Considerations and Recommendations for School Reopening

This document contains considerations and recommendations for St. Charles County Schools as they prepare to start a new school year during the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. St. Charles County is prioritizing the safety and well-being of students and staff while keeping in mind the complexity and unique needs of the education system. It is important to understand that the current COVID-19 pandemic is a continuously evolving situation and schools should prepare for various degrees of function depending on the local severity of the disease.

These recommendations are aligned with the advice provided by state and federal health officials. They have been developed in alliance with local Superintendents.

### Assessing Severity of Disease in the Area

St. Charles County Schools will work with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health (SCCDPH) to determine level of risk and spread in the community throughout the school year. Different considerations will need to be in place depending on the severity of the disease in the area. (As determined by state and local health officials)

Please visit our website for up-to-date data and information on current county cases: [https://www.sccmo.org/COVID](https://www.sccmo.org/COVID).

#### Substantial Spread:
Large scale community transmission, healthcare staffing significantly impacted, multiple cases within communal settings like healthcare facilities, schools, mass gatherings etc. (CDC, 2020)

During substantial community spread, schools should follow strict procedures to ensure the well-being of staff and students, including but not limited to:
- Strict social distancing guidelines (6 feet apart)
- Strict cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Symptoms screening and education
- Reduction in non-essential school activities
- If necessary, alternate modes of educations such as distance/remote learning

#### Moderate Spread:
Widespread and/or sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings with potential for rapid increase in suspected cases (CDC, 2020).

During moderate community spread, schools should focus on strict infection control procedures including but not limited to:
- Social Distancing guidelines (6 feet apart)
- Strict cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Symptom screening and education
- Hand hygiene and education
- Encouraging facial coverings and masks
**Minimal Spread:** Evidence of isolated cases or limited community transmission, case investigations underway, no evidence of exposure in large communal setting, e.g., healthcare facility, school, mass gathering (CDC, 2020).

During minimal community spread, schools should focus on illness prevention and education including but not limited to:

- Hand hygiene education and practice
- Encouraging social distancing
- Symptoms screening and education
- Cleaning and disinfection procedures

**Infection Control and Disease Prevention**

It is vital that schools enforce a protocol for the prevention and identification of illness in all their facilities. These practices should be maintained throughout the school year and staff/students should receive continuous education on these procedures.

**Daily Symptoms Screenings**

Staff, faculty, students, volunteers and visitors should be assessed daily for symptoms associated with COVID-19. School districts should consider adopting the same procedure throughout the county to ensure continuity and minimize the distraction of explaining the rationales for practices that deviate from one another. There are several ways that screening can take place prior to the school day:

- In person screening prior to entering the school building. In person screening would include symptom and temperature checks.
- Virtual/survey screening from home prior to entering the school building.
- Survey screening during first period for older students, in person screening by staff for younger students.

Symptoms screening should include:

- Temperature check (should be below 100.4 F)
- Subjective Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath/Difficulty Breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste and/or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
*Please note, temperature check on its own is not an appropriate way of assessing symptoms of COVID-19.

If one or more of the following symptoms is present, the person must not be allowed to enter the school building until **24 hours** after symptoms resolution. They should be advised to seek testing either through a PCP, urgent care or SCCDPH to rule out the possibility of COVID-19.

-Symptoms checks are also encouraged prior to high risk activities such as band, choir or sports activities.
-Symptoms checks should be performed on any visitors entering the building.
-Random temperature checks can be implemented to reinforce the practice of self-screening.
-Perfect attendance awards for staff and students should be eliminated. It is important to encourage staff and students to stay home anytime they are sick.

### Managing Symptomatic Staff/Students During School Hours

Staff and students (and their parents), should be thoroughly educated on symptoms of COVID-19 and the importance of not coming to school if symptomatic. In situations where someone becomes ill while at school, steps should be taken to minimize exposure to others.

- As soon as the symptoms are identified, separate the staff/student from others. If they are able to leave the building at that time they should do so.
- If the staff member/student cannot leave immediately, they should be directed to an “isolation” room as designated by the school. This room should only be used for symptomatic individuals who are awaiting transportation home. The door to this room should remain closed at all times and only designated nursing staff should be allowed to enter when wearing appropriate PPE (see Nursing Considerations). The room should be thoroughly sanitized after each use and should be well ventilated.
- Begin contact tracing as soon as possible. Make a line-list (the name, address, and phone number of anyone who was a close contact to the case) of all possible exposures to the symptomatic case as soon as you become aware (anyone within 6 feet from individual for at least 15 minutes). This line list will be used to investigate possible exposures if the individual tests positive for COVID-19.
- Ensure that the individual has a follow up plan for testing either through primary care provider, urgent care or SCCDPH.
- Contact SCCCDPH to inform them of the possible case and to prepare for follow-up.

**St. Charles County COVID-19 Hotline: 636-949-1899**
**St. Charles County Communicable Disease Fax: 636-949-7414**

### Sanitation and Hygiene

Education and practice of appropriate hand hygiene and sanitation is imperative to prevent the spread of disease in the school building. The following measures should be implemented:

- Teach and reinforce good hand hygiene as often as possible. Teach and reinforce good cough etiquette and benefits of face coverings and social distancing.
- Recommend hand washing anytime the face/mouth are touched.
- Allow for various breaks within the school day for students and staff to perform hand hygiene and to sanitize their work and learning environments appropriately. At a minimum, desks should be sanitized between classes.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use.
- Allow students and staff to bring hand sanitizer and face masks/coverings to use from home.
- Ensure you have an appropriate amount of hand washing stations, soap, hand sanitizer and surface sanitizing wipes.
- Post signs in classrooms and throughout the school with information on good hygiene and sanitation.

**Water Fountains**
- Consider closing water fountains or only allowing them for the use of filling water bottles.
- Avoid congregation of individuals around a water fountain.
- Ensure water fountains are thoroughly cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.

**Bathrooms**
- Limit the number of individuals in the restroom.
- Administer at least one deep cleaning a day and general cleaning and sanitation throughout the day.
- Consider implementing a bathroom schedule to avoid mixing of students from different classes.
- Place visual cues outside restrooms to encourage social distancing while waiting.

**Masks and Face Coverings**
- Strongly encourage all staff to wear face coverings/masks, especially when social distancing is not possible.
- Strongly encourage older students (over the age of 9) to wear masks, especially when social distancing is not possible.
- Consider the use of face mask or covering during change of classroom periods when walking through the hallways.

For more information on cleaning and sanitizing, please see the CDC website: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html)

**Social Distancing Within the School Building and During School Activities**

Social distancing (6 feet apart) should be implemented to the extent possible in all school activities. Ensuring that appropriate social distancing is in place will help prevent large disruptions in the school year due to illness or outbreaks of COVID-19.

- Remove or close off any areas that can be used to congregate such as couches in classrooms and break rooms for staff.
- Discourage the congregation of students in parking lots and common areas.
- Discourage unnecessary physical contact between individuals such as handshakes, high-fives, and hugs.
- Encourage the use of masks or face coverings in any situation where social distancing is not possible.
- Social distancing should be implemented in activities such as choir, band and sports games.
- Limit mixing of students with other classes to the extent possible.
- Limit unnecessary congregations of students and staff.
- Designate alternate paths, staggered class times or other measures for preventing the congregation and intermingling of staff and students during class transitioning periods to minimize risk of exposure.
- Social distancing should be practiced in the lunchroom.
- Identify and utilize large spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) for social distancing.
- Stagger the schedule for large group gatherings.
- Utilize signage and announcements to remind staff and students about social distancing.

**Meals**

- Require student hand washing before and after meal service.
- Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff.
- Strongly encourage students and staff to wear face masks/coverings while in large group gatherings.
- Clean and sanitize cafeterias and high-touch surfaces before/after every use.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines (to the extent practicable); designate entrances and exit flow paths; stagger use.
- **Encourage cafeteria staff to wear a face mask at all times while preparing and serving meals.**

**Social and Emotional Well-being**

- Consider adopting services that provide emotional support for both students and staff.
- Provide training to teachers and other staff on how to talk to and support students during a Pandemic.
- Consider checking in with students who miss school due to anxiety or worry about the pandemic.
- Provide additional support to students or staff who might be experiencing depression or suicidal ideation due to loss of family or friends.
- Consider implementation of academic accommodations for students having difficulty concentrating or learning new information due to stress associated with the pandemic.
Considerations for the School Nurse

School Nurses will have an important role to play in the successful reopening of schools. It is important that they have the appropriate resources and information to maintain a healthy environment throughout the coming school year.

### PPE for School Nurses or Staff

At a minimum, school nurses should have access to:

- Gloves
- Disposable gowns
- N95 masks

**Standard Precautions:** Should be in place with ALL nursing and medical care and includes the use of gloves, a face covering or regular mask, proper hand hygiene and thorough cleaning/disinfection of environmental surfaces after use.

**Contact and Airborne Precautions:** must be used when caring for a person suspected of having COVID-19 or performing a high-risk procedure. This includes the use of gloves, disposable gown and N-95 mask. High risk procedures include:
- airway suctioning
- nebulizer administration
- high flow oxygen delivery
- tracheostomy suctioning
- nasal suctioning with bulb syringe
- metered dose inhalers

### Necessary Spaces

Three different spaces will need to be available for School Nurses to care for the student population depending on the need at hand:

1. A “well” area, used for staff/students not experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 who are in need of nursing care such as with medication administration, blood sugar testing etc. Social distancing and disinfecting procedures should still be followed here. Nursing staff should wear face coverings/masks and gloves.
2. A room designated for high risk procedures such as nebulizer treatments, trache suctioning etc. Only designated nursing staff should enter this room with appropriate PPE. The room should be well ventilated (preferably with windows) and shall remain closed at all times. Thorough disinfecting should happen between uses.
3. A room designated for staff or students experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 who are awaiting transportation. Only designated nursing staff should enter this room with appropriate PPE. The room should be well ventilated (preferably with windows) and shall remain closed at all times. Thorough disinfecting should happen between uses.
Staff/Student Education

School nurses should make it a priority to educate staff and students on appropriate hand hygiene and sanitation practices. A plan of education should be in place prior to the start of the school year and should be maintained throughout the year.
Considerations for Transportation

SCCDPH understands that school transportation is a necessary and important part of the school system for many students. There are certain steps that can be taken to help ensure the health and safety of staff and students who use school transportation.

### Infection Prevention on School Transportation

Establish protocol for bus stops
- Require social distancing at bus stops to the extent possible.
- If possible, develop additional stops along a route to prevent large crowding of students and reduce the number of students in a bus.
- Educate parents to avoid sending children to the bus stop if they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Establish protocol for loading and unloading buses to avoid close contact, such as loading and unloading the back of the bus first.
- Encourage parents to transport students to and from school.

Establishing Protocols for Drivers
- Strongly encourage drivers to wear face coverings at all times when driving a bus with students.
- Educate drivers on disinfection procedures in-between pickup times. At minimum, the bus should be disinfected between AM and PM pickup times.
- Air out buses when not in use.

Establish Protocols for Students
- Have assigned seating on all buses. This will ensure easier contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 case.
- Have hand sanitizer readily available.
- Strongly encourage facial coverings/masks whenever possible.
- Educate students on proper cough etiquette.
- If possible, practice social distancing.
What to do if there is a positive case of COVID-19 in your school

Your school will work in conjunction with the St. Charles County Department of Public Health to determine the extent of exposure and develop a plan to prevent and stop infection in the school. Below are some steps that can be taken to ensure an easier investigation process.

* It is important to remember that each case is unique and might require different or additional actions on the part of the school. SCCDPH will work with you to determine appropriate follow up needed for each particular case.

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<tr>
<th>1. Implement assigned seating in school as often as possible.</th>
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<tr>
<td>This will facilitate the investigation process surrounding a positive case as it tells us exactly who was around that case. This will help prevent any “guessing” on close contacts and decrease the amount of students/staff who might need to be quarantined.</td>
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<th>2. Report the case to SCCDPH as soon as possible.</th>
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<td>Positive (and negative) COVID-19 results are required to be reported to the local health department of the tested person’s county of residence.</td>
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<tr>
<th>3. Develop a line list of all possible exposures to the positive case (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more, starting two days prior to symptom onset).</th>
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<tr>
<td>The people on this list who had prolonged contact will have to be quarantined at home for 14 days after their last exposure. School personnel will work with SCCDPH to reach out to the affected families and provide quarantine information.</td>
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<th>4. Implement disinfecting/cleaning procedures</th>
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<td>Conduct deep cleaning of school prior to student/staff returning.</td>
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<td><strong>Routine cleaning:</strong> should be taking place daily and includes frequent disinfecting of public areas and high touch surfaces.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Deep Cleaning:</strong> Should be done at any time that someone becomes sick in your facility. It includes cleaning, disinfecting and vacuuming all areas used by the person who is sick. For more information on cleaning and disinfecting please see the CDC website: <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html</a></td>
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In the event a person diagnosed with COVID-19 is determined to have been in the building and poses a risk to the staff or students, a school may close for 1-2 days for cleaning and disinfection of that building or exposed area if unable to clean during the nighttime closing.
5. School Closing

The St. Charles County Health Department suggests that if over 5% of the student body in a building or district test positive any day, 4% test positive over 2 days in a row or 3% test positive for 3 days in a row, then that building or district closes for 10 days (percentages may change when better scientific data becomes available).

Additional Resources

SCDHPH Contact Information:

St. Charles County COVID-19 Hotline: 636-949-1899
St. Charles County Communicable Disease Fax: 636-949-7414

Helpful Websites:


MSBA Pandemic Recovery Considerations: https://ams.embr.mobi/Documents/DocumentAttachment.aspx?C=ZfON&DID=GJGDM&fbclid=IwAR2pXKR9jWDPl3Nw9kokXo3Dfk7oAfZ0MJILiVrcTEntEMtLmYuHgzRgYVQ


St Charles County Sample Screening Policy: https://www.sccmo.org/DocumentCenter/View/15560/Sample-Screening-Policy-PDF

EPA List- N for SARS-CoV-2: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2