



## *Department of Public Health*

Monroe County, New York

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### **NEW YORK STATE REQUIREMENTS FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS**

**August 14, 2020**

*(Replaces guidance dated 8/6/2020)*

The Public Health Departments of the Finger Lakes region are committed to supporting our area schools based on guidance issued by the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department.

The Public Health Departments for the counties of Chemung, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates believe that providing consistent guidance throughout the region will assist in facing the challenges of COVID-19. This document is regularly reviewed and updated.

This communication is intended to serve as an informational tool only to support districts developing and implementing reopening plans in accordance with New York State guidance. Districts should review the NYSDOH guidance closely and consult their counsel for legal advice.

#### MASKS and SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Face coverings are recommended at all times, but required whenever individuals cannot maintain a six-foot distance from other individuals who are not from the same household.
- Schools must ensure six (6) feet of space in all directions between individuals at all times unless there is an appropriate barrier (ie, plexiglass, a cubicle wall, etc.) between them unless the core activity (e.g., instruction, moving equipment, using an elevator, traveling in common areas) requires a shorter distance or individuals are

of the same household.

- For certain activities, the minimum required distance between individuals is increased to twelve (12) feet in all directions. Examples include singing, playing wind instruments, and aerobic exercise.
- Face coverings must be worn on buses at all times (entering, exiting and seated). Individuals should be seated at least six (6) feet away from other individuals who are not from the same household.
- Currently accepted diagnoses to justify exemption from wearing a face covering are:
  - A previously documented neuromuscular disorder that makes it difficult for a child to independently remove a face covering.
  - A child with a previously diagnosed, severe developmental/behavioral problem.
  - A child diagnosed with a serious emotional disturbance or other significant mental health issue that the child's behavioral health team feels would be exacerbated if the child had to wear a face covering.

### RISK SCREENING

- Temperature checks are required daily for all students, faculty and staff. It is highly recommended this be done before arrival at school (which will involve parents).
- Faculty and staff reporting to school must answer a daily screening questionnaire. Students must periodically be given screening questionnaires.

### HAND HYGIENE and SURFACE DISINFECTION

- Schools must train all students, faculty and staff on proper hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Schools must maintain logs of cleaning and disinfection frequency.

### IN-SCHOOL MANAGEMENT OF SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS

- School Districts should continue to rely upon the guidance of their medical directors. The Finger Lakes region local health departments in each County (LHDs) will support schools in complying with NYSDOH guidance and recommendations.
- When a student presents with symptoms requiring a visit to the school nurse, LHDs

recommend immediate isolation and arranging for the student to be picked up and taken home by a parent or guardian as soon as possible.

- When an individual exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during a screening, that individual must immediately be separated from others and sent home. The individual cannot return to school without, at minimum: documentation from a health care provider, a negative COVID-19 test and symptom resolution. If an individual receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, the individual must also be released from isolation before returning (see below).

### CASE IDENTIFICATION, CONTACT NOTIFICATION, ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

- Schools must notify the state and local health departments immediately upon learning of a positive COVID-19 test among students, faculty, staff or visitors. Schools must cooperate with contact tracing, isolation and quarantine efforts.
- For a COVID-19 confirmed case, LHD will take lead on isolation and quarantine efforts and release of individuals from isolation or quarantine.
- LHDs will respond and perform thorough investigations for confirmed cases, including contact tracing, with cooperation from the school.
- For confirmed cases, the responsible LHD will evaluate each COVID-19 positive result on a case-by-case basis and provide recommendations to the school district regarding a plan of action. Recommendations could include, but are not limited to, the immediate closure of a classroom, school building or district for 24 hours or more.
- LHDs will not publicly disclose personal information of those testing positive for COVID-19. All relevant parties will be notified appropriately by the school or through contact tracing by the LHD. LHDs will notify the community of a positive student case by identifying the name of the school building impacted. LHDs will notify the community of a positive faculty/staff by identifying the name of the school district.
- LHDs will notify the superintendent and school nurse of all mandatory quarantines for students, staff and faculty after notifying the individual and/or family.
- Schools should follow NYSDOH workplace guidance for faculty or staff members who are seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, or after close contact with a person with COVID-19.
- LHDs do not automatically consider teachers and school staff as essential workers. A

determination needs to be made on a case by case basis with the LHD and school, and such determination is subject to any further NYSDOH guidance.

