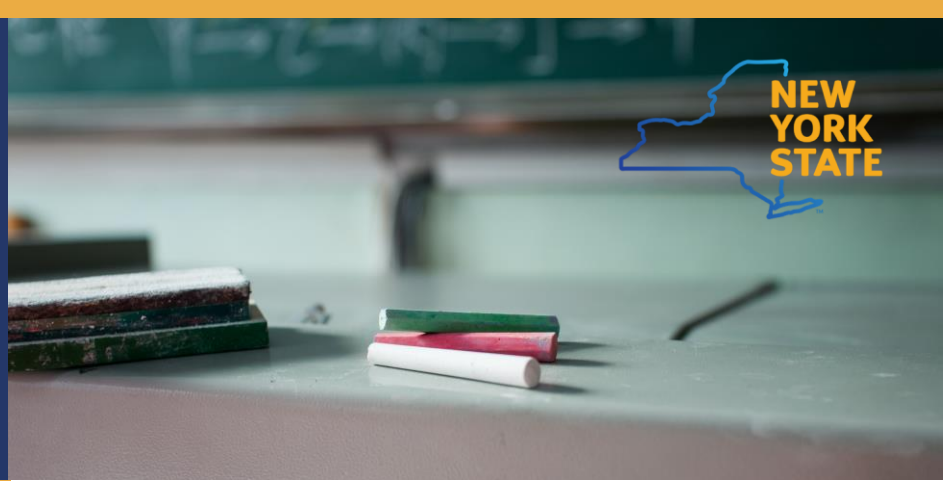
Protocols and procedures for how to respond to positive or presumed-positive cases, as well as preventative practices.

- ✓ **School Health Offices:** Protocols for safely caring for a student, faculty, or staff member if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day;
- ✓ **Isolation:** Procedures to isolate individuals who screen positive upon arrival, or symptomatic individuals should they become symptomatic while at school, providing appropriate PPE for school health office staff caring for the symptomatic individual. Protocols for safe transportation, including pick-up arrangements, if applicable, for symptomatic students, faculty, and staff;
- ✓ **Collection:** Protocols for how parents or legal guardians should pick up their student with instructions that the student must be seen by a health care provider;
- ✓ **Infected Individuals:** Requirements that persons who have tested positive complete isolation and have recovered, and will not transmit COVID-19 when returning to in-person learning. Discharge from isolation and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department;
- ✓ **Exposed Individuals:** Requirements that individuals who were exposed to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. Discharge from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department;
- ✓ **Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection:** Adherence to, and promotion of, hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection guidance set forth by DOH and CDC, including strategies for cleaning and disinfection of exposed areas and appropriate notification to occupants of such areas;
- ✓ **Contact Tracing:** Plans to support local health departments in contact tracing efforts using the protocols, training, and tools provided through the [New York State Contact Tracing Program](#) – an initiative between the Department of Health, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Vital Strategies; and
- ✓ **Communication:** Plans to share protocols and safety measures taken by the school with all relevant parties including parents/legal guardians, faculty, staff, students and the local community.

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Closure

Contingency plans, protocols, and procedures for decreasing the scale or scope of in-person education, and/or closing the school.

- ✓ **Closure triggers:** Identification of the conditions that may warrant reducing in-person education or closing the school, in consultation with state and local health departments, and plan for an orderly closure;
- ✓ **Operational Activity:** Determination of which operations will be decreased, or ceased and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly closures which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel; and
- ✓ **Communication:** Plan to communicate internally and externally throughout the closure process.

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