



CREATING SOCIAL DISTANCE WHEN RE-OPENING SCHOOLS

Bluum has created this document as a resource for schools. It is intended to help school leaders, teachers, staff, and the larger school community consider social distancing options when re-opening schools during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Before re-opening, every school should obtain guidance and approvals from all applicable state, county, and local public authorities.

Drawing on multiple sources, this document synthesizes and provides information and ideas about how schools can create social distance within their building(s) upon re-opening. This is not an exhaustive list of all considerations facing schools. Schools should also consider plans for facility cleaning and disinfecting, student and employee hygiene practices, monitoring student and employee health, planning for a sick child or employee, collaborating with public health officials, and closing school again if necessary.

Every school building and school community is unique in terms of infrastructure, budget, supply chain, enrollment, student ages and demographics, staffing, and broader family and community supports. Not all the ideas listed here will be possible or even necessary at every school; so decisions about which measures to implement in a specific situation should fit each school's unique context.

UPON IMMEDIATE RETURN TO SCHOOL

1. Create cohorts of students and staff. Ensure that cohorts are as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same adults (all day for young children, and as much as possible for older children).
2. Restrict mixing between cohorts.
3. Create one-way traffic flows in hallways.
4. Stagger class periods and dismissal times to reduce the number of students in hallways and at exits.
5. Cancel field trips, inter-group events, and extracurricular activities.
6. Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain social distancing, support proper hand hygiene, and restrict attendance of those from higher transmission areas.
7. Restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving other groups at the same time.
8. Space seating/desks to at least six feet apart.
9. Install partitions or plastic barriers in tight spaces, such as between desks.
10. Close communal use spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds if possible; otherwise stagger use. Grid off sections using floor markings to help students separate and disinfect in between use.
11. If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms instead. Serve individually plated meals or pre-boxed meals. Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations. Put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible.
12. Install no-touch bathroom fittings and trash cans.
13. Create social distance between children on school buses where possible. Increase the number of bus routes to reduce occupancy. Encourage students to walk to school and families to drop off students.



14. Stagger drop-off times and arrange for cohorts of students to arrive and dismiss at the same times.

IN LATER PHASES

15. Consider keeping classes together, as in step 1, to include the same group of children each day, and consider keeping the same teachers and staff with the same group each day.
16. Allow minimal mixing between groups. Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain social distancing, support proper hand hygiene, and restrict attendance of those from higher transmission areas.
17. Continue to space out seating and bedding (head-to-toe positioning) to six feet apart, if possible.
18. Consider keeping communal use spaces closed, such as game rooms or dining halls, if possible; if this is not possible, stagger use and disinfect in between uses.
19. Consider continuing to plate each child's meal, to limit the use of shared serving utensils.
20. Consider limiting nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving other groups. Restrict attendance of those from higher transmission areas.
21. Consider staggering arrival and drop-off times or locations. Put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible. Continue to stagger arrival and drop-off times and plan to continue limiting direct contact with parents as much as possible.

IN ALL PHASES

22. Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
23. Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment, etc., assigned to a single student) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
24. 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 of foods and utensils.
25. Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.
26. Train all teachers and staff in the above safety actions. Consider conducting the training virtually, or, if in-person, ensure that social distancing is maintained.

**For more information, contact Greg Richmond at: GRichmond@bluum.org
This document will be updated on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available.**

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control COVID-19 home page: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html

Social distancing: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html

Cleaning and disinfecting: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

Bluum COVID-19 Resource Page: www.bluum.org/coronavirus/