



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



Washington State Department of
Health



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

EMPLOYER HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL SCENARIOS

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Developed by:

- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- The Department of Health
- The Department of Labor & Industries
- Local School District Superintendents
- School Labor Representatives

ABOUT THIS GUIDANCE

The following set of rules and guidance for school staff health and safety was developed by representatives from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), local superintendents, and labor organizations.

Questions related to personal protective equipment (PPE) or other employment-related requirements should be [directed to L&I](#), questions about health requirements should be directed to DOH, and questions about K–12 education requirements should be directed to OSPI.

Key Points

This guidance clarifies and builds out the worksite safety guidance embedded in the June reopening guidance ([Reopening Washington Schools 2020: District Planning Guide](#)).

The key points are as follows:

- The overall health risk for the typical K–12 in-person instructional setting is classified as low risk. There are other scenarios in the school setting where the risk level may be higher or lower.
- In low risk situations, staff may wear a cloth face covering.
- In medium risk situations, L&I's long-standing guidance allows for several different protection options, including a face shield with a cloth face mask, a surgical-style mask, a hobby dust mask, a KN95 mask, or a KN90 mask.
- For high risk or extremely high risk situations, an N95 respirator or equivalent should be used. If an employer cannot reasonably obtain an N95 or equivalent, they may use a face shield **plus** an FDA-approved surgical mask, procedural mask, or a KN95 mask until a respirator can be obtained.
- N95 respirators or equivalent protection are only required in high risk or extremely high risk situations.

For all risk levels, different face covering and respirator options are included in L&I's [Which Mask for Which Task?](#) document.

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INTRODUCTION

This document provides general guidance to protect employees in common school scenarios under existing conditions. The guidance is intended to aid local school districts and safety officers as they develop required COVID-19 safety plans and procedures. The guidance does not replace local decisions based on specific conditions.

When schools reopen for in-person instruction, they must protect their employees. Required protections may differ based on the specific job duties and occupations. For guidance related to the health and safety requirements for students, please refer to materials developed by the Department of Health, including:

- [Fall Guidance, K–12](#)
- [Decision Tree, K–12](#)

This document focuses on required PPE, assuming other required safeguards such as cleaning and hygiene, and engineering or administrative controls, are present. It is intended to aid school districts for planning purposes only.

Please also consider recently updated guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- [Strategies for Protecting K–12 School Staff from COVID-19](#)
- [What is known about the signs and symptoms, burden, and transmission of SARS-COV-2 among children?](#)
- [Preparing K–12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020](#)

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

As described in the [Reopening Washington Schools 2020: District Planning Guide](#), school districts, like all businesses, have a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy worksite in accordance with state and federal law and safety and health rules for a variety of workplace hazards. An employer's obligations include developing an Accident Prevention Plan (APP), including a Job Hazard Analysis that also includes worker protections from COVID-19, a known workplace hazard.

School districts must comply with the following COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices as outlined in the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with L&I's [General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces](#) and DOH's [Workplace and Employer Resources and Recommendations](#).

K–12 employers must specifically ensure operations follow the main L&I COVID-19 requirements to protect workers, including:

1. Educate workers in the language they understand best about coronavirus, how to prevent transmission, and the employer's COVID-19 policies.
2. Limit capacity in indoor spaces to ensure 6 feet of distance can be kept between all staff, students, and others.
3. Maintaining a minimum 6-foot separation is required between all employees, students, and others to the maximum extent feasible. When strict physical distancing is not feasible for a specific task, and takes more than 10 minutes in an hour, the employer is required to provide additional prevention measures, such as use of barriers, masks, or respirators that provide a higher level of protection than a cloth face covering, minimize the number of staff or students in the enclosed areas, and stagger breaks, recesses, and work shift starts.
4. Provide (at no cost to employees) and require the wearing of PPE, such as gloves, goggles, face shields, and face masks as appropriate or required for the work activity being performed. Cloth face coverings must be worn by every employee not working alone on the job site unless their exposure dictates a higher level of protection under L&I safety and health rules and guidance.
 - a. Exceptions to this requirement for cloth face coverings include:
 - i. when working alone in an office, vehicle, or at a job site;
 - ii. if the individual is deaf or hard of hearing and is communicating with someone who relies on language cues such as facial markers and expression and mouth movements as a part of communication;
 - iii. if the individual has a medical condition or disability that makes wearing a facial covering inappropriate; or
 - iv. when the job has no in-person interaction.
 - b. For additional details, please refer to:
 - i. L&I's [Washington Coronavirus Hazard Considerations for Employers \(except COVID-19 care in hospitals and clinics\) Face Coverings, Masks, and Respirator Choices](#) document.
 - ii. L&I's [Which Mask for Which Task?](#) document.
 - iii. Cloth face coverings are described in [Department of Health guidance](#).
5. Ensure frequent and adequate hand washing with adequate maintenance of supplies. Use disposable gloves where safe and applicable to prevent transmission on tools or other items that are shared.

6. Increase the frequency of facility cleaning schedules that includes cleaning and sanitizing with a particular emphasis on commonly touched surfaces – which shall be no less stringent or frequent than what is required by the [Department of Health's fall guidance for K–12 schools](#).
7. Screen employees, students, and any other individual who will be at the school facility for more than 15 minutes, for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 at start of every shift.
8. Make sure sick employees and students stay home or immediately go home if they feel or appear sick.
9. Cordon off any areas where an employee or student with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness worked, touched surfaces, etc. until the area and equipment is cleaned and sanitized. Follow the cleaning and sanitizing guidelines established by the Department of Health in their fall K–12 guidance.

A site-specific COVID-19 supervisor shall be designated by the employer at each school and other worksite to monitor the health of employees and enforce the COVID-19 job site safety plan.

SCENARIOS FOR SCHOOL SETTINGS

The following scenarios are intended as general guidance to aid local school districts and safety officers as they develop required COVID-19 safety plans and procedures. Specific conditions of each work site must be considered when determining workplace protections required for workers. However, these general guidelines should be beneficial for planning and anticipating needed PPE supplies.

Each scenario assumes:

- The activity is conducted indoors, if not otherwise specified. In general, working outdoors reduces potential exposure to airborne pathogens.
- People who are required to wear a cloth face covering are, indeed, wearing a cloth face covering during any interaction. While protections outlined below are required for workers, they are predicated on the assumption that virus transmission is reduced when non-workers also wear at least a cloth face covering.
- No known positive case of COVID-19 exists in the workplace. When a positive case is identified, that person is immediately removed from the worksite, and the locations where the person had been are cordoned off and sanitized before workers return to the area.
- Exposure time exceeds 15 minutes. In general, longer periods of potential exposure increase the likelihood that a worker is infected. For reference, the June reopening guidance exempts individuals who are on campus less than 15 minutes.
- All required protections – including PPE – are provided by the employer. These workplace protections work together to protect workers. No single protection is sufficient by itself.
- Required disinfection occurs before work areas are shared. For example, if a school employee moves from one classroom to another, all shared equipment is sanitized before the next employee arrives.
- Additional controls are not present. Where additional barriers, ventilation, distance or other controls are provided, minimum requirements may be reduced further. [Consultative services from the Department of Labor & Industries Division of Occupational Safety and Health](#) are available for districts with specific questions.

In the [Washington Coronavirus Hazard Considerations for Employers \(except COVID-19 care in hospitals & clinics\)](#), minimum requirements for face coverings, masks, and respirators are identified based on transmission level. For each scenario below, a risk level is identified, indicating required PPE and some alternatives. Additional alternatives, or combinations of controls and PPE may also be identified through consultation services.

The summary tables on pages 8–11 provide basic PPE requirements in each scenario. However, all additional conditions identified immediately above must also be considered when applying the minimum PPE guidelines summarized in the tables.

SUMMARY OF PPE REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL-SPECIFIC SCENARIOS

Examples of Work Conditions by Transmission Risk Level

Negligible Transmission Risk	Low Transmission Risk	Medium Transmission Risk	High Transmission Risk	Extremely High Transmission Risk
Health Status of the People Around You:				
Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Probable or Known COVID-19 Source or Direct Human Mouth, Nose, or Eye Interactions
<p>Workspace with controlled and low public interaction, where at least 6 feet of distance is always maintained and only broken in passing once or twice a day.</p> <p><i>For example, when working alone in a classroom or office.</i></p>	<p>Work inside a structure/office where number present allows for at least 6 feet of distance to be easily maintained fulltime and only broken intermittently, in passing, up to several times a day.</p> <p><i>For example, in the general instructional setting, in office settings with 6 feet of distance, or in food service with 6 feet of distance.</i></p>	<p>Work inside a structure/office where at least 6 feet of distance is mostly maintained, but with job tasks that require sustained several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day without sneeze guards or other mitigations.</p> <p><i>For example, in an individual/small group instructional setting with 6 feet of distance or in transportation settings with 6 feet of distance mostly maintained.</i></p>	<p>Work in close quarters, such as a multiple-occupancy permit-required confined space or inside a room with 10 or more people where at least 6 feet of distance is not maintained, and includes job tasks requiring sustained close-together (less than 3 feet apart) work for more than 10 minutes in an hour multiple times a day.</p> <p><i>For example, in different in-person educational settings with sustained close contact.</i></p>	<p>Healthcare work involving face-to-face close proximity or potential for coughing or sneezing while working with healthy or asymptomatic people. Potential for droplets of biological material or fluids to become airborne within the breathing zone of the employee. Examples include tonometry during eye exams, visual examination of the oral and nasal cavities, visual examination of the eyes, swab sampling in the mouth or nose.</p> <p><i>For example, in a health or isolation room.</i></p>

Minimum Required Mask or Respiratory Protection for Employees Without Additional Engineering Controls or PPE

Negligible Transmission Risk	Low Transmission Risk	Medium Transmission Risk	High Transmission Risk	Extremely High Transmission Risk
Health Status of the People Around You:				
Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Healthy/Asymptomatic (No COVID-19 Symptoms)	Probable or Known COVID-19 Source or Direct Human Mouth, Nose, or Eye Interactions
Reusable cloth face covering that fully covers mouth and nose except when working alone in room, vehicle, or on job site. Job has no in-person interaction. A face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield is an acceptable accommodation.	Reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose. A face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield is an acceptable accommodation.	Face shield with a cloth face covering. -OR- Non-cloth disposables: dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks.	Elastomeric half- or full-face respirator with particulate filters ***** -OR- Powered-air purifying respirator (PAPR) with particulate filter. (Tight-fitting respirators must be fit-tested and the wearer must be clean-shaven. No fit-testing is required for loose fitting systems.) -OR- Industrial use N95, R95 or P95 or foreign-system non-NIOSH approved filtering facepiece respirator (or other particulate respirator*****). -OR- Face shield plus an FDA-approved KN95 mask, surgical mask, dust mask, or procedural mask (if a respirator cannot be reasonably obtained).	FDA-approved surgical mask or healthcare N95 filtering facepiece respirator***** -OR- Elastomeric respirator with particulate filters. -OR- Face shield plus an FDA-approved KN95 mask, surgical mask, dust mask, or procedural mask (if a respirator cannot be reasonably obtained). Tight-fitting respirators must be fit-tested and the wearer must be clean-shaven. Powered-air purifying respirator (PAPR) with particulate filter may be used; no fit testing is required for loose-fitting models. When feasible, people with COVID-19 should also wear an FDA-approved surgical N95 or surgical mask.

**Use a face shield combined with the minimum face covering to lower the risk category where the work or job task allows.*

**For all risk levels, different face covering and respirator options are included in L&I's [Which Mask for Which Task?](#) document.*

Staff-Only Face Coverings Required in School-Specific Scenarios

Scenario	Negligible Transmission Risk	Low Transmission Risk	Medium Transmission Risk	High Transmission Risk	Extremely High Transmission Risk
In Classroom or Office Working Alone	X – when “working alone,” a mask is not required				
General Group Instructional Setting		X – with 6 feet of distance easily maintained			
Individual/Small Group Instructional Support Setting			X – with 6 feet of distance	X – without 6 feet of distance, sustained close contact*	
Office Settings— School and Non-School-Based	X – when “working alone,” a mask is not required	X – with easily maintained 6 feet of distance		X – if near health/isolation room, sustained close contact*	
Transportation (Driver and Staff)			X – with 6 feet of distance mostly maintained	X – without 6 feet of distance, sustained close contact	
Food Service		X – with easily maintained 6 feet of distance	X – with 6 feet of distance mostly maintained		
Health/Isolation Room*					X – whether nurse or other staff*
Band	X – wind instruments permitted only if entirely remote, with no other human	X – for percussion and string instruments only with easily maintained 6 feet of distance			

Scenario	Negligible Transmission Risk	Low Transmission Risk	Medium Transmission Risk	High Transmission Risk	Extremely High Transmission Risk
	outside the household present				
Choir	<i>Remote only with no other human outside the household present; otherwise not permitted at this time. See DOH Guidance to determine when small or large group choir may be resumed.</i>				
Physical Education (Outdoor)		X – with easily maintained 6 feet of distance; no strenuous activity; cloth face covering worn at all times			
Physical Education (Indoor)			X – with 6 feet of distance mostly maintained; no strenuous activity; cloth face covering worn at all times		
Distribution Centers		X – with 6 feet of distance easily maintained	X – without 6 feet of distancing		

***Additional PPE is required as indicated.**

If an employer cannot reasonably obtain a NIOSH-approved N95 or equivalent for their employees who perform work tasks (not including aerosolizing procedures) that require one, they may utilize a face shield and an approved KN95 mask, dust mask, or procedural mask until a respirator can be obtained. The employer must show that they are attempting to procure the appropriate the PPE (for example, through a standing order that cannot be filled).

1. General Instructional Settings

General instructional settings are the most common settings in schools. This is a typical 900-square-foot classroom with a planned number of students present, allowing for 6 feet of physical distancing and additional recommended health and safety measures as outlined by the Department of Health.

School employees working from their classroom workstation with students present would be at low risk level, where at least 6 feet of distance is **easily maintained full time** and only **broken intermittently**, in passing, up to several times a day.

This low risk environment requires:

- Reusable cloth face coverings that fully covers the mouth and nose.
- Tools are not shared or are sanitized between different users.

However, there are some situations that may require a different level of protection, depending on specific job tasks. For example, school employees working from their classroom workstation with no one else (students or staff) present are considered to be “working alone” and, therefore, not required to wear a cloth face covering.

When leaving the classroom or if being joined by any other person, employees must wear a cloth face covering or face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield.

Where possible, a cohort model is used to reduce potential exposure. According to the CDC’s guidance [Preparing K–12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020](#), updated August 24, 2020:

Cohorting is a new term for a strategy that schools may use to limit contact between students and staff as part of their efforts to limit transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). These strategies work by keeping groups of students – and sometimes staff – together over the course of a pre-determined period of time. Ideally, the students and staff within a cohort will only have physical proximity with others in the same cohort.

This practice may help prevent the spread of COVID-19 by limiting cross-over of students and school employees to the extent possible, thus:

- Decreasing opportunities for exposure or transmission of SARS-CoV-2
- Reducing contact with shared surfaces
- Facilitating more efficient contact tracing in the event of a positive case
- Allowing for targeted testing, quarantine, and/or isolation of a single cohort instead of school-wide measures in the event of a positive case or cluster of cases

Cohorting strategies are common practice in many elementary schools across the United States. Many elementary school students have the same school employees and classmates during the entire school year. Implementation of this strategy varies, depending on setting and resources. For example, schools may:

- Keep cohorts together in one classroom, and have employees rotate between rooms.
- Alternate cohorts by days or weeks, with cohorts assigned to specific days or weeks.

- Adopt a hybrid approach, with some cohorts assigned to in-person learning and others assigned to remote learning.

Evidence of the impact of cohorting on the spread of COVID-19 is limited. Some evidence from other viral disease outbreaks and school reopenings in international settings suggests that cohorting may be an important tool for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. However, it is essential to note that those studies were conducted in very different contexts, in communities with lower transmission levels.

2. Individual/Small Group Instructional Support Setting

Individual instructional settings include situations when work occurs inside a classroom or office where at least 6 feet of distance **is mostly maintained**, but with job tasks that **require sustained** several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day without sneeze guards or other mitigations. Examples may include:

- Working with students with disabilities or other students needing one-to-one support
- Speech language, behavioral support, or articulation therapy

A school employee working in an individual or small group instructional support setting would generally be considered medium transmission risk.

Medium transmission risk requires:

- A minimum of 6 feet of distance is maintained in most interactions.
- Students wear at least a cloth face covering.
- Employees wear at least a face shield with a cloth face covering **OR** non-cloth disposable dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved, foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirator, or non-FDA approved procedure mask.

When working in close proximity with someone who may not be able to consistently wear at least a cloth face covering, best practices also include:

- Wearing a disposable gown that is discarded after each close interaction.
- Frequent hand washing and reminders to not touch face.

In addition, and while it is likely the exception, there may be job tasks that require sustained close contact with students. For those job tasks, a school employee may be considered high transmission risk where at least 6 feet of distance **is not maintained**, and includes tasks **requiring sustained** close-together (less than 3 feet apart) work for more than 10 minutes in an hour multiple times a day.

In these situations:

- School employees wear at least industrial use N95, R95, or P95 or foreign-system non-NIOSH approved filtering facepiece respirator (or other particulate respirator****). If an employer cannot reasonably obtain an approved filtering facepiece respirator, then a face shield **plus** an FDA-approved KN95 mask, dust mask, or procedural mask is an acceptable alternative.
- Respirator use that is required must comply with existing respirator rules, including medical surveillance, fit testing, training, and a written program. Written Respiratory Protection Program templates can be found on L&I's website.

3. Office Settings – School and Non-School Based

Like other office settings, school and non-school-based office settings could include situations where workers are “working alone” and also potential interactions with students and other staff on a daily basis. Non-school-based office settings *may* include short interactions with families and students for specific staff, but primarily the settings would only include other staff members working in the same school buildings.

When a worker in a school-based office setting is expected to interact with others but maintains distance, it would be considered a negligible transmission risk, requiring at least a cloth face covering. This may include situations where more than one worker is in an office space without partitions or doors, or students or other staff may enter the space.

Where an office worker is working alone, with no expectation of human interaction, a cloth face covering is not required. A person is considered to be working alone when they're isolated from interaction with other people and have little or no expectation of in-person interruption. How often a worker is able to work alone throughout the day may vary.

Examples of working alone include:

- A person by themselves inside an office with four walls and a door.
- A lone worker inside a cubicle with four walls (one with an opening for an entryway) that are high enough to block the breathing zone of anyone walking by, and whose work activity will not require anyone to come inside of the cubicle. Cubicle walls or other barriers may include plexi-glass or other non-porous materials.

Staff working in an office with students present would be at low risk level, where a distance of at least 6 feet is **easily maintained fulltime** and only broken intermittently in passing up to several times a day.

It would require:

- A reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose.
- Tools are not shared or are sanitized between different users.

Office staff who are working with students in the health or isolation room where known or suspected cases of COVID-19 may be present, and where at least 6 feet of distance is maintained may be considered high transmission risk, requiring at least Industrial use N95, R95 or P95 or foreign-system non-NIOSH approved filtering facepiece respirator (or other particulate respirator****) or surgical mask. If an employer cannot reasonably obtain an N95 or equivalent, they may use a face shield **plus** an FDA-approved surgical mask, procedural mask, or a KN95 mask.

If their duties include working directly (within 3 feet) with these students, particularly students not able to wear a mask, a respirator is required. See section 6, Health/Isolation Room minimum requirements.

When working in close proximity with someone who may not be able to consistently wear at least a cloth face covering, best practices may also include:

- Wearing a disposable gown that is discarded after each close interaction.
- Frequent hand washing and reminders to not touch face.

4. Transportation

Student transportation may include many different sizes of buses and numbers of students. Students boarding the bus may be screened prior to boarding to take temperatures and observe symptoms. (If screening is done, it is performed by additional staff at the pick-up spot.) Windows should remain open to increase ventilation whenever possible.

A driver or other staff working to transport students would be considered medium transmission risk, requiring they:

- Wear non-cloth disposables, such as dust masks, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks

-OR-

- Wear a face shield with a cloth face covering.

Also, consider leaving seats open near the driver to reduce exposure.

A driver or other staff working to transport students, including students with disabilities or other students that may require the driver or staff to be in close proximity, where at least 6 feet of distance **is not maintained**, and includes job tasks **requiring sustained** close-together (less than 3 feet apart) work for more than 10 minutes in an hour multiple times a day would be considered high transmission risk, requiring at least Industrial use N95, R95, or P95 or foreign-system non-NIOSH approved filtering facepiece respirator (or other particulate respirator****). If an employer cannot reasonably obtain an approved filtering facepiece respirator, then a face shield **plus** an FDA-approved KN95 mask, dust mask, or procedural mask is an acceptable alternative.

When working in close proximity with someone who may not be able to consistently wear at least a cloth face covering, best practices may also include:

- Wearing a disposable gown that is changed between each close interaction.
- Frequent hand washing and reminders not to touch face.

Frequent cleaning procedures for commonly touched surfaces on the bus is also required. Follow [CDC guidelines](#), including:

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.
- Develop a schedule for increased frequency of [routine cleaning and disinfection](#).
- 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](#).
 - Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
 - Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing products securely away from children. Use products that meet [EPA disinfection criteria](#).
 - Avoid using cleaning products near children and ensure there is adequate ventilation to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.

When considering spacing of students while being transported, 6 feet of distancing is not required. Follow DOH's [K–12 Fall Guidance](#), including:

- Keep riders as far apart as possible on the bus. Consider how to reduce occupancy and increase space on the bus through scheduling (e.g., through staggered arrivals/departures, A/B scheduling) or add buses where possible.
- Require assigned seating.
- If possible, seat students with household members or members of their school group/cohort.
- Maximize outside air and keep windows open as much as possible.
- Encourage walking or biking where safe or being driven by caregivers when feasible.
- Require riders and staff members to wear a cloth face covering or acceptable alternative.
- Encourage students to wash or sanitize hands when they leave their home or classroom immediately before boarding the bus.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, including the tops and backs of seats, using an EPA-registered product and following manufacturers' instructions.

Additional Resources

- [National Association of Pupil Transportation](#)
- [Transit Operators Guidance](#) (CDC)
- [List of Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#) (Environmental Protection Agency)
- [Resources for School Bus Personnel](#) (American Federation of Teachers)

5. Food Service

In addition to other applicable food handling and safety requirements, school personnel preparing, serving, delivering, and cleaning up after service for students must be provided appropriate PPE to meet the conditions of their work. Several different approaches to food service in schools may be used.

Wherever possible, schools should have students bring their own meals or serve individually plated meals in classrooms instead of in a communal dining hall or cafeteria to reduce staff interaction, while ensuring the safety of children with food allergies.

In addition, schools should:

- 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, use pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils and ensure the [safety of children with food allergies](#).

In areas where food service workers are in a common, indoor kitchen, where at least 6 feet of distance **is mostly maintained**, but with job tasks that **require sustained** several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day without sneeze guards or other mitigations would be considered medium transmission risk, requiring:

- Non-cloth disposables: dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks.

-OR-

- A face shield with a cloth face covering.
- Tools are shared and sanitized between different users.

In areas where food service workers are in a common, indoor kitchen, where number present allows for at least 6-foot distance to be **easily maintained full time** and only broken intermittently, in passing, up to several times a day would be considered low transmission risk, requiring:

- A reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose.
- Tools are not shared or are sanitized between different users.

Workers delivering meals are encouraged to place them outside the classroom or eating space, and pick up leftover food/packaging there, as well. Staff delivering pre-packaged meals or retrieving debris after meals, but remaining outside the eating area or classroom, where at least 6-foot distance is **easily maintained fulltime** and only broken intermittently, in passing, up to several times a day are considered low transmission risk, requiring:

- A reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose.
- Tools are not shared or are sanitized between different users.
- A face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield is an acceptable accommodation.

Food service workers serving students or cleaning after a meal, gathered in a cafeteria, whether in a cohort group or not, where at least 6-foot distance **is mostly maintained**, but with job tasks that **require sustained** several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day without sneeze guards or other mitigations would be considered medium transmission risk, requiring:

- Non-cloth disposables: dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks.

-OR-

- A face shield with a cloth face covering.

In addition, follow Department of Health guidelines for schools, including:

- Limit gatherings and potential mixing of classes or groups in the cafeteria or other communal spaces.
- If using the cafeteria, have students sit with their class or group and ensure physical distance between students in a group or cohort and between groups.
- Stagger mealtimes in lunchroom or dining hall. Arrange and direct the flow of students to reduce crowding such as at handwashing sinks, food vending areas, etc.
- Space students as far apart as you can at the table. Make sure tables are at least 6 feet apart. Individually plate food for each student.
- To reduce the spread of germs, staff (not students) should handle utensils and serve food.

- Clean and sanitize tables before and after each group eats. Use a washable plastic tablecloth for wooden tables.

Schools could also review the [CDC's guidance for bars and restaurants](#) for additional food service safety guidance.

6. Health/Isolation Room

Each school facility is required to plan for temporarily isolating any staff or student who appears symptomatic or indicates a fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell. Refer to the [CDC guidance about protecting school staff](#) to ensure that personnel managing sick employees or students are appropriately protected from exposure. See also [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).

- Only designated, trained staff should interact with people showing symptoms of COVID-19. At least one designated, trained staff member should be available at all times in case there is a need to isolate a symptomatic employee or student.
- When providing care for anyone with suspected or confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, personnel who need to be within 6 feet of a sick colleague or student must be provided appropriate PPE (including gloves, a gown, a face shield or goggles, and an N95 or equivalent or higher-level respirator or a surgical facemask and face shield if a respirator is not available), and follow [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#).

If respirators are needed, they must be used in the context of a comprehensive respiratory protection program that includes medical exams, fit testing, and training in accordance with Washington Administrative Code 296-842 – Respirators.

Staff serving in these roles would be considered an extremely high transmission risk, requiring:

- FDA-approved surgical mask or healthcare N95 filtering facepiece respirator**** or elastomeric respirator with particulate filters. Tight-fitting respirators must be fit-tested and the wearer must be clean-shaven. Powered-air purifying respirator (PAPR) with particulate filter may be used; no fit testing is required for loose-fitting models. When feasible, clients with COVID-19 should also wear an FDA-approved surgical N95 or surgical mask.
 - If an employer cannot reasonably obtain an approved filtering facepiece respirator, then a face shield **plus** an FDA-approved KN95 mask, dust mask, or procedural mask is an acceptable alternative.
- Add face shield to surgical masks or eye goggles to half-face disposable respirators and non-permeable disposable upper body coverings; use powered-air purifying respirator (PAPR) system, elastomeric full-face respirators with particulate filters or higher protection.

However, if the interaction with ill students involves students without masks, particularly for very close contact (3 feet), or if there is an additional reason for concern (aerosol-generating procedure or performing physical assistance would be the most likely), a surgical mask would not be sufficient. If staff are simply watching over the students and can generally maintain physical distancing, then surgical masks are sufficient.

In addition, staff are required to cordon off any areas where an employee or student with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness was present until the area and equipment is cleaned and sanitized. Follow the [cleaning guidelines set by the CDC](#) to clean and sanitize.

School nurses circulating in multiple school settings must follow these guidelines for each school setting in which they work. In addition, follow guidelines required for cleaning vehicles prior to traveling between work locations.

This document does NOT substitute nursing judgment and acknowledges that courses of action may be modified on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Resources

- [Guidance for Healthcare Personnel on the Use of PPE in Schools During COVID-19](#) (National School Nurses Association)
- [Special Considerations – School nurses/health professionals](#) (CDC)

7. Band & Choir

Continuing the full range of academic activities is important to maintain student learning. However, singing or playing wind and brass instruments, when done by a person with COVID-19, can generate respiratory droplets and aerosols that contain the virus. As shown by recent events, such activities may contribute to virus spread, whether or not that person is symptomatic.

To reduce potential exposure from these activities:

- Band is limited to percussion and stringed instruments only, with physical distancing and at least a cloth face covering to be worn at all times; and
- Choir is permitted only in a remote setting, when no other people outside the immediate household are present. Otherwise, choir is not permitted at this time. See DOH's guidance to determine when small or large group choir may be resumed.

In addition, students and staff are encouraged to rehearse alone or remotely, whenever possible, and:

- Limit exchange (or sharing) of any instruments, parts, music sheets, or any other items.
- Sanitize between users.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between participants.

Band practice should occur outdoors whenever possible. If indoors, increase the distance between staff and students and increase ventilation, including opening windows. Staff are required to wear at least a cloth face covering. No instrument should be played that requires removal of at least a cloth face covering.

Additional Resources

- [High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice](#) (Skagit County, Washington, March 2020)
- [Safer Singing During the SARS-COV-2 Pandemic: What We Know and What We Don't](#) (Naunheim et al., 2020)

8. Physical Education

Whenever possible, physical education should occur outdoors, within class cohorts. Outdoor locations for fitness training and team sports are preferred to indoor locations and should be utilized to the greatest extent possible to allow for maximum fresh air circulation and social distancing. Outdoor temporary structures may be used. Outdoor temporary structures should have no more than two walls to provide appropriate ventilation.

Limit exercise so that it is not strenuous to allow students and staff to continue to wear at least a cloth face covering and maintain at least 6 feet of distance. Clean and disinfect all exercise equipment and tools between users.

If indoors, increase the distance between staff and students during exercise and follow DOH guidelines, avoid strenuous activity so that a cloth face covering is worn by all participants at all times. Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation. Adjust mechanical ventilation systems to bring in as much outside air as possible. Increase filters to MERV 13 if the HVAC can accommodate.

Use class cohorts to reduce possible transmission outside the cohort. Clean and disinfect all exercise equipment and tools between users. In addition, schools should:

- Modify or adjust cardio equipment, free weight areas, weight training equipment, and classrooms to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between students, coaching staff, and athletic trainers.
- Where specialized equipment is used such as weights, balls, or rackets, they must be disinfected between each use.
- Consider limiting locker room access to the restroom area only, prohibiting the use of shower and changing areas.
- Consider closing water stations and water fountains if students have alternative water access.
- Encourage staff and students to bring their own water bottles to minimize use and touching of water fountains or consider installing no-touch activation methods for water fountains.
- Students and staff must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after each exercise session.
- Mark group exercise areas with floor markings to show the physical distancing requirements for participants, when practical, and sanitize thoroughly before and after use. Adequate time must be provided between classes in order for the facility to properly sanitize after each class.

Staff, whether working with a cohort or not, where at least 6 feet of distance **is mostly maintained**, but with job tasks that **require sustained** several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day without sneeze guards or other mitigations, are considered medium transmission risk, requiring:

- Non-cloth disposables: dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks.

-OR-

- A face shield with a cloth face covering.

Additional Resources

- [COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Businesses and Workers](#) (Governor Inslee's Office)
- [Phase 2 and 3 Indoor Fitness and Training COVID-19 Reopening Requirements – Update](#) (Governor Inslee's Office)
- [Indoor Fitness and Training – Proclamations 20–25](#) (August 3, 2020 Memo by Governor Inslee)
- [Fitness Frequently Asked Questions](#) (Governor Inslee's Office)

9. Distribution Centers (Food Service, Technology, etc.)

Distribution centers used to prepare and distribute items such as meals, student learning packets, or technology have generally been held outside with few or no students present. Interaction is limited between employees and the public, with the public remaining in their vehicles to access services and supplies.

The following guidance should be followed when school employees are outside and are working together to prepare and package meals and materials:

1. In a large area where at least 6 feet of distance is **easily maintained fulltime** and only broken intermittently, in passing, up to several times a day and tools are not shared or are sanitized between different users would be considered low transmission risk, requiring:
 - A reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose.
 - Writing utensils or other tools are not shared or are sanitized between users.
 - A face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield is an acceptable accommodation.
 2. In a large area where at least 6 feet of distance is **mostly maintained**, but with job tasks that require several minutes of 6-foot distance broken several times a day and tools are shared and sanitized between different users would be considered medium transmission risk, requiring:
 - Non-cloth disposables: dust mask, KN95 or other non-approved foreign-system NIOSH-style filtering facepiece respirators, or non-FDA approved procedure masks.
- OR-**
- A face shield with a cloth face covering.

For school employees working together to distribute meals and materials where they are outside and have limited interaction with members of the public only such as reaching through a car window and/or placing items into a car trunk, where at least 6 feet of distance is **easily maintained fulltime** and only broken intermittently, in passing, up to several times a day and tools are not shared or are sanitized between users would be considered low transmission risk, requiring:

- A reusable cloth face covering that fully covers the mouth and nose.
- Writing utensils or other tools are not shared or are sanitized between users.
- A face shield that includes a cloth extension attached to the entire edge of the shield is an acceptable accommodation.

Additional Resources

- [Preparing K–12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020](#) (CDC)