

GUIDANCE ON RE-ENTRY TO SCHOOLS | K-12

A CURATED RESOURCE OF
TOP RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR EDUCATORS

FLINN
SCIENTIFIC

2020





In times of uncertainty, Flinn understands that clear communication and easy access to facts and recommendations is key—and we are ready to help.

There is an overwhelming amount of information available on returning to school safely and we know your time is limited.

The education and safety professionals at Flinn have created this guide curating the key pieces of information designed to help as you plan for what lies ahead.

Pulling from the guidelines provided by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), [World Health Organization](#) (WHO), [North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response](#) (NACTATR)* and more, we have organized this document into four sections that reflect the categories outlined by top physical and mental health organizations.

Section One: COVID-19 Safety Preparation and Concerns within Schools

Section Two: Covid-19 School Modifications and Continuity In Education

Section Three: Maintaining Healthy Operations When Schools are Open

Section Four: Maintaining a Physically and Mentally Healthy School Environment

There is no one universal formula for opening schools safely and maintaining a safe environment. We recommend using this guide as a starting place to find the information you need, clicking through on the links to read more, and deferring to your local DOE regulations (also linked in this document).

*These materials contain content provided by third parties and are being distributed for your convenience only. We make no representations about the accuracy of these materials and urge you to consult federal, state, and local public health guidelines for the most up-to-date information on reopening.

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SECTION 3

COVID-19 SAFETY PREPARATION AND CONCERNS WITHIN SCHOOLS

2020





When is the ‘right time’ to re-open schools?

There will not be a universal formula that can be used to determine the best day to start re-opening physical schools, however, there are considerations for education leadership to factor into their re-opening of school timelines and procedures. The CDC offers a [decision tree](#) designed to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Schools can determine, in collaboration with [state and local health officials](#) to the extent possible, whether and how to implement these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community.²

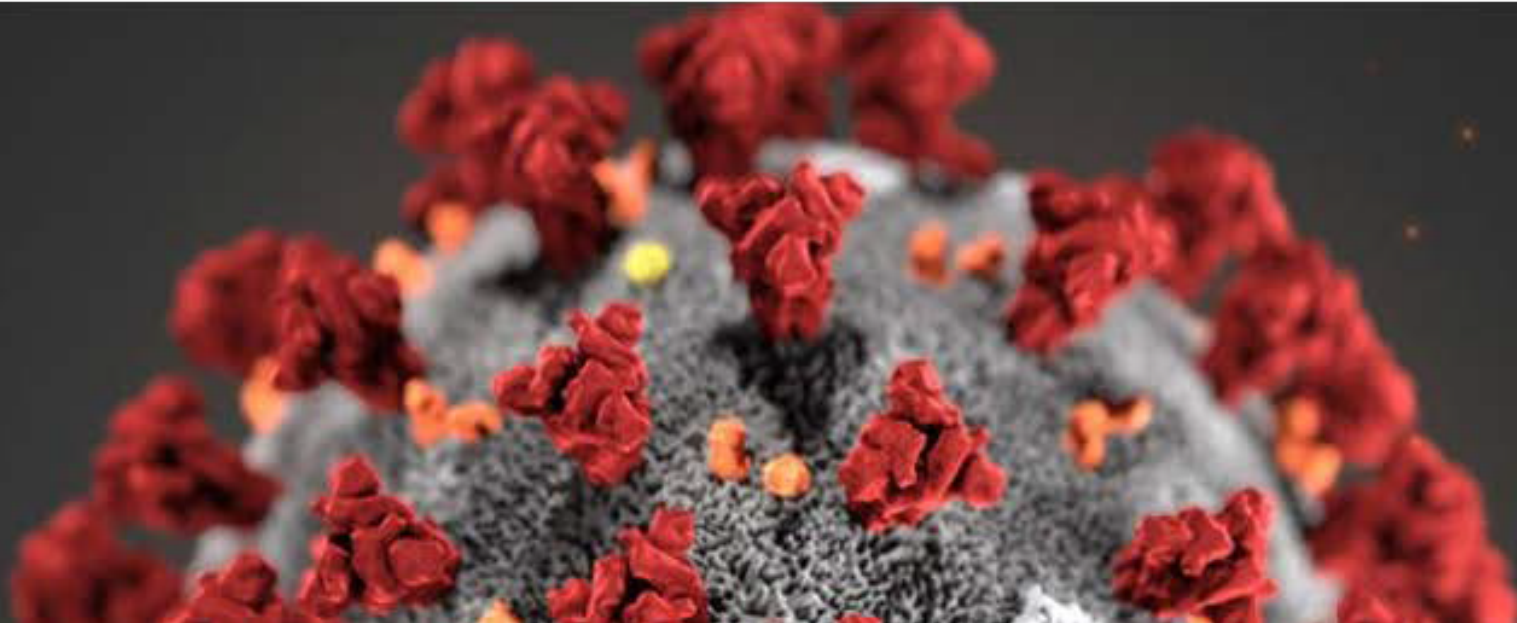
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1. [CDC Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 2. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

Background on Coronavirus Transmission

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).¹

Therefore, personal prevention practices—such as [handwashing](#) and [staying home when sick](#)—and [environmental cleaning and disinfection](#) are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions school administrators can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during school sessions and activities.

1. [CDC: How Covid-19 Spreads](#)





Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of Covid-19:

Actively encourage employees and students who are sick or who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 to stay home. Develop policies that encourage sick employees and students to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees, students, and students' families are aware of these policies. Consider not having perfect attendance awards, not assessing schools based on absenteeism, and offering virtual learning and telework options, if feasible.¹

Educate staff and families about the [symptoms of Coronavirus](#), [what to do if they are sick](#), and implement [stay home](#) measures for sick students and staff.

1. [CDC: Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure](#)



Behaviors that Reduce the Spread of Covid-19: When to Return to Work

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations. It is important to remember that anyone who has close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after exposure based on the time it takes to develop illness.¹

Here are some links to share with staff and students:

- [If they have been sick with COVID-19](#)
- [If they have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19](#)

1. [CDC: When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19](#)

Hand Hygiene Requirements

Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). Encourage staff and students to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).¹

1. [CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

Stop Germs! Wash Your Hands.

When?

- After using the bathroom
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

How?

Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.

Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

Rinse hands well under clean, running water.

Dry hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy.

LIFE IS BETTER WITH CLEAN HANDS

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

This material was developed by CDC. The Life is Better with Clean Hands Campaign is made possible by a partnership between the CDC Foundation, GOJO, and Staples. HHS/CDC does not endorse commercial products, services, or companies. 0331027-A

[CDC launched Life is Better with Clean Hands, a new national campaign designed to motivate adults to make clean hands part of their daily lives. Download and share them to help spread the word and encourage handwashing within your community.](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)



Cloth Face Coverings

Teach and reinforce use of [cloth face coverings](#). Face coverings may be challenging for students (especially younger students) to wear in all-day settings such as school. Face coverings should be worn by staff and students (particularly older students) as feasible, and are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. Individuals should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to [wash their hands](#) frequently. Information should be provided to staff, students, and students' families on [proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings](#).

Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

How to Properly Wear a Face Covering

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily¹

Who Should Wear Face Coverings	Who Should Not Wear Face Coverings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People older than 2 years of age in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children under age 2 ▪ Anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance²

1. [CDC How to Wear Cloth Face Coverings](#)
 2. [CDC About Cloth Face Coverings](#)

How to Protect Yourself and Others
 Print Resources Web Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>

Know how it spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
 - » Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
 - » Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
 - » These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
 - » Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.


Everyone should

Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
- **Stay at home as much as possible.**
- **Put distance between yourself and other people.**
 - » Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
 - » This is especially important for **people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html

 cdc.gov/coronavirus

Share the CDC information for safely wearing masks with faculty, students and families.

Keep Supplies On-Hand

Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible) and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.¹



1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

Signage and Messages at School

Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering).

Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA systems.

Include messages (for example, videos) about behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff and families (such as on school websites, in emails, and on school social media accounts).

- Find free CDC print and digital resources on CDC's communications resources main page.¹

1. CDC Considerations for Schools

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Print Resources Web Page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html>

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- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick.
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[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

The CDC has provided a library of signing designed to promote safe behaviors during the COVID-19 pandemic



Maintain Healthy Environments

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environment.¹

- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Shared Objects
- Ventilation
- Water Systems
- Modified Layouts
- Physical Barriers and Guides
- Communal Spaces
- Food Service

1. CDC Considerations for Schools



Cleaning and Disinfection

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.


If transport vehicles (e.g., buses) are used by the school, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff (e.g., hand hygiene, cloth face coverings). To clean and disinfect school buses or other transport vehicles, see guidance for [bus transit operators](#).¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Cleaning and Disinfection

Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. Follow directives from school district and DOE policy.

Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products,¹ including storing products securely away from children. Use products that meet EPA disinfection criteria .

Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.²

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1. [EPA Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
 2. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Shared Objects

Discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.

Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.

Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids..¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Ventilation Systems (HVAC)

Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors.

Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Water System Management

To minimize the risk of Legionnaire's disease and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and students to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Modified Classroom Layouts

The CDC offers some simple starting guidelines for re-imagining the school layout.¹

Space & Distance	Turn Desks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.▪ Create distance between children on school buses (g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

Modified Classroom Layouts

Schools in other countries have begun opening and making modifications to the classroom with safety in mind. Physical distancing and PPE are very critical pieces to the safe re-opening of schools globally. Follow direction from your local health and education authority.



Elementary school in Heppenheim, Germany, April 21, 2020¹



Gymnasium Steglitz school in Berlin, Germany, April 20, 2020²

1. [Alex Grimm, Getty Images. From: USA Today What schools will look like when they reopen](#)
2. [Alex Schmidt, Retuers. From: Retuers: Germany Cautiously Reopens Schools](#)

Additional Modified Classroom Layouts



Hong Kong, China, April 24, 2020¹

1. [Jerome Favre, Reuters. From: Reuters: Masked Hong Kong students take final school exams after coronavirus delay](#)

Physical Barriers and Guarding Guides

Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).

Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and children remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating “one way routes” in hallways).¹

Photo: Teacher installs a plexiglass frame in an elementary school in Heppenheim, Germany, April 21, 2020²



1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)

2. [Alex Grimm, Getty Images. From: USA Today What schools will look like when they reopen](#)



Communal Spaces

Close communal use shared spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds with shared playground equipment if possible; otherwise, stagger use and clean and disinfect between use.

Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Communal Spaces: Libraries & Science Labs

Libraries and Science Labs have unique challenges, and protocols will need to be adjusted to reflect the new practices of physical distancing, minimizing exposure and extra vigilance on disinfection and sanitation.

The [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) offers a [COVID-19 Resources for Libraries and Museums](#), including articles covering [best-practices for cleaning play and learning spaces](#).¹

In the [science lab](#), the same classroom considerations regarding distance and disinfection apply.² High touch science equipment, such as microscopes and scales, will need to be sanitized before and after use.³ This extra time required to perform these tasks will need to be built-in to the lesson planning.

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1. [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#)
 2. [LabManager.com: Lab Health and Safety](#)
 3. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Food Service Considerations

Have children bring their own meals as feasible, or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria, while ensuring the safety of children with food allergies.

Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils¹

Students eat their lunch on desks in Taipei, Taiwan, on April 29, 2020²

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)
2. [Sam Yeh/Getty Images From: Business Insider](#)

SECTION 4

MAINTAINING A PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT





Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Schools may consider implementing several strategies to prepare for when someone gets sick. It is inevitable that people will become sick at school or after being at school. These protocols are here to help guide your decision-making processes.¹

Advise Staff and Families of Sick Students of Home Isolation Criteria

- Isolate and Transport Those that are Sick
- Clean and Disinfect Areas
- Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Advise Staff and Families of Sick Students of Home Isolation Criteria

Sick staff members or students should not return until they have met CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).¹

Follow the guidance and direction from the local school district policy on communication for COVID-19 and ensure that all messaging is in keeping within these protocols.

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick

Make sure that staff and families know that they (staff) or their children (families) should not come to school, and that they should notify school officials (e.g., the designated COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), test positive for COVID-19, or have been [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.

Immediately separate staff and [children](#) with COVID-19 [symptoms](#) (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow [CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick](#).¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick

Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive but does not have symptoms. School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).

Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, try to call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Clean and Disinfect

Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting

Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting.

If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school administrators should notify [local health officials](#), staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).

Inform those who have had [close contact](#) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and [self-monitor for symptoms](#), and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop.¹

1. [CDC Considerations for Schools](#)



Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact

The COVID 19 pandemic has required our educational system to pivot quickly and effectively in a relatively short period of time. While the tendency is to seek “best practice” solutions to school re-entry, reality tells us that each of our schools will require a unique response to

re-entry mostly because we are planning this response while still “being in it”.¹

The WHO, NACTATR, and other leading agencies have been working to design and develop a school age guidance document on how to discuss the COVID-

19 in schools that provides the adequate amount of information that can be easily understood by the student learners.

1. NACTATR: Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic



Messages for the Carers of Children

Help children find positive ways to express feelings such as fear and sadness. Every child has his or her own way of expressing emotions. Sometimes engaging in a creative activity, such as playing or drawing can facilitate this process. Children feel relieved if they can express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment.

Keep children close to their parents and family, if considered safe, and avoid separating children and their carers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from his or her primary carer, ensure that appropriate alternative care is provided and that a social worker or equivalent will regularly follow up on the child. Further, ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and carers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled telephone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g. social media).¹

1. [WHO: Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)



Messages for the Carers of Children

Maintain familiar routines in daily life as much as possible, or create new routines, especially if children must stay at home. Provide engaging age-appropriate activities for children, including activities for their learning. Where possible, encourage children to continue to play and socialize with others, even if only within the family when advised to restrict social contact.

During times of stress and crisis, it is common for children to seek more attachment and be more demanding on parents.

Discuss COVID-19 with your children in an honest and age-appropriate way. If your children have concerns, addressing them together may ease their anxiety. Children will observe adults' behaviours and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times.¹

1. [WHO: Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)



Tips for talking to Children about COVID-19

Remain calm. Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others.

Reassure children that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.

Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Let children know they can come to you when they have questions.

Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma.

Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online. Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.¹

1. [CDC: Tips for talking to Children](#)



Tips for talking to Children about COVID-19

Provide information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Talk to children about how some stories on COVID-19 on the Internet and social media may be based on rumors and inaccurate information. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.

Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs. Remind children to wash their hands frequently and stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing or sick. Also, remind them to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow, then throw the tissue into the trash.

If school is open, discuss any new actions that may be taken at school to help protect children and school staff.²

1. [CDC: Tips for talking to Children](#)



Primary School Conversations about COVID-19

Make sure to listen to children's concerns and answer their questions in an age-appropriate manner; don't overwhelm them with too much information. Encourage them to express and communicate their feelings. Discuss the different reactions they may experience and explain that these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation.¹

Emphasize that children can do a lot to keep themselves and others safe:

- Introduce the concept of social distancing (standing further away from friends, avoiding large crowds, not touching people if you don't need to, etc.)
- Focus on good health behaviors, such as covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow and washing hands

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)

Primary School Conversations about COVID-19



Help children understand the basic concepts of disease prevention and control. Use exercises that demonstrate how germs can spread. For example, by putting colored water in a spray bottle and spraying over a piece of white paper. Observe how far the droplets travel.

Demonstrate why it is important to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water:

- Put a small amount of glitter in students' hands and have them wash them with just water, notice how much glitter remains, then have them wash for 20 seconds with soap and water.¹

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)



Primary School Conversations about COVID-19

Have students analyze texts to identify high risk behaviors and suggest modifying behaviors.

- For example, a teacher comes to school with a cold. He sneezes and covers it with his hand. He shakes hands with a colleague. He wipes his hands after with a handkerchief then goes to class to teach. What did the teacher do that was risky? What should he have done instead?³

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)



Middle School Conversations about COVID-19

Make sure to listen to students' concerns and answer their questions.

Emphasize that students can do a lot to keep themselves and others safe.

- Introduce the concept of social distancing
- Focus on good health behaviors, such as covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow and washing hands
- Remind students that they can model healthy behaviors for their families

Encourage students to prevent and address stigma

- Discuss the different reactions they may experience and explain these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. Encourage them to express and communicate their feelings



Middle School Conversations about COVID-19

Build students' agency and have them promote facts about public health.

- Have students make their own Public Service Announcements through school announcements and posters

Incorporate relevant health education into other subjects

- Science can cover the study of viruses, disease transmission and the importance of vaccinations
- Social studies can focus on the history of pandemics and evolution of policies on public health and safety
- Media literacy lessons can empower students to be critical thinkers and makers, effective communicators and active citizens.¹

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)



Secondary School Conversations about COVID-19

Make sure to listen to students' concerns and answer their questions.

Emphasize that students can do a lot to keep themselves and others safe.

- Introduce the concept of social distancing
- Focus on good health behaviors, such as covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow and washing hands

Encourage students to prevent and address stigma

- Discuss the different reactions they may experience and explain these are normal reactions to an abnormal situation. Encourage them to express and communicate their feelings¹

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)



Secondary School Conversations about COVID-19

Incorporate relevant health education into other subjects

- Science courses can cover the study of viruses, disease transmission and the importance of vaccinations
- Social studies can focus on the history of pandemics and their secondary effects and investigate how public policies can promote tolerance and social cohesion.

Have students make their own Public Service Announcements via social media, radio or even local tv broadcasting

- Media literacy lessons can empower students to be critical thinkers and makers, effective communicators and active citizens.²

1. [WHO: Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19](#)



Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact of COVID-19

Students and staff returning to school do so with a varying range of emotions; fear for some, and the weight of uncertainty for most due to the unseen force of a virus so powerful, we were told to “hide in our homes” to avoid it.

However, unlike most other traumatic experiences where we are supporting schools in the aftermath of a single tragedy, COVID- 19 is a protracted world-wide traumatic event. An event that in all likelihood, will still be occurring during re-entry to schools.

Yet, what makes that fact more manageable is that schools are not “traumatic stimuli”. Meaning, schools were closed to protect students and staff from harm and not because they were harmed. Whereas, reclaiming a school where a terrible tragedy occurred within its walls is more complex than re-entering a school we have been temporarily disconnected from for our own protection.¹

1. [NACTATR Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#)



Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact of COVID-19

At the federal and state/provincial level, there will continue to be guidance about how to take action to prevent contagion and to maintain safety of the school/campus and the classroom. But what can we expect when students return to the classroom in regard to their social and emotional well-being?

- Will they be ready to learn?
- What percentage of students will be truant or refuse to return to school?
- Are faculty and staff prepared?
- Are parents sufficiently reassured to allow their children to return to school buildings?
- What can we expect from all the constituents and members of the school family and what are the steps we can take to facilitate the best possible outcomes when schools restart?¹

1. [NACTATR Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#)



The Role of State/Provincial and Federal Government

This is a crisis of enormous proportions and complexity but, due to the disparity of impact, some regions are experiencing social-emotional and traumatic impacts more than others.

This disparity means that under-reaction is also an issue we will need to address as some schools (students, staff and their families) may have pronounced polarization between those who feel the government response to the pandemic was completely unnecessary to those who feel we should not be returning school. COVID-19 is not only a “School Issue”. It is an entire “Community Issue”.¹

1. [NACTATR Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#)



The Role of State/Provincial and Federal Government

Therefore, the return of many of our citizens to school (students and staff) requires guided multidisciplinary collaboration and the leadership of local, state/provincial and federal government departments-especially those who are part of education, health, crisis and trauma response teams as well as those responsible for public safety-including violence and suicide prevention. The strategies around physical distancing are the tangible aspects of re-entry during the pandemic that may lower health official's anxiety but increase that of some students and staff.

Therefore, it will be managing the social-emotional and trauma response of some individuals to both the initial school disruption due to the virus, and the impact of those tangible strategies for re-entry. Strategically addressing these two dynamics is what will influence whether a return to school is functional or dysfunctional.²

2. [NACTATR Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#)

Helping Children with Traumatic Separation or Traumatic Grief as Related to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in thousands of children being separated from loved ones who require isolation and/ or hospitalization due to a loved one testing positive for COVID-19 or because of potential exposure for essential workers. For some children, the separation may result in distress or in a traumatic reaction. If a loved one dies from the virus, a child may experience traumatic grief due the sudden

nature of the death and being unable to say goodbye or observe cultural or religious mourning rituals.

This tip sheet is for caregivers or other adults supporting children with traumatic separation or traumatic grief related to COVID-19. Especially in stressful times, in addition to the suggestions here, all children benefit from caregivers listening to and validating their different feelings.¹



HELPING CHILDREN WITH TRAUMATIC SEPARATION OR TRAUMATIC GRIEF RELATED TO COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in thousands of children being separated from loved ones who require isolation and/ or hospitalization due to a loved one testing positive for COVID-19 or because of potential exposure for essential workers. For some children, the separation may result in distress or in a traumatic reaction. If a loved one dies from the virus, a child may experience traumatic grief due the sudden nature of the death and being unable to say goodbye or observe cultural or religious mourning rituals. This tip sheet is for caregivers or other adults supporting children with traumatic separation or traumatic grief related to COVID-19. Especially in stressful times, in addition to the suggestions here, all children benefit from caregivers listening to and validating their different feelings.

I want you to know that:	You can help when you:
1. I may have a lot of feelings but am not able to identify them or why I have them.	Acknowledge it is ok to feel sad, angry, hurt, lonely, etc. Understand when I get upset out of the blue about things that do not seem related. Help me label my feelings with words and talk about what is happening.
2. I am afraid when my loved one who is sick must be isolated from me at home or away from home.	Explain that isolating my loved one protects me from getting sick and helps the sick person to recover. Tell me the isolated person cares about me very much and does not want me to get sick. Remind me how you or other helpers take care of our sick loved one and me. Help me to find ways to stay in contact with my sick loved one (call, text, make a card).
3. I am afraid that my loved one, who is a health worker or emergency responder, will get sick or die.	Explain that health professionals and emergency responders get special training on how to stay safe at work to care for people. Tell me ways I can stay in touch with my loved one if I can't see them all the time or if they have to stay close to work for a period of time. Explain the important work they are doing to care for people.
4. I am sad that I can't see my sick loved one in the hospital and I worry that they are alone.	Assure me that my loved one wants me to stay safe, so they do not want me near sick people in the hospital. Explain how people in the hospital make sure my loved one is not alone. Help me communicate with my loved one, through calls, cards, pictures, songs, prayers, texts, and virtual communication when possible.
5. I am scared that my sick loved one is in the hospital and might die.	Give me accurate information about how my loved one is doing in words I can understand for my age. Help me understand that most people get better and come home. Tell the truth if my loved one won't recover and help me find a way to say goodbye.
6. I am scared, sad and mad that I can't say goodbye in person if my loved one is going to die in the hospital, and we can't go.	Explain that health care workers are with my loved one, so they are not alone. Find out if you can send a message for me or I can say goodbye remotely.

This project was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The views, policies, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of SAMHSA or HHS.

[Helping Children with Traumatic Separation or Traumatic Grief Related to COVID-19](#)




1. [NCSTN: Helping Children With Traumatic Separation Or Traumatic Grief Related To Covid-19](#)

Supporting Children During Coronavirus

With the ever-changing landscape of our lives as you cope with the COVID-19 outbreak, you are trying to determine how best to help your family. Your children/teens may be worrying about the safety of your family, struggling with thoughts and feelings about the stories and images coming from coverage of COVID-19, and the uncertainty of not knowing when they can return to those routines that provided them comfort.

They may turn to you or other trusted adults for support, help, and guidance. We hope that this resource will help you think about what you can do to make these times of uncertainty a bit less stressful.¹

1. NCSTN: Supporting Children During Coronavirus (COVID19)



Supporting Children During Coronavirus (COVID19)

With the ever-changing landscape of our lives as you cope with the COVID-19 outbreak, you are trying to determine how best to help your family. Your children/teens may be worrying about the safety of your family, struggling with thoughts and feelings about the stories and images coming from coverage of COVID-19, and the uncertainty of not knowing when they can return to those routines that provided them comfort. They may turn to you or other trusted adults for support, help, and guidance. We hope that this resource will help you think about what you can do to make these times of uncertainty a bit less stressful.

Start the conversation

Many people worry that talking to young children will lead to increased worries and anxieties. The opposite is actually the case. Bringing difficult topics into the conversation can help lessen worries in children of all ages. Find a quiet, comfortable place to talk. Take a breath and bring it up.
You can say something like this:

- "There has been a lot of talk about coronavirus. Tell me what you know about it, or tell me what you've heard about it."
- For tweens and teens, also consider, "Tell me what your friends are saying about coronavirus. What have you seen about this online?"

Starting the conversation allows you to listen to what your child/teen knows and gives you a place to begin as the conversation continues.

Correct inaccurate information

If you hear inaccurate information or misunderstandings from your children/teens, take time to provide the correct information in language your child/teen can understand.

Encourage your children to ask questions, and answer those questions directly.

Your children/teens may have some difficult questions about the coronavirus. For example, children may ask if it is possible that someone in the family may get the virus that causes COVID-19. The concern may be an issue for both you and your children/teens alike. This question is speaking to concerns about the safety and security of themselves and those they love. In your answer, stress what is being done in your family, the community, state, country, and the world to reduce risk. Question-and-answer exchanges help ensure ongoing support as your children begin to cope with emotions related to this virus.

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Supporting Children During Coronavirus (COVID19)

FLINN SCIENTIFIC

Ask about our custom district solutions designed to support a safe return to school:

- Custom safety and professional development/learning proposals to ensure full school safety
- Full PPE for students, faculty, and support staff
- Blended science learning solutions that provide continuity of lab instruction for both onsite & remote learners