

Indiana's Considerations for  
Learning and Safe Schools  
**IN-CLASS**

*COVID-19 Health and Safety  
Re-entry Guidance*



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# Document Overview

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Considerations outlined within this Indiana's Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools (IN-CLASS) document are intended to provide all Indiana districts and schools with guidance for preparing school operations under the current pandemic environment. The conditions, current medical landscape, and growing body of knowledge surrounding COVID-19 continue to evolve. This reality presents challenges to planning, preparing, and guiding school operations.

**Therefore, expect document revisions accordingly.** The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) will continue to coordinate with the Governor's Office, the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH), and the Indiana General Assembly (IGA) to provide guidance. Districts and schools are encouraged to communicate with local authorities and always adhere to the most recent and restrictive recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In light of this new pandemic environment, schools must understand two key factors: 1) the school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy school environment, and 2) the prevalence of COVID-19 in their community. Schools will need to constantly evaluate these two key factors as schools and communities will most likely fluctuate between the various phases of disease transmission over the coming months. **Per Governor Holcomb's executive order, Indiana schools are allowed to reopen on July 1.** Administrators should work with their local health departments to assess the schools ability to implement the necessary health and safety measures required to prevent the spread of disease. Schools are encouraged to review the [CDC's Decision Tree](#), the [CDC Considerations for Schools](#), and the [CDC's Community Mitigation Strategies](#) in order to determine their preparedness for reopening.

IN-CLASS considerations are based on recommendations and/or statute. Due to capacity and resource limitations, not all districts and schools will be able to address or implement all the considerations listed. **Districts and schools should use this document as a guide and consult with local health departments to secure contact information for their public health nurse or local health officer. In addition, relevant stakeholders and local legal counsel should be consulted to determine which considerations are feasible and the most appropriate way to proceed.**

# Considerations: Operations for Indiana Schools

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IN-CLASS provides a guide of considerations to inform schools and districts as they approach planning and preparing school operations surrounding COVID-19. This document reflects considerations as of the date published.

Local school boards, led by superintendents and administrative teams, should work with appropriate stakeholders to focus on the immediate needs to prepare for school operations under the current pandemic. The following items are provided for consideration during the planning process.

- ❑ Adopt a blanket local resolution suspending future policies that conflict with statutory waivers or extensions granted by the Governor, IDOE, or IGA.
- ❑ Contact district/school insurance carrier to discuss specifics of liability coverage.
- ❑ Continue to work with school attorneys, local school board, and local bargaining unit throughout. As a reminder, school employers have an obligation to discuss with the exclusive representative of certificated employees the items set forth in Indiana Code 20-29-6-7
- ❑ Ensure information on the COVID-19 federal leave is posted in *all* buildings. (See the U.S. Department of Labor’s [Employee Rights](#) poster, [available in multiple languages](#).)
- ❑ Review current [ISDH Guidance for Employers During COVID-19](#) concerning COVID-19 related Workman’s Compensation.
- ❑ Encourage staff to update contact information, verify the health and safety of employee and employee families, and communicate to staff a return-to-work plan at the beginning of the school year and/or at other necessary returns. Work with your human resources department and/or local school attorneys.
- ❑ Contact the district/school’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or health insurance provider and inform staff of available resources.
- ❑ Review and revise the 2020-2021 school year calendar and build in contingencies.  
*Districts should anticipate and plan for 180 days of instruction.*
  - The mandatory 180 days of instruction can consist of onsite, virtual, or blended (hybrid) instruction.

- Shorter or longer breaks should be considered.
  - Semester calendar discussions and/or approval, rather than the entire school year calendar approval, might also be an option for some.
  - Be purposeful in staff PD days considering the possibility of intermittent or permanent building closures impacting instructional days.
- ☐ Review an alternative command structure if administrative and/or key employees are unable to work.
  - ☐ Review policies and procedures included in handbooks and athletic codes of conduct documents to provide more flexibility and remove punitive measures for absences when there is determined illness, a localized outbreak, or exposure of a contagious disease.
  - ☐ Establish predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies by following ISDH's recommendation to work with your local health department in following the CDC guidance which can be found [here](#) (Reference page three, "When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission." ), and ISDH's mitigation strategy document which can be found in [Appendix F](#).
  - ☐ Review the plan and supply inventory to thoroughly clean and disinfect all buildings, desks, buses, equipment, and other surfaces prior to students and/or staff returning and after return, using [CDC](#), [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), and [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) guidelines.
  - ☐ Review and revise your district/school's *School Safety Plan*. As a reminder, all *School Safety Plans* must be reviewed and signed-off by the superintendent within 60 days of your first instructional day.
  - ☐ Review Drill Consideration [Guidance](#) for the following drills: fire, man-made, tornado, bus evacuation.
  - ☐ Review social distancing expectations found in *Social Distancing in the School Environment*. [Appendix B](#).
  - ☐ Review procedures for buildings to prepare and provide daily health reports to the superintendent or central office in order for him or her to be informed and make determinations.
    - Track reasons for student and staff absences.
    - Report positive cases of COVID-19 (one or more) to the local health department for additional closing guidance and contact tracking.
      - ☐ [CDC Schools Decision Tree](#)
      - ☐ [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)
    - Ensure positive COVID-19 cases are also reported to the [Indiana Department of Education](#).

- ❑ Develop screening procedures by following guidance. See [Appendix A](#).
- ❑ Review student and staff daily schedules to provide adequate time for handwashing, sanitizing desks, and other good hygiene practices. For specific hygiene practices, see [Appendix A](#).
- ❑ Review school clinic procedures to minimize infection. See [Appendix A](#).
  - Provide a separate room or holding area for students/staff who might have COVID-19 or other communicable diseases and are waiting for pickup. The room needs to be disinfected frequently and restricted to authorized staff/students.
- ❑ Review personal wellness inventory and order necessary supplies.
  - Touch-free thermometers
  - Sanitizers/cleanser, hand soap, and tissues
  - [Recommended face covering usage](#)
  - Touch-free trash cans, receptacles, and other supplies
- ❑ Review guidance related to serving students with special needs. See [Appendix D](#).
- ❑ Review and/or create student health plans. Work with families and/or related physicians to determine if education services and/or health plans need to be revised to address the need to minimize infection and account for mental health-related issues.
- ❑ Review and/or create staff health plans. Work with physicians to determine if working conditions should be revised to address the need to minimize infection. The work environment should be kept as safe as possible, following the [CDC Guidelines for Schools](#) to the extent practicable.
- ❑ Review and revise the district/school's relevant human resource policies and handbooks for clarity to address attendance issues related to potential COVID-19 exposure, illness, and concerns. Keep in mind any emergency laws that are in effect and are applicable to schools (for example, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act).
- ❑ Review and revise job descriptions for appropriate duties during future school closure.
- ❑ Review Indiana's Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Re-entry Considerations. [Appendix C](#).
- ❑ Review and revise the district/school's technology plan and examine what steps can be recommended to the school board to expand the number of students with fast and reliable home Internet access and take-home devices in preparation for intermittent and/or continuous remote learning.
- ❑ Review and revise the district/school's *Continuous Learning Plan*. Updated plans need to be completed in anticipation of calendar interruptions during the 2020-2021 school

year.

- ❑ Guidance regarding Career and Technical Education will fall under the authority of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet.
- ❑ Review and revise the district/school’s professional development plan to provide relevant training for certified staff, non-certified staff, and substitute teachers. Suggestions include:
  - Plan for training on symptoms of COVID-19, prevention techniques, and district/school procedures.
  - Best practice for remote learning as determined by *Continuous Learning Plans*.
  - Best practices in math and literacy remediation.
  - Best practices to assess academic loss. [Formative Assessment Memo](#)
  - Signs of mental health stress in students and staff, trauma-informed practices, best practices to address social, emotional, and behavioral wellness.
    - ❑ [SEL Roadmap to Re-entry](#)
  - Individual staff members’ discussed responsibilities if shutdown occurs during the school year.
  - Train custodial staff on effective methods of cleaning and disinfecting work and play areas and the time schedules for cleaning.
- ❑ Review and/or revise budgets, including federal and state grant budgets.
  - Determine how federal COVID-19 funding and other state or federal grants should be spent. Knowing local, state, and federal funds are vulnerable, approaching budgeting in a conservative manner is advised.
  - Consider needed and available resources to implement *Continuous Learning Plans* and reentry for 2020-2021.
  - Plan for increase of educational services to provide compensatory services to special education students and to assist challenged students to re-engage in school.
  - Track excess costs of COVID-19-related expenses for funding/grant purposes such as the [FEMA Public Assistance Program](#) or the [CARES Act](#).
- ❑ Review school supply lists to ensure lists are sensitive to the current economic circumstances of the community.
- ❑ Review policies and procedures to address volunteers, visitors, collegiate interns, and deliveries.
- ❑ Review and/or revise the district or school’s facilities usage plan based on recommendations from the [CDC Considerations for Schools](#).
- ❑ Plan and prepare for academic and social, emotional, and behavioral wellness.
  - Considering academic loss from 2019-2020, read this document regarding

identifying [skill gaps](#).

- Considering social, emotional, and/or behavioral wellness needs, review [IDOE's SEL Roadmap for Re-entry](#) for ideas.
  - [National Association of School Psychologists: Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19](#)
  - [Guidance created by the CDC to help teachers and parents talk with their students about COVID 19](#)
- ❑ Prepare for the possibility of an increased need for substitute employees in all positions given substitutes can be very difficult to secure. Plan for reduced staff operations and increased costs.
- ❑ Review [information](#) pertaining to residential schools.
- ❑ Develop a district/school communications plan to account for the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation. See this [Communications Guidance for Indiana School Re-entry](#) to capture ideas.



## Health Protocol for Schools

It is essential for the school community to work together to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in the school environment and in the community while still providing a quality education program.

State statute gives public school districts the authority to exclude students who have a contagious disease such as COVID-19 or are liable to transmit it after exposure (IC 20-34-3-9). In addition, the local health department has the authority to exclude students from school and may order students and others to isolate or quarantine (IC 16-41-9-1.6). As such, districts/schools are encouraged to work closely with their local health departments.

### Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School

Students and employees [should be trained](#) to recognize the following COVID-19-related symptoms:

- A fever of 100.4° F or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Students and employees should be excluded from school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19 based on [CDC Guidance](#) that is not otherwise explained.

### Return to School After Exclusion

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC. Currently those guidelines are:

#### ***Untested***

Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of COVID-19 but experience symptoms may return if the following three conditions are met:

- They have not had a fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- At least 10 calendar days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
- The state [website](#) has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location, and hours

of operation. This list is updated frequently.

### ***Tested Positive- Symptomatic***

Persons who experienced symptoms and have been tested for COVID-19 may return to school if the following conditions are met:

- The individual no longer has a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers); and
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved); and
- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
- The individual has received two negative tests at least 24 hours apart.

### ***Tested Positive- Asymptomatic***

Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 may return when they have gone ten calendar days without symptoms and have been released by a healthcare provider. Students may also return if they are approved to do so in writing by the student's health care provider.

### ***Tested Positive- Impact on School Operations***

Establish predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies by following ISDH's recommendation to work with your local health department in following the CDC guidance which can be found [here](#). Reference page three, "When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission."

## **Screening**

The current [CDC guidelines](#) recommend screening all students and employees for COVID-19 symptoms and history of exposure. Screening can consist of self-screening, school-based screening, and/or medical inquiries. The type and extent of screening is at the discretion of the district/school.

- ***Self-Screening***  
At a minimum, districts/schools are strongly encouraged to communicate information to parents and employees about the symptoms of COVID-19 and require them to self-screen before coming to school. Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (See Appendix A-Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School) without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they should be sent home immediately.
- ***School-Based Screening***
  - ***Temperature Screening***  
Using temperature checks for screening purposes can present challenges. Most districts/schools do not have enough staff and equipment to screen temperatures as students and staff are entering the building and/or

loading buses, and there is a shortage of accurate, touch-free thermometers and other medical devices to conduct the screenings. Even if a district/school has the resources to screen temperatures, these efforts will not eliminate the risk in the building and/or on buses. Each district/school needs to determine if this method of screening is worth the expense independently. The district/school may take the temperature of students, employees and visitors on school property on a random basis or in situations where there is reason to believe that the person may be ill. Touch-free thermometers are recommended.

- *Observational/Self-Reported Screening*  
Districts/schools are encouraged to provide professional development regarding the recognition of COVID-19 symptoms and screening. (See page seven - Review and Revise Districts Professional; Development Plan) Students and employees exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (See Appendix A-Symptoms Impacting Consideration for Exclusion from School) without being otherwise explained, are prohibited from coming to school, and if they do come to school, they should be sent home immediately.

### **Medical Inquiries**

Federal law typically limits the type of medical inquiries that can be made, but given the nature of the pandemic more leeway has been given to districts/schools in this circumstance to make additional medical inquiries of staff and students than would otherwise be allowed.

- If a parent tells the district/school that a student is ill, the district/school may ask the parent whether the student is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
- If an employee calls in sick or appears ill, the district/school can inquire as to whether the employee is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a person is obviously ill, the district/school may make additional inquiries and may exclude the person from school property.

Even without symptoms, if a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, has someone in their home being tested for COVID-19, or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, the district/school may exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine for 14 calendar days.

### **Wearing Masks and Other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Non-students**

Mask-wearing requirements or recommendations in schools should be consistent with state and local guidelines. The current [CDC guidelines](#) recommend that all employees wear cloth face coverings.

- Some non-students may be required to wear additional PPE (i.e. health-related, custodial staff, specialized positions, etc.) when directed to do so by district/school protocol or the employee’s supervisor.
- It may be necessary for schools to provide masks.
- Additional accommodations may need to be made for staff based on their individual

health plan.

- If districts are unable to provide masks and/or additional necessary PPE, administration will work with non-students to meet the requirements.

### **Wearing Masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - Students**

Mask-wearing requirements or recommendations in schools should be consistent with state and local guidelines. The current [CDC guidelines](#) recommend that all students wear cloth face coverings.

- Some students may be required to wear additional PPE (i.e. health-related, special conditions, etc.) when directed to do so by student health plans.
- It may be necessary for schools to provide masks for those students.
- Additional accommodations may need to be made for students based on their individual health plan.

### **Clinical Space COVID -19 Symptomatic**

It is recommended that each school have a room or space separate from the nurse's clinic where students or employees who are feeling ill are evaluated or wait for pick up. All waiting staff and students should wear a cloth face covering. Only essential staff assigned to the room may enter. A record will be kept of all persons who entered the room and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Strict social distancing is required and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their parents. If a student or staff member has a fever, for any reason, it is recommended that the district/school adjust their school policy to require staff and students to be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for 72 hours before returning to school. Additionally, all staff and students with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should be encouraged to seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions. Students and staff may return before the 72 hour window has elapsed if they are approved to do so in writing by their healthcare provider.

### **Clinic Space Non-COVID-19 Related**

Students who do not display symptoms of COVID-19 can be seen and treated in the nurse's clinic. These would include students who are injured during the school day or students with special health care needs such as those with chronic health conditions (i.e. - diabetes or seizures), those requiring medical treatments (i.e. - suctioning, tube feeding, or nebulizers), and those with individual health plans.

### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 on School Property**

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was on school property, the district/school will contact the local health department immediately. It is important to also notify the [Indiana Department of Education](#). Unless extenuating circumstances exist, the district/school will work with the local health department to assess factors such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine building closure.

It is the responsibility of the local health department to contact the person confirmed with COVID-19, inform direct contacts of their possible exposure, and give instructions to those

involved with the confirmed case, including siblings and other household members regarding self-quarantine and exclusions. The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications to the school community at large but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the local health department.

If a closure is determined necessary, schools should consult with their local health department to determine the status of school activities including extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and before and after-school programs.

As soon as the district/school becomes aware of a student or employee who has been exposed to or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the custodial staff will be informed, so that impacted building or bus areas, furnishings, and equipment are thoroughly disinfected. If possible, based upon student and staff presence, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours or as long as possible prior to disinfecting. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

### **Immunizations**

Immunization requirements should remain. Assistance through local health departments and health systems will be provided.

### **Preventative Measures**

The priority for preventing the spread of disease in the school setting is to insist that sick employees and students stay home. Additionally, students and employees should remain home if someone in the household has COVID-19 symptoms or is being tested for COVID-19. Sharing this message with the school community and having a policy in place that ill persons must stay home for a minimum of 72 hours before returning to school is the first and most important step district/schools should take. It is recommended that schools review any attendance bonus or similar attendance reward programs and consider modifying or suspending such programs to avoid encouraging employees and students to come to school when they are sick. As a reminder, schools need to ensure they are complying with Indiana's collective bargaining laws with respect to certificated staff under Indiana Code 20-29-6.

Some people can be infected with COVID-19, but show no signs of illness even though they are contagious and can spread the disease to others. It is also unknown how contagious people are the day or two before they begin to exhibit illness symptoms. Thus, these employees or students may be present at school, will show no signs of illness, but be capable of transmitting the disease to others. In these situations, the three most important mitigation strategies are social distancing, frequent handwashing, and appropriate PPE.

Social distancing can be accomplished in many different ways and it is up to the district/school to determine which strategies would work best in their unique situation. Suggestions and guidance regarding social distancing can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Handwashing and avoiding touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth are also important steps a person can take to avoid becoming sick or spreading germs to others. Districts/schools should

insist that employees and students wash their hands often and if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Districts/schools should incorporate key times into the school day when all persons should wash their hands.

Reinforcing healthy habits regarding handwashing is expected and guidance can be found [here](#).

These key times should be done in a staggered class pattern to maintain social distancing between students and include:

- Start of the school day
- Before eating
- After using the restroom
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using shared equipment

Water fountains should not be utilized in schools until further notice. Water should be accessible.

More information regarding preventative measures can be found below.

- [Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [Social Distancing](#)
- [Handwashing](#)
- [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)
- [Cleaning Procedures and Considerations](#)
- [Proper Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#)
- [Parent Checklist](#)
  - [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)

### **Exchange of Resources to and From School**

Every effort should be made to reduce the amount of materials, supplies, and personal belongings going to and from school. The same consideration should be given to reducing student exposure to high-touch, shared resources at school.

## Social Distancing in the School Environment

The following are measures that districts/schools can take to increase social distancing while still maintaining a level of face-to-face instruction. Once the district/school creates protocols, they should be communicated to parents, students, staff and the public. The district/school should note these protocols may evolve as they are implemented, and more information is obtained about COVID-19.

### **Review optional educational programming for alternatives that meet the needs of all students:**

- Schedule specified groups of students to attend in-person school on alternate days or half days to minimize the number of students in the building. Those students not attending in-person should be expected to engage in remote/continuous learning.
- Consider year-round schooling with alternating breaks to minimize the numbers of students in the building at any time.
- Provide in-person instruction to elementary students and increase distance learning opportunities for secondary grade levels.
- Offer both in-person and remote instruction based on student need and parent concerns.

### **Review course sizes, structure, and classrooms to decrease infection:**

- Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff as much as possible.
- Close communal use spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds if possible. Otherwise, stagger use and disinfect in between use.
- Reorganize P.E., choir, band, orchestra, and other large classes to allow for smaller classes, social distancing, and other precautions.
- Eliminate or reorganize assemblies, field trips, registrations, orientations, round-ups, and other large gatherings to allow for social distancing.
- Alternate recess to minimize the number of students on the playground, encourage social distancing, and allow time to disinfect equipment between uses.
- Increase space between students during in-person instruction.
- Move classes outdoors whenever possible.
- Rearrange desks to increase space between students.
- Face desks in the same direction.
- Require students to remain seated in the classroom and assign seats.
- Eliminate activities that combine classes or grade levels.
- Eliminate or minimize whole staff gatherings/meetings.

- Eliminate or minimize students traveling to different buildings to receive services.
- Eliminate or minimize employees traveling between buildings.
- Consider broadcasting in-class instruction to multiple locations to allow students to spread out and/or learn from home.
- Consider a homeroom stay-in-place system where teachers rotate, as opposed to the students changing classrooms.
- Limit or eliminate classroom visitors.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment, etc. assigned to a single child) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between uses.
- Avoid or minimize the sharing of electronic devices, toys, books, art supplies, and other games or learning aids when possible.
- Discourage the use of attendance awards or perfect attendance incentives for students.

**Review nutrition service procedures to minimize exposure:**

If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, meals should ideally be served in classrooms instead. Programs should not participate in family style meals and should practice social distancing during meal times. Static groups should be maintained during meal times. Bagged or boxed meals with all necessary utensils, condiments, napkins, etc. included would be the preferred method. In addition, prior to any meal service, all children should utilize hand washing or sanitizing to ensure safe eating practices.

- Eliminate self-serve food items.
- Napkins and silverware (disposable if possible) are provided directly by staff, not for individuals to grab.
- Install engineering controls such as sneeze guards in cafeteria serving lines.
- Plan to serve medically fragile students separately from other students.
- Place tape marks on the floor to promote social distancing while waiting in line.
- Prohibit food-sharing.
- Classroom party items should be commercially prepared and prepackaged.
- Limit cash transactions. Staff handling cash should not also handle food.
- Implement a policy prohibiting eating on the bus unless medically necessary.
- Provide hand sanitizer during vending machine use and clean vending machines regularly.
- PPE should be provided to all food service staff, including students preparing and serving food.
- Work with local health department officials to comply with all requirements for your county.



**Implement measures to decrease students congregating in one location:**

- Assign students to use different entrances or create directional paths.
- Stagger drop-off and pick-up processes.
- Stagger times that classes are released.
- Require students to stay in an assigned section of the schoolyard or playground as opposed to mingling with other classes.
- Schedule restroom breaks to avoid overcrowding.
- Rearrange furniture to avoid clustering in common areas.
- In locations where students line up, place tape marks on the floor to indicate appropriate social distancing.

**Implement measures to decrease employees congregating in one location:**

- Limit usage of the staff/teacher's lounge.
- Encourage virtual meetings.
- Make alternate plans for whole staff gatherings.
- Rearrange workstations to encourage social distancing.

**Take measures so persons exposed can be more easily traced by the health department:**

- Use assigned seating when possible.
- Use sign-in sheets for in-person meetings to document attendees.
- Keep accurate records of any persons other than students and staff entering the building, their reason for entering, and the locations in the building to which they travel.

**Minimize or eliminate the need for people to be in the building other than necessary employees and students:**

- Restrict vendor access to the school to times when students are not present.
- Prohibit family visits or minimize visits.
- Restrict the number of people in the school building who are not students or staff to a minimal number and ensure that someone is assigned to enforce the rules.
- Post lowered revised maximum occupancy numbers.

## Indiana's Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Re-entry Considerations

Unique requirements for a district/school's region or county must be followed regardless of the phase defined below. In addition, given the fluid situation of COVID-19, these considerations are subject to change. Read the phases carefully as the considerations are gradually expanded in many areas.

### Phase I: July 6-July 19

- Student athletes should be limited to 15 hours per week on campus.
- Individual student athletes are limited to 15 total hours of school contact activity per calendar week. (The Sunday Rule will be enforced)
- School contact activity includes conditioning and sport-specific activities.
- No sport may have more than two activity days per calendar week. Each sport must register their activity days in the office of the Athletic Director at least 10 days in advance. Sport-specific activity days may not occur on consecutive calendar days.
- Activity days are limited to three hours per day. (Six hours per calendar week.)
- Conditioning is limited to four days per week. Conditioning sessions may be held multiple times each day, each session limited to two hours. Student athletes may attend only one conditioning session per day.
- **ALL SUMMER ACTIVITIES ARE VOLUNTARY**
- All State and local guidelines for group limitations must be followed and social distancing is encouraged.
- Any student who prefers to wear a face covering for activities should be allowed, if doing so will not cause a health risk.
- Students, when not engaging in vigorous activity and when practical, should wear face coverings. See [Appendix A](#).
- Non-students, including coaches, medical-related staff, directors, security staff, supervisors, etc. should wear face coverings at all times unless under rigorous activity or poses a health risk. See [Appendix A](#).
- Only essential student athletes, student participants, coaches, medical staff, related supervisors, directors, and security should be in attendance.
- Consideration should be given to [vulnerable individuals](#) and it is encouraged for those individuals to seek medical guidance regarding his/her individual level of participation.
- An alternate command structure for coaching staff should be established in case of illness.
- Prior to participation, all first-time student athletes are required to have an IHSAA pre-participation physical for the upcoming school year. Returning student athletes are not required to obtain a new IHSAA pre-participation physical, but should provide a

[2020-21 IHSA Health History Update Questionnaire and Consent & Release Certificate](#) prior to participation.

- All students and staff [should be trained](#) and screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating in workouts, rehearsals, or practices. See [Appendix A](#).
  - Any person with COVID-19-related symptoms should not be allowed to take part in workouts, rehearsals, or practices and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
    - The State [website](#) has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.
  - Any person with a positive COVID-19 test shall trigger the established predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies by following ISDH's recommendation to work with your local health department in following the CDC guidance which can be found [here](#). Reference page 3, "When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission."
  - Coaches must track COVID-19 impacted attendance and report to district/school administration.
  - Follow specific return to school protocol in reference to participation for student athletes or staff members who no longer test positive and/or no longer display symptoms of COVID-19. See [Appendix A](#), reference *Return to School After Exclusion*.
  - Districts/schools are encouraged to [post signs](#) displaying symptoms to educate students.
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating. If this is not possible, hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Locker rooms should not be utilized. Students should report to their activity in proper gear and immediately return home to shower at the conclusion. Restrooms should remain available for student athletes and athletic staff, however social distancing is encouraged.
- Gathering sizes should be decreased as much as possible to reduce risk. Workouts should be conducted in defined, smaller groups of students with the same students always together. Reduce gathering size by half capacity in large areas (weight room, band rooms, wrestling rooms, etc.).
- The goal of social distancing is defined by the [CDC](#). If it is not possible to follow these guidelines indoors or outdoors, then create as much distance as possible. It is recommended that participants and coaches wear face coverings when distancing is limited and the individual is not participating in rigorous activity. For sidelines, benches, or other holding areas, consider establishing protocol as a guide for students and coaches. The goal and expectation is no contact.
- Consider scheduling adjustments to reduce the number of events, duration, and/or participants present.
- Cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all facilities and

equipment to mitigate any communicable diseases. Review the plan and supply inventory to thoroughly clean and disinfect prior to and after usage following [CDC](#), [EPA](#), and [OSHA](#) guidelines. The plan should be clear on who cleans and appropriate training and PPE is provided for such.

- School activities using off-site, non-school owned facilities and equipment for related activities should work with the off-site facility provider to ensure the associated and relevant safety measures are in place. If transporting to-and-from workouts, rehearsals, or practices, transportation safety measures and cleaning regarding team or group transportation must be followed. See [Appendix E](#).
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize transmission.
- No sharing of clothing, shoes, towels, or water bottles.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available at all times.
- If equipment must be shared, including sports balls, weight room facilities, non-wind instruments, etc., this equipment should be cleaned prior to use and immediately following usage. Responsibility for cleaning should be clear and appropriate training and PPE should be provided.
- Equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered or discarded.
- Students must be expected to shower at home and wash workout clothing immediately upon returning to their home. If a student does not have a laundered uniform, he/she may not be allowed to participate in practice or competition.
- If schools launder student gear or uniforms, PPE must be available for the person in charge of laundering.
- Free weight exercises requiring a spotter cannot be conducted. Safety measures in all forms must be strictly enforced in the weight room.
- For contact sports, no contact is allowed.
- Shared hydration stations (water trough, water fountains, water hose, etc.) should not be utilized except for filling individual, labeled water bottles.
- No formal competition is allowed.
- Pool usage is acceptable. Schools should take necessary steps to promote health and safety both in the water and out by social distancing and using good hygiene.
  - State and local guidelines that may determine when and how recreational water facilities may operate should be followed.

***Phase II: July 20-August 15***

- All State and local guidelines for group limitations must be followed and social distancing is encouraged.
- Any student who prefers to wear a face covering for activities should be allowed, if doing so will not cause a health risk.
- Students, when not engaging in vigorous activity and when practical, should wear face coverings. See [Appendix A](#).

- Non-students, including coaches, medical-related staff, directors, security staff, supervisors, etc. should wear face coverings at all times unless under rigorous activity or poses a health risk. See [Appendix A](#).
- Only essential student athletes, student participants, coaches, medical staff, related supervisors, directors, and security should be in attendance.
- Consideration should be given to [vulnerable individuals](#) and it is encouraged for those individuals to seek medical guidance regarding his/her individual level of participation.
- An alternate command structure for coaching staff should be established in case of illness.
- Prior to participation, all first-time student athletes are required to have an IHSAA pre-participation physical for the upcoming school year. Returning student athletes are not required to obtain a new IHSAA pre-participation physical, but should provide a [2020-21 IHSAA Health History Update Questionnaire and Consent & Release Certificate](#) prior to participation.
- All students and staff [should be trained](#) and screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating in workouts, rehearsals, or practices. See [Appendix A](#).
  - Any person with COVID-19-related symptoms should not be allowed to take part in workouts, rehearsals, or practices and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
    - The State [website](#) has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.
  - Any person with a positive COVID-19 test shall trigger the established predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies by following ISDH's recommendation to work with your local health department in following the CDC guidance which can be found [here](#). Reference page 3, "When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission."
  - Coaches must track COVID-19 impacted attendance and report to district/school administration.
  - Follow specific return to school protocol in reference to participation for student athletes or staff members who no longer test positive and/or no longer display symptoms of COVID-19. See [Appendix A](#), reference *Return to School After Exclusion*.
  - Districts/schools are encouraged to [post signs](#) displaying symptoms to educate students.
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating. If this is not possible, hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, 50 percent capacity is recommended.
- Gathering sizes should be decreased as much as possible to reduce risk. Workouts should be conducted in defined, smaller groups of students with the same students always together. Reduce gathering size by half capacity in large areas (weight room, band rooms, wrestling rooms, etc.).
- The goal of social distancing is defined by the [CDC](#). If it is not possible to follow these

guidelines indoors or outdoors, then create as much distance as possible. It is recommended that participants and coaches wear face coverings when distancing is limited and the individual is not participating in rigorous activity. For sidelines, benches, or other holding areas, consider establishing protocol as a guide for students and coaches.

- Consider scheduling adjustments to reduce the number of events, duration, and/or participants present.
- Contact is allowed as [defined by Indiana High School Athletic Association \(IHSAA\)](#).
- Cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all facilities and equipment to mitigate any communicable diseases. Review the plan and supply inventory to thoroughly clean and disinfect prior to and after usage following [CDC](#), [EPA](#), and [OSHA](#) guidelines. The plan should be clear on who cleans and appropriate training and PPE is provided for such.
- School activities using off-site, non-school owned facilities and equipment for related activities should work with the off-site facility provider to ensure the associated and relevant safety measures are in place. If transporting to-and-from workouts, rehearsals, or practices, transportation safety measures and cleaning regarding team or group transportation must be followed. See [Appendix E](#).
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize transmission.
- No sharing of clothing, shoes, towels, or water bottles.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available at all times.
- If equipment must be shared, including sports balls, weight room facilities, non-wind instruments, etc., should be cleaned prior to use and immediately following usage. Responsibility for cleaning should be clear and appropriate training and PPE should be provided.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered or discarded.
- Students must be expected to shower at school or at home and wash workout clothing immediately upon returning to their home. If a student does not have a laundered uniform, he/she may not be allowed to participate in practice or competition.
- If schools launder student gear or uniforms, PPE must be available for the person in charge of laundering.
- Free weight exercises requiring a spotter can be conducted. Safety measures in all forms must be strictly enforced in the weight room.
- Celebratory and sportsmanship acts that involve contact should be prohibited.
- Shared hydration stations (water trough, water fountains, water hose, etc.) should not be utilized except for filling individual, labeled water bottles.
- Pool usage is acceptable. Schools should take necessary steps to promote health and safety both in the water and out by social distancing and using good hygiene.

- State and local guidelines that may determine when and how recreational water facilities may operate should be followed.
- No formal competition is allowed with the exception of girls golf.

**Phase III: August 15**

- All State and local guidelines for group limitations must be followed and social distancing is encouraged.
- Any student who prefers to wear a face covering for activities should be allowed, if doing so will not cause a health risk.
- Students, when not engaging in vigorous activity and when practical, should wear face coverings. See [Appendix A](#).
- Non-students, including coaches, medical-related staff, directors, security staff, supervisors, etc. should wear face coverings at all times unless under rigorous activity or poses a health risk. See [Appendix A](#).
- Consideration should be given to [vulnerable individuals](#) and it is encouraged for those individuals to seek medical guidance regarding his/her individual level of participation.
- An alternate command structure for coaching staff should be established in case of illness.
- Prior to participation, all first-time student athletes are required to have an IHSAA pre-participation physical for the upcoming school year. Returning student athletes are not required to obtain a new IHSAA pre-participation physical, but should provide a [2020-21 IHSAA Health History Update Questionnaire and Consent & Release Certificate](#) prior to participation.
- All students and staff [should be trained](#) and screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating in workouts, rehearsals, or practices. See [Appendix A](#).
  - Any person with COVID-19-related symptoms should not be allowed to take part in workouts, rehearsals, or practices and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
    - The state [website](#) has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.
  - Any person with a positive COVID-19 test shall trigger the established predetermined thresholds for mitigation strategies by following ISDH's recommendation to work with your local health department in following the CDC guidance which can be found [here](#). Reference page 3, "When a confirmed case has entered a school, regardless of community transmission."
  - Coaches must track COVID-19 impacted attendance and report to district/school administration.
  - Follow specific return to school protocol in reference to participation for student athletes or staff members who no longer test positive and/or no longer display symptoms of COVID-19. See [Appendix A](#), reference *Return to School After Exclusion*.
  - Districts/schools are encouraged to [post signs](#) displaying symptoms to educate students.
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating. If this is not possible, hand

sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

- If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, 50 percent capacity is recommended.  
\*If the restriction to 50 percent capacity at competitive events creates a hardship and impacts the hygiene or safety of students, a 50 percent or greater capacity is allowed.
- Consider scheduling adjustments to reduce the number of events, duration, and/or participants present.
- Gathering sizes should be decreased as much as possible to reduce risk. Workouts should be conducted in defined, smaller groups of students with the same students always together. Reduce gathering size by half capacity in large areas (weight room, band rooms, wrestling rooms, etc.).
- The goal of social distancing is defined by the [CDC](#). If it is not possible to follow these guidelines indoors or outdoors, then create as much distance as possible. It is recommended that participants and coaches wear face coverings when distancing is limited and the individual is not participating in rigorous activity. Officials should be given the option to wear face coverings. For sidelines, benches, or other holding areas, consider establishing protocol as a guide for students and coaches.
- Hospitality rooms for officials should not include shared food service and should allow space for social distancing. Individual waters and pre-packaged snacks may be made available.
- Consider scheduling adjustments to reduce the number of events, duration and/or participants present.
- Cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all facilities and equipment to mitigate any communicable diseases. Review the plan and supply inventory to thoroughly clean and disinfect prior to and after usage following [CDC](#), [EPA](#), and [OSHA](#) guidelines. The plan should be clear on who cleans and appropriate training and PPE is provided for such.
- Cleaning regarding team or group transportation must be followed. See [Appendix E](#).
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to minimize transmission.
- No sharing of clothing, shoes, towels, or water bottles.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available at all times.
- Contact should be limited to only contact necessary to compete as [defined by IHSA](#). Modified sportsmanship practices should be observed.
- If equipment must be shared, including sports balls, weight room facilities, non-wind instruments, etc., this equipment should be cleaned prior to use and immediately following usage. Responsibility for cleaning should be clear and appropriate training and PPE should be provided.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered or discarded.
- Students must be expected to shower at school or at home and wash workout clothing immediately upon returning to their home. If a student does not have a



laundered uniform, he/she may not be allowed to participate in practice or competition.

- If schools launder student gear or uniforms, PPE must be available for the person in charge of laundering.
- Shared hydration stations (water trough, water fountains, water hose, etc.) should not be utilized except for filling individual, labeled water bottles.
- Pool usage is acceptable. Schools should take necessary steps to promote health and safety both in the water and out by social distancing and using good hygiene.
  - State and local guidelines that may determine when and how recreational water facilities may operate should be followed.
- Competition may begin.
- Spectators, media, and vendors can be present but should implement social distancing and follow established mass gathering guidelines.
- Concessions may be sold if food handlers and cashiers use appropriate PPE and only prepared, prepackaged food is available.

## Special Education Overview

Districts and schools should continue to collaborate, share information, and review plans with local health officials to help protect the whole school community, including those with special health needs. District and school plans should be designed to complement other community mitigation strategies to protect high-risk populations, and the community's healthcare system, and minimize disruption to teaching and learning, while protecting students and staff from social stigma and discrimination.

Districts and schools should develop a strong communication plan with families to discuss the delivery method of instruction for students with disabilities. An appropriate platform for delivery of special education-related services must be identified. Schools and districts must ensure that adequate staffing is available to meet the needs of all students with IEPs within the district.

### Case Conferences

#### ***Annual Case Reviews***

At this time, there has been no waiver of the requirement to convene the case conference committee (CCC) annually to conduct the annual case review (ACR) consistent with the requirements of 511 IAC 7-42-5(a)(2). Districts and schools must conduct the ACR within the one year timeline, regardless of school closure status.

#### ***Case Conference Committee Meetings to Review and Revise the IEP***

As schools and districts plan to reopen buildings to provide in-person instruction, CCC meetings with parents should be scheduled to review the provision of services and the educational progress of each student. Discussion should determine whether or not there is a need to adjust the frequency or duration of services.

Educational needs can be measured by considering:

- Whether the student participated in continuous learning opportunities provided by the school and district during the COVID-19 school building closure;
- Parent observations of the student's learning during the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school or district;
- Teacher observations of the student's learning in the continuous learning opportunities provided by the school or district;
- Whether there were services identified in the student's IEP prior to the school closure that the school or district was unable to provide during the building

- closure due to restrictions on in-person services;
- Whether the student continued making progress toward meeting his/her IEP goals;
  - Whether the student experienced any additional or new social-emotional health issues during building closure and re-entry;
  - Whether the student experienced any regression during the period of school building closure.

### ***Future Services/Compensatory Services***

The United States Department of Education (USED) has advised, “[A]n IEP Team and, as appropriate to an individual student with a disability, the personnel responsible for ensuring Free and Public Education (FAPE) to a student for the purposes of Section 504, would be required to make an individualized determination as to whether compensatory services are needed under applicable standards and requirements.” QA-1 *Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak* (USED March 12, 2020).

This does not mean schools must immediately offer compensatory services to all students with IEPs; rather, it requires the CCC to lead a discussion of the educational needs of the student, including the potential loss of skills. Based on these individual needs, the CCC may consider the appropriateness of collecting data for an agreed-upon time following the student’s return to school and subsequently reconvening to discuss the need for future services at that time.

It is important school staff are documenting with specificity the special education and related services being provided to students with disabilities while monitoring and tracking individual student progress. This information will be necessary to inform the CCC in making a determination as to what future services or compensatory services are necessary to ensure the provision of a FAPE.

### ***Transition IEPs***

Transition assessments need to be updated annually, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. When updating transition assessments, teachers of record (TORs) may conduct assessments virtually or in person. Assessments may be administered prior to or during the CCC meeting. In all cases, assessment information needs to be documented within the Summary of Findings utilizing the SPIN method - Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs. Ways to provide transition assessments virtually are available as a part of the [eLearning Resources for Secondary Transition](#) document.

Transition services still need to be created so the school is the primary service provider. It is recommended that the narrative include in-person and remote ways to accomplish objectives and goals to accommodate for the fluidity of the COVID-19 situation.

### ***CCC Meeting Method Options***

CCC meetings may be conducted virtually while school buildings are closed. See this

[guidance document](#) for more information on conducting remote CCC meetings. As school buildings reopen, CCC meetings may be conducted in-person or through virtual means.

### **EdPlan Connect**

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indiana IEP vendor, Public Consulting Group (PCG), has made EdPlan Connect available to IDOE to help facilitate IEP meetings. With EdPlan Connect, parents/guardians have a centralized, secure place to:

- Access student records online and in their native language;
- Sign documents electronically and save time;
- View historical documents in the student’s record; and
- Stay up to date with student progress.

This [link](#) will take you to resources related to using EdPlan Connect.

### **Evaluations**

Requirements for evaluations remain unchanged. Please refer to the [Revised OSE-Evaluation Timeline memo](#) for detailed evaluation information. Evaluations may be conducted virtually if the school psychologist has been appropriately trained in conducting virtual assessments and has access to the digital assessments. Additionally, the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) has combined resources to support virtual evaluations. This [link](#) will take you to NASP resources related to evaluations.

### **Medically Fragile Students**

Medically fragile students are at high-risk of severe medical complications if exposed to COVID-19, and therefore may be unable to attend school. Medically fragile students unable to attend school will need to be provided with educational services remotely. The determination of the services to be provided must be made by the CCC based upon the individual student’s medical and educational needs. Special education and related services determined by the CCC could be provided online or in a virtual instructional format, through instructional telephone calls, or through other curriculum-based instructional activities (511 IAC 7-42-10). If the services are to be delivered through online or virtual instruction, technological competency and the need for additional assistive technology must be considered. The CCC must convene at least every 60 instructional days to review the IEP for every student unable to attend school in person (511 IAC 7-42-11).

### **Homebound Services**

Districts and schools must provide special education and related services to a student with a disability who is absent for an extended period of time. QA-2 in *Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During a COVID-19 Outbreak* (USED March, 2020) states:

“It has long been the Department’s position that when a child with a disability is classified as needing homebound instruction because of a medical problem, as ordered by a physician, and is home for an extended period of time (generally more than 10

consecutive school days), an individualized education program (IEP) meeting is necessary to change the child's placement and the contents of the child's IEP, if warranted. Further, if the IEP goals will remain the same and only the time in special education will change, then the IEP Team may add an amendment to the IEP stating specifically the amount of time to be spent in special education. ***If a child with a disability is absent for an extended period of time because of a COVID-19 infection and the school remains open, then the IEP Team must determine whether the child is available for instruction and could benefit from homebound services such as online or virtual instruction, instructional telephone calls, and other curriculum-based instructional activities, to the extent available.*** In doing so, school personnel should follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and address the risk of transmission in the provision of such services. The Department understands there may be exceptional circumstances that could affect how a particular service is provided.

If a child does not receive services after an extended period of time, a school must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed, consistent with applicable requirements, including to make up for any skills that may have been lost."

If the school has been provided a statement from the student's physician that the student will be unable to attend school for 20 or more instructional days, Article 7 requires the school provide instruction to the student during the time the student is unable to attend school (511 IAC 7-42-12). For students with disabilities, (511 IAC 7-42-11) requires the CCC to determine the appropriate educational services to be provided.

#### ***Use of Homebound due to Infection in Student's Family***

Once school buildings reopen, a student with a disability may be quarantined at home for an extended period of time due to a family member's infection. A school or district would follow the same homebound protocol identified above to ensure the provision of FAPE. School personnel should likewise follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and reduce the risk of transmission in the provision of such homebound services.

#### ***Use of Homebound Not Related to COVID-19***

As schools reopen, students who were receiving services in a homebound placement pursuant to their IEP will remain in that placement until the CCC determines that a different placement is appropriate. Whether the location of the homebound services identified in the student's IEP is in the student's home or an out-of-school location other than the student's home, school personnel should follow appropriate health guidelines to assess and reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 (511 IAC 7-42-11).

#### ***Homebound Timelines***

Schools and districts must ensure the CCC reconvenes at least every 60 instructional days (this instructional day count includes remote learning days used pursuant to the LEA's Continuous Learning Plan) when a student is receiving services in a homebound setting. 511 IAC 7-42-5(a)(7). Changes to the IEP related to a safer service delivery

method during school closures and re-entry may be considered by the CCC at these 60 day reconvenes. 511 IAC 7-42-11.

### ***Special Transportation***

If districts and schools are providing in-person services and a student requires transportation, then the IEP should reflect this service. Collaboration with transportation vendors to implement a bussing plan that meets social distancing recommendations is imperative (including pick-up, in-transit, and drop off). It is also important to review cleaning and disinfection protocols. (See Appendix D)

### **Therapy**

FAPE requires taking into account the needs of individual students. Therefore, at a minimum, school re-entry planning for providing IEP-required therapies in accordance with the [CDC community-level guidance for schools](#) must address:

1. Student-specific medical and special transportation needs for transitioning back into school settings such as classrooms, playgrounds, and day programs for therapy services;
2. Unique operating conditions, including:
  - Intensified cleaning and disinfecting of equipment and surfaces between therapy sessions;
  - Class and therapy group size reductions, staggered (alternate days/rotation) scheduling and/or spaced seating to facilitate physical distancing, restricted sharing of equipment/learning aids, and possible shifts to non-traditional class settings to improve ventilation;
  - Instruction about and observance of frequent handwashing and face covering recommendations;
  - Remote therapy needs, including assistive technology, as necessary, for special student populations who cannot yet safely return to congregate settings;
  - Contingency planning to continue services if COVID-19 transmission requires intermittent or extended school building closures; and
3. Individual students' skills regression or lack of progress and communication with parents/families about IEP therapy service changes or additions to address regression; and
4. Anticipated backlogs in evaluations and possible need to prioritize new referrals before re-evaluations.
5. Adequate staffing to meet all students' therapy needs, including:
  - Age and underlying medical conditions that may preclude qualified personnel from delivering services in the physical proximity of students and other staff;
  - Technology training and access for therapists to serve medically fragile students, such as those who are ventilator-dependent and have tracheostomies; (see [USED](#) and [IDOE](#) COVID-19 web resources on expanded options and Indiana Medicaid coverage for IEP therapy services); and
  - Flexible and adaptive scheduling to maximize therapy service provision despite personnel shortages, staff illness/isolation, and limited access to students.
6. The district requirement to provide equitable services to parentally-placed students with disabilities attending reopened non-public school buildings within the district

boundaries.

## Student Transportation Considerations

The school bus is often the student’s first contact with the school in the morning and the last point of contact in the afternoon. Thus, districts/schools should pay particular attention to protocols used in student transportation to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and protect both students and employees.

The following are considerations and protocols that districts/schools could put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. These precautions are not required by law and while not feasible for some, should be considered. Districts/schools need to work with their local health departments to ensure the protocols align with the most current guidance and recommendations from the CDC and the [National Association for Pupil Transportation \(NAPT\)](#).

### Communication

Districts/schools should communicate to parents and students prior to reopening schools that all busses and transportation vehicles have been thoroughly disinfected. In addition, the district/school should communicate to parents the passenger expectations and the role students will play in minimizing infection.

### Preparation and Cleaning

Inspect all buses and transport vehicles for cleanliness and safety.

- Inventory, collect, and purchase cleaning equipment and hygiene supplies with the understanding that buses will be disinfected more frequently and thoroughly than previous years. Use products recommended by the CDC, local health departments, and/or risk management professionals. Some of these products are listed on this [website](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Conduct worksite hazard assessments to identify COVID-19 prevention strategies, such as appropriate use of cloth face coverings or personal protective equipment (PPE), and follow the prevention strategies.
- Employees should wear masks. Consideration should be given to whether additional PPE is necessary in respect to cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing.
- Determine if physical barriers between the driver and passengers are feasible.
- Thoroughly clean and disinfect all buses and transportation vehicles before and after routes.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting a bus/transportation vehicle that transported a passenger or had a driver who tests positive for COVID-19 or exhibited symptoms of COVID-19. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Affected buses can be used immediately after cleaning and disinfection.



## **Modifications Considerations for School and Extracurricular Transportation Situations**

- Encourage custodial-arranged, reimbursable transportation for McKinney-Vento, foster, and medically fragile students.
- Assign drivers to a single bus and/or a specific route and establish consistent driver assignments for extracurricular activities.
- Assign students to a single bus and to a specific seat.
- Limit students to one route.
- Consider adding additional bus stops and routes.
- Consider social distancing.
- Consider assigning student seats in assist the local health department with contact tracing.

## **Training**

Ensure drivers and maintenance/cleaning staff are properly trained. (Eight hours of annual training required.) Examples of training topics should minimally include:

- Correct information about COVID-19, how it spreads, symptoms, and risk of exposure.
- Who to contact if a student or the driver exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- The requirement that PPE is worn (disposable masks, gloves, clothing, etc.), how to wear them correctly, and maintain and dispose of the equipment.
- The appropriate methods, tools, and products for cleaning buses, including opening doors and windows for effective circulation and to avoid extensive exposure to cleaning fumes.
- The location of and how to use eye wash stations in the case of chemical contact with eyes.
- The hygiene expectations of staff.
- Using gloves when handling and disposing of trash.
- Avoiding touching surfaces often touched by passengers.
- Universal precautions when handling bodily fluids.

## ISDH Mitigation Strategy Recommendations

Districts/schools are encouraged to work with their local health departments to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among students, staff and teachers. School officials should communicate with their local health departments before school starts to ensure they have contact information for a public health nurse or the local health officer for consultation when needed.

Although evidence shows that most children infected with COVID-19 have mild symptoms, some children will develop serious illness, especially those children at risk because of underlying health issues. Discussion should occur with the child's health care provider to determine whether continued remote learning is the appropriate plan until adequate immunization can occur. Also, teachers and staff who are 65 years and older or who have underlying health conditions should consult with a health care provider.

Schools should be prepared to respond to COVID-19 cases when they occur in their facilities. This will require each school to develop a mandatory reporting system for all teachers, administrators, staff and students (parents/guardians) to report any documented positive cases of COVID-19 in their school.

Any student, teacher, administrator or staff who is symptomatic for infection should stay home and consult their primary care provider or seek testing. The state website [www.coronavirus.in.gov](http://www.coronavirus.in.gov) has a list of over 200 testing facilities, their location and hours of operation. This list is updated frequently.

If an individual in one's home has COVID-19 or is quarantined because of COVID-19, those in the household should also stay home for a minimum of two weeks. Return to school after documented infection with COVID-19 should be directed by the individual's health care provider.

Below is the CDC's "Interim guidance for Administrators of US K-12 and child care programs to plan, prepare and respond to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)." This document is available on [CDC's website](#).

You will note that in the event of a documented positive case, that the decision tree has the school closing for two-five days so the local health department or the Indiana State Department of Health can engage with your team to recommend further testing, cleaning etc.

Recommendations about prolonged closure will depend on the level of cohorting the school has been adhering to, the community level of disease and the current burden of infection impacting your hospital systems.

# References

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This document was created through a combination of original resources created by Indiana state agencies and plan outlines created by other states. Additionally, development relied heavily on materials developed from the following documents:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Coronavirus, 2019, *Interim Guidance for Child Care Programs*.

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# Communications Guidance for Indiana School Re-entry

Effective an

**Who?** Central Point of Contact

**What?** Messaging

**When?** Timing and Scheduling

**How?** Format and Methods

**Clarify**