

# Recommendations for K-12 Schools by Level of Community Transmission

**COVID Green: No Activity/ Sporadic -Low Risk of COVID-19 Spread**

- Minimal cases of COVID-19 within the community.
- COVID-19 has minimal impact on local healthcare system
- Viral and antibody testing is readily available
- There are effective treatment modalities for COVID-19 and an effective vaccine is widely available
- PPE is easily obtainable through standard supply chains

**COVID Yellow: Local to Regional Activity- Moderate Risk of COVID-19 Spread**

- There is a downward trajectory in numbers of COVID positive cases OR percent positive cases due to community or regional spread
- There is limited community spread within Buffalo, Dawson, Franklin, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, and Phelps Counties or regionally
- COVID has a small impact on the local healthcare system capacity
- PPE supplies are adequate for critical healthcare workers and community needs
- COVID testing is available for all suspected cases and focused asymptomatic surveillance.
- TRPHD is able to conduct investigation and contact tracing for new cases and associated contacts without assistance
- Critical medical equipment is readily available

**COVID ORANGE: Regional to Widespread Activity- Elevated COVID-19 Significant Community Spread**

- There are increasing or high stable numbers of COVID positive cases OR percent positive cases due to community or regional spread
- Clusters or outbreaks exist that are still likely in their early stages, plans to quarantine students and staff are implemented with the consideration for virtual learning
- There is only enough testing available for symptomatic people
- TRPHD must rely on assistance to conduct investigation for new cases and associated and contact tracing OR TRPHD must assist adjacent jurisdictions to conduct investigation and contact tracing
- PPE supplies are only adequate for critical healthcare workers
- Critical medical equipment is in limited supply

**COVID Red: Widespread Activity- Severe COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak**

- In-person school sessions suspended, virtual learning endorsed amid concerns of increased risk of transmission and personnel shortages
- There is a significant increase in COVID positive cases OR percentage of positive cases which may potentially overwhelm the local healthcare system
- Hospitals are utilizing Surge Capacity
- There is an inadequate testing capacity for critical workers
- There is inadequate capacity to conduct investigation and contact tracing
- There are shortages of critical medical equipment or testing

## Definitions of Risk

	Low	Moderate	Elevated	Severe
Transmission Prevention Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons who are unvaccinated should continue to wear masks appropriately and consistently in public places including school.</li> <li>Teach and promote frequent handwashing for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching high frequency touch surfaces, sneezing/coughing/touching face, and before eating</li> <li>Use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol when handwashing is inaccessible or not feasible</li> <li>Remind staff and students to cough and sneeze into their elbows, or to cover with a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.</li> <li>Teach and promote increased awareness of germ transmission through contact high contact surfaces.</li> <li>Use increased disinfection practices, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures, and countertops)</li> <li>Exclude any staff, student, or visitor with symptoms of illness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masks, consistently and appropriately worn at all times for all staff and students.</li> <li>Water fountain use is limited to refilling containers.</li> <li>Increased frequency of disinfection procedures, especially for high contact surfaces (door/other handles, light switches, bathroom fixtures)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers</li> <li>Limit sharing of personal items and supplies such as writing utensils.</li> <li>Keep students' personal items separate and in individually labeled cubbies, containers or lockers.</li> <li>Limit use of classroom materials to small groups and disinfect between uses or provide adequate supplies to assign for individual student use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage staff and students to practice self-care, good hygiene, and social distancing at home.</li> </ul>
Mental and Social Emotional Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a crisis response team that includes school principals, school nurses, mental health specialists, social workers, guidance counselors, and parents, to focus on student and staff mental health and wellness using trauma informed models.</li> <li>Assess natural resources (personnel, existing partners) to determine if there is a need for external support, and reach out to the existing mental health service providers in the community to assess the potential for expanded work.</li> <li>Evaluate staff baseline mental health readiness utilizing questionnaires, surveys, and direct outreach. If any screening does occur, it should comply with privacy and HIPAA requirements.</li> <li>Where feasible, institute a universal mental health screening tool that can be used for both teachers and students. If any screening does occur, it should comply with privacy and HIPAA requirements.</li> <li>Provide resources for staff and student self-care, including resiliency strategies through employee assistance programs</li> <li>Designate a mental health liaison (school-based) who will work with the district, local public health agencies, and community partners.</li> <li>Consider additional resources required to serve special needs populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the crisis response team as needed for individuals experiencing negative mental health outcomes.</li> <li>Utilize the crisis response team to evaluate staff and student mental health using a universal mental health screening tool if this has not already been completed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activate the crisis response team.</li> <li>Reevaluate staff mental health utilizing questionnaires, surveys, and direct outreach.</li> <li>Reinforce use of resources for staff and student self-care, including resiliency strategies, EPA, and guidance counselors.</li> <li>Consider additional resources required to serve special needs populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilize the crisis response team to connect staff and students to community-based support programs and refer to primary care providers.</li> </ul>
Spacing, Movement and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spacing is three feet between desks.</li> <li>Teachers should maintain three feet of distance between themselves and students as much as possible.</li> <li>In primary grades, where tables are utilized, we recommend configuring tables with all students facing forward.</li> <li>Arrange all desks facing the same direction toward the front of the classroom.</li> <li>Resume normal travel with considerations of COVID activity in destinations</li> <li>Outdoor gatherings are preferred to indoor gatherings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class sizes should be kept to 25 or less (as afforded by necessary spacing requirements and personnel)</li> <li>If all students cannot fit in the classroom space available, it is recommended that a staggered school schedule which incorporates alternative dates of attendance or use of virtual teaching be implemented</li> <li>Classroom windows should be open as much as possible as conditions allow.</li> <li>As able, schools should stagger use of hallway, bathroom, and lockers to minimize exposure to other classrooms or grade levels.</li> <li>As able, teachers and specialists from art, music, reading, media center, libraries, and other specialized services or locations should be brought to the classrooms instead of having students transit to those locations.</li> <li>Movement of people should occur in only one direction at a time.</li> <li>If one-way flow is not possible, hallways can be divided with either side following the same direction.</li> <li>Floor tape or other markers should be used at three-foot intervals where line formation is anticipated.</li> <li>Provide social distancing floor/seating markings in waiting and reception areas</li> <li>Use signage in restroom and entryways to indicate proper social distancing</li> <li>Staff will monitor arrival and dismissal to discourage congregating and ensure students go straight from a vehicle to their classrooms and vice-versa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly encourage students and staff to limit direct contact with others outside the school setting</li> <li>Class sizes should be kept to 25 or less (as afforded by necessary spacing requirements and personnel).</li> <li>Movement of people will occur in only one direction at a time.</li> <li>Markers or barriers are installed to maintain social distance in the hallways, restrooms, reception areas, and waiting areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools are closed</li> <li>Teach from home</li> </ul>

Gathering and Dining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Encourage unvaccinated students, and staff to remain masked except when eating.</li> <li>•Meal activities continue per normal operating procedures.</li> <li>•Encourage students and staff to sanitize hands before and after all gathering events.</li> <li>•Large scale gatherings are allowed per normal operating status. Encourage staff, students and visitors to maintain at least three feet physical distancing when possible or seating in cohorted groups which are three feet from other cohorted groups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If possible, meals should be served in the classroom</li> <li>•Discontinue self-serve food lines.</li> <li>•If meals are served in the cafeteria, meal times must be staggered to create seating arrangements with social distancing between students.</li> <li>•Food service and other staff in the cafeteria should use personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks; N95 respirators are not required.</li> <li>•Hand sanitizer will be provided at cafeteria entrances and classrooms when hand washing is infeasible.</li> <li>•Any assemblies of more than 50 students should be discontinued. If assemblies of less than 50 students are necessary, they are allowed as long as masks are worn consistently and appropriately for all staff and students.</li> <li>•Visitors may not attend assemblies.</li> <li>•Offer telecasting of events if able</li> <li>•Field trips off school grounds are discontinued.</li> <li>•After school programs may be continued if masks are worn consistently and appropriately for all staff and students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•If school is operating: dining should be in classrooms delivered by the dietary team</li> <li>•If school is closed: continue with meal distribution</li> <li>•Large scale assemblies of more than 25 students are discontinued.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All gathering operations are suspended</li> <li>•Meal pick-up and delivery are operated through the school using DHHS restaurant guidance for Phase I of Directed Health Measures.</li> </ul>
Extracurricular Activities and Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All activities are allowed to continue per normal procedures.</li> <li>•Spectator events are allowed with the recommendation that unvaccinated individuals wear masks consistently and appropriately.</li> <li>•Extracurricular activities and gatherings conducted normally with unvaccinated students masked consistently and appropriately at all times.</li> <li>•After school programs are open and operating normally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Every participant in any activity should confirm they are healthy and without any symptoms prior to the event.</li> <li>•All equipment should be disinfected before and between uses.</li> <li>•Schools will follow guidance from the Nebraska School Activities Association and local public health departments to determine which activities can be safely conducted and any restrictions required.</li> <li>•Spectators are allowed provided that masks are worn consistently and appropriately by all.</li> <li>•Weight room and physical conditioning activities should follow guidance from the NSAA.</li> <li>•Activities that do not allow adequate distancing such as football, wrestling, basketball, chess, choir, band, etc. should be discontinued.</li> <li>•Large scale spectator or stadium events are not allowed</li> <li>•Handshakes, fist bumps, and other unnecessary physical contact should be minimized.</li> <li>•Any uniforms or other clothing to be laundered at school can be washed in warm water with regular detergent.</li> <li>•There should be no sharing of equipment (i.e. make-up, protective pads, uniforms, towels, etc.).</li> <li>•Clearly marked water bottles may be instated for individual use.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All extracurricular activities and athletics are suspended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All extracurricular activities and athletics are suspended.</li> </ul>
Bussing and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School busing operations proceed normally.</li> <li>•No changes to schedules or seating patterns on the buses are required.</li> <li>•All unvaccinated occupants are masked consistently and appropriately.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Disinfect transportation vehicles daily. Students must not be present during disinfection.</li> <li>•Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing products securely away from children and adequate ventilation when staff use such products.</li> <li>•Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle prior to morning routes and prior to afternoon routes.</li> <li>•Keep doors and windows open when cleaning the vehicle and between trips to let the vehicles thoroughly air out.</li> <li>•Clean, sanitize, and disinfect equipment including items such as car seats and seat belts, wheelchairs, walkers, and adaptive equipment being transported to schools.</li> <li>•Create a plan for getting students home safely if they are not allowed to board the vehicle.</li> <li>•Maintain a policy that if a student becomes sick during the day, they must not use group transportation to return home and must follow protocols outlined above.</li> <li>•If a driver becomes sick during the day, they must follow protocols for sick staff above and must not return to drive students.</li> <li>•Whenever possible, use hand sanitizer before entering the bus.</li> <li>•Whenever possible, allow for three feet of social distancing between students, and between students and the driver, while seated on vehicles</li> <li>•Consider keeping windows open while the vehicle is in motion to help reduce spread of the virus by increasing air circulation, if appropriate and safe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enforce three feet of distancing between students, and between students and the driver, while seated on vehicles will be maintained.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All busing and transportation operations are suspended.</li> </ul>
At Risk or Vulnerable Populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•For students, staff, and visitors with underlying health conditions and other populations at heightened risk from COVID-19 including individuals over 65.</li> <li>•You do not have to stay home at all times, but should continue physical distancing when possible in public settings.</li> <li>•Cautious expansion of interactions with others, reengage in small social settings, outdoor activities preferred</li> <li>•Avoid large group settings and events with many people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Use best judgement and consider virtual learning, or working from home</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•School administration will consult local health department and state officials for guidance in reopening buildings.</li> </ul>