

Checklist #5: Mitigation Strategies

Schools should consider mitigation strategies that reduce the risk of staff and students spreading COVID-19 at schools.

Complete this checklist when preparing to reopen and regularly reassess practices after opening. For Items marked “in-progress” or “not started,” identify steps to ensure their completion. For those marked “not feasible,” consider appropriate adaptations or alternatives.

Mask Use, Social Distancing, and Cohorting

Items for Assessment	Completed	In-Progress	Not Started	Not Feasible
Is there a plan to ensure that masks are used consistently and correctly (covering mouth and nose) by staff and students at school?				
Identify areas where masks should be worn (including areas where distancing of at least 6 feet apart is difficult)				
Identify individuals that may need adaptations or alternatives when the use of a mask is not feasible <i>Note: Masks should not be worn by anyone under the age of two, or who has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. Wearing masks may be difficult for people with cognitive, sensory, or behavioral issues and precludes the ability to read lips and facial expressions.</i>				
Determine whether staff and students will be responsible for bringing their own mask to school and if not, identify who is responsible for providing masks to staff and students				
Train staff and students on how to properly wear, handle, and clean masks				
Are physical guides for distancing at least 6 feet apart in place in the classroom and other areas (e.g., lunchrooms, offices, etc.)?				
Space desks and seating at least 6 feet apart				
Face student desks and seating in the same direction				
Place physical guides (e.g., tape, marks) and signs for distancing to account for movement of staff and students and include furniture placement				
Is there a plan for use of cohorts (or pods) to keep groups small and limit interaction of staff and students during the day and school term?				
Is there a plan to use any extra available space within the school or school community to keep groups small and limit interaction of staff and students during the day and school term?				

Handwashing, Cough, and Sneeze Etiquette

Items for Assessment	Completed	In-Progress	Not Started	Not Feasible
Is there a plan to teach and reinforce proper handwashing with all staff and students?				
Ensure clean water, soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and a way to dry hands are accessible throughout the school, including in each classroom				
Plan to demonstrate and monitor handwashing or use of hand sanitizer during times when germs are likely to spread, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before and after eating • After using the toilet • After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing • After touching garbage 				
Is there a plan to teach and reinforce cough and sneeze etiquette with all staff and students ?				

Alternate Work Options for Those at Increased Risk

Items for Assessment	Completed	In-Progress	Not Started	Not Feasible
Have alternate options (virtual learning) been offered to students at higher risk for severe illness or with family members at higher risk?				
Have alternate options (such as telework or virtual teaching) been offered to staff at higher risk for severe illness ?				
Have alternative options been considered for staff with family members at higher risk?				
Are reasonable accommodations offered if a job can only be performed at the school, in-person?				

Training and Communication

Items for Assessment	Completed	In-Progress	Not Started	Not Feasible
Is there a plan to provide education and training to staff and students on everyday protective measures to reduce the spread of germs at school and outside of school?				
Are signs and other visuals, such as posters, displayed in common areas of the school to promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs? <i>Note: Refer to the At-A-Glance chart for possible locations to display signs.</i>				
Is there a plan to make all trainings and communications available in languages that staff and students understand and accessible to persons with disabilities?				
Is there a plan to send regular communications (e.g., email, social media, flyers, phone messages in accessible formats) about everyday behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 to staff, students, parents, caregivers, and guardians?				