

READY SCHOOLS, SAFE LEARNERS

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2020–21

Navigating the 2020-21 School Year

How will my school and district navigate the 2020-21 school year?

Prior to the beginning of the school year, every school, under the direction of their local district, will determine whether they teach all students on-site, teach all students through Comprehensive Distance Learning or utilize a hybrid model. *Model selection for each school is guided by a series of public health metrics, available in Ready Schools, Safe Learners.* Each school will develop an Operational Blueprint for Reentry that ensures their school meets requirements outlined in Ready Schools, Safe Learners. This Blueprint will be submitted to the School Board. All school districts are required to post their school blueprints on a website and submit that website link to ODE. *It is required that a revised Operational Blueprint be completed and updated when there is a change of Instructional Model.*

What if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 at my school?

Outbreaks are determined by Oregon Health Authority and Local Public Health Authorities. All plans for fall On-Site and Hybrid instruction must include a school's response to an outbreak. In the event that there is a single positive case or a cluster of cases of COVID-19, schools and districts must partner with the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) who will work to support them on ongoing COVID-19 mitigation efforts. *The "[Planning for COVID-19 Scenarios in Schools Toolkit](#)" will support schools in developing safe and effective plans to respond to outbreaks.*

FERPA allows schools to share personally identifiable information with local public health authorities without consent when needed to respond to a health emergency. Schools should work with their Local Public Health Authority ([LPHA](#)) to ensure they are able to effectively respond to and control outbreaks through sharing of information, even without parental

consent, when appropriate. Consult with district legal counsel for more clarification. Your LPHA will attest to receiving the Operational Blueprint and reviewing sections 1-3 and will work with you to mitigate ongoing COVID-19 impacts.

Infection Control

Schools must implement measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the school setting, such as appropriate disinfectant/sanitizing procedures; screening, monitoring, and isolation/exclusion for illness among symptomatic staff and students; use of face coverings; and limiting interactions between different groups of students (e.g., teachers moving between classrooms rather than students).

All districts and public charter schools must update their written Communicable Disease Management Plan to specifically address the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. OAR 581-022-2220 requires school districts to develop, update and maintain a Communicable Disease Management Plan. In addition, all district policies related to communicable diseases and student health and wellbeing should be reviewed and updated to assure alignment with new public health requirements.

Required

- *Conduct a risk assessment as required by OSHA administrative rule [OAR 437-001-0744\(3\)\(g\)](#).*
 - OSHA has developed a [risk assessment template](#).
- Implement measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the school setting, including when the school setting is outside a building
- Update written Communicable Disease Management Plan to specifically address the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. Examples are located in the [Oregon School Nurses Association \(OSNA\) COVID-19 Toolkit](#).
 - *Review OSHA requirements for infection control plan to ensure that all required elements are covered by your communicable disease management plan, including making the plan available to employees at their workplace. Requirements are listed in OSHA administrative rule [OAR 437-001-0744\(3\)\(h\)](#).*
 - OSHA has developed a sample [infection control plan](#).
- *Designate a single point-person at each school to establish, implement, support and enforce all RSSL health and safety protocols, including face coverings and physical distancing requirements, consistent with this guidance and other guidance from OHA. This role should be known to all staff in the building with consistent ways for licenced and classified staff to access and voice concerns or needs.*

- *Create a simple process that allows for named and anonymous sharing of concerns that can be reviewed on a daily and weekly basis by the designated RSSL building point-person. Example: Anonymous survey form or suggestion box where at least weekly submissions and resolutions are shared in some format.*
- Include names of the LPHA staff, school nurses, and other medical experts who provided support and resources to the district/school policies and plans. Review relevant local, state, and national evidence to inform plan.
- Process and procedures established to train all staff in sections 1 - 3 of this guidance. Consider conducting the training virtually, or, if in-person, ensure physical distancing is maintained to the maximum extent possible.
- Protocol to notify the local public health authority ([LPHA Directory by County](#)) of any confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff.
- Plans for systematic disinfection of classrooms, *common areas*, offices, *table surfaces*, bathrooms and activity areas.
- Process to report to the LPHA any cluster of any illness among staff or students.
- Protocol to cooperate with the LPHA recommendations.
- Provide all logs and information to the LPHA in a timely manner.
- Protocol for screening students and staff for symptoms (see section 1f).
- Protocol to isolate any ill or exposed persons from physical contact with others.
- Protocol for communicating potential COVID-19 cases to the school community and other stakeholders (see section 1e).
- Create a system for maintaining daily logs for each student/cohort for the purposes of contact tracing. This system needs to be made in consultation with a school/district nurse or an LPHA official. Sample logs are available as a part of the [Oregon School Nurses Association COVID-19 Toolkit](#).
 - If a student(s) is part of a stable cohort (a group of students that are consistently in contact with each other or in multiple cohort groups) that conform to the requirements of cohorting (see section 1d), the daily log may be maintained for the cohort.
 - If a student(s) is not part of a stable cohort, then an individual student log must be maintained.
- Required components of individual daily student/cohort logs include:
 - Child's name
 - Drop off/pick up time
 - Parent/guardian name and emergency contact information
 - All staff (including itinerant staff, district staff, substitutes, and guest teachers) names and phone numbers who interact with a stable cohort or individual student
- Protocol to record/keep daily logs to be used for contact tracing for a minimum of four weeks to assist the LPHA as needed.
 - See supplemental guidance on LPHA/school partnering on contact tracing

- Refer to [OHA Policy on Sharing COVID-19 Information](#)
- Process to ensure that all itinerant and all district staff (maintenance, administrative, delivery, nutrition, and any other staff) who move between buildings keep a log or calendar with a running four-week history of their time in each school building and who they were in contact with at each site.
- Process to ensure that the school reports to and consults with the LPHA regarding cleaning and possible classroom or program closure if anyone who has entered school is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Designate a staff member and process to ensure that the school provides updated information regarding current instructional models and student counts and reports these data in [ODE's COVID-19 Weekly School Status](#) system.
- Protocol to respond to potential outbreaks (see section 3).

What is a local decision and what is a state-level decision?

When determining if part or an entire school needs to close, schools should work in a collaborative manner with Local Public Health Authorities (LPHAs). LPHAs are vital partners to advise and consult on health and safety in schools with school officials but in general decisions of public health at the local level reside with school and district officials. There can be exceptions within local law and any additional authorities should be clarified at the local level.

Additionally, the authority of an educational governing body or school employee to close a school facility and shift to distance learning may vary depending on what governance structure is in place and the type of school. This guidance covers the most common governance structures:

School districts: School district boards have the authority to close district facilities and transition to distance learning. Boards have generally delegated to the Superintendent of the school district the ability to make this decision.

Education service districts: Education service district boards have the authority to close education service district facilities and transition to distance learning. Boards have generally delegated to the Superintendent of the education service district the ability to make this decision. If a facility is utilized by students from component school districts the ESD should also collaborate with those component school districts about how to continue to serve students.

Public charter schools: Public charter school boards have the authority to close a charter school facility and transition to distance learning. Boards have generally delegated to the Director of the charter school the ability to make this decision. However, such a decision should also be

made consistently with the charter of the school which may require additional steps such as notice to the school's sponsor. Additionally, a sponsor of a public charter school may terminate the charter agreement of a school and close the school if the school is endangering the health and safety of students.

Oregon School for the Deaf: The Director of the Oregon Department of Education has the authority to close the Oregon School for the Deaf and transition students to distance learning.

Private schools: The authority to close a private school and transition to distance learning varies depending on the governance structure of the school.

If a Local Public Health Authority has concerns about public health in a given school within the operation of this guidance or in response to an outbreak and the school or district disagree, these concerns may be elevated to the State Public Health Director or the Director of the Oregon Department of Education.

The State Public Health Director at the Oregon Health Authority has broad authority to close a facility that presents a public health risk.

The Director of ODE also has authority to close a school facility within existing state laws and within the scope of Executive Order 20-29. ODE also has the authority to address any complaints raised regarding practices that do not confirm with the requirements in this guidance and take other actions. These actions include referring complaints to the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHA) and the potential to withhold State School Fund (SSF) payments if needed and as a means of last resort.

Except where it requires compliance and is labeled as "Required" and often indicated with a checkbox (☐), the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance is advisory and intended to provide school districts with information and best practices in delivering education services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance does not require a specific action by districts, districts may choose whether to consider or implement advisory information or recommendations labeled "Recommended" and often indicated with an arrow (⇒).

Nothing in the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance is intended to provide legal advice. ODE encourages districts to consult with their own legal counsel and to consider other state and federal guidance and laws when implementing any recommendations of the Ready Schools, Safe Learners guidance.

Disclaimer: This guidance does not constitute legal advice and may not be relied on as legal advice. If schools require legal advice regarding the issues discussed in this guidance, they



should consult an attorney.