



# **NEVADA's ROADMAP TO RECOVERY: Pre-K – 12 Education**

*February 17, 2021*

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As Nevada navigates the COVID-19 global pandemic and continues vaccinating residents through an efficient and equitable approach, plans for a safe reopening must focus on how we can continue mitigating the spread while getting Nevadans back to work, protecting and recovering our economy, and **getting our students back to in-person learning in the safest way possible.**

According to state public health officials, a critical component of a successful reopening plan is that current restrictions must be eased incrementally and we continue to follow the mitigation measures that are proven to work. Commonly recommended or required mitigation measures are still the best way to protect people until wide-spread vaccination becomes available, including:

- limiting the number of people in enclosed spaces,<sup>1</sup>
- social distancing of at least 6 feet,<sup>2</sup>
- requiring the use of masks,<sup>3, 4</sup>
- increasing ventilation,<sup>5</sup> and
- using disinfectants on high-touch surfaces.<sup>6</sup>

Each mitigation measure reduces overall risk, and combining all of these measures has proven to be the most effective.

### Pre-K-12 Education

As district and school leaders and members of the public continue to assess the risk associated with specific activities and work together to mitigate the spread and decrease community transmission, they must remember that the risk of infection from COVID-19 increases as the:

- Size of groups increases,<sup>7, 8, 9</sup>
- Length of exposure increases,<sup>10</sup>
- Amount of ventilation (indoors or outdoors) increases,<sup>11, 12</sup> and
- Amount of time unmasked increases.<sup>13</sup>

The following information is excerpted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#) as released on February 12, 2021:

While fewer children have been sick with COVID-19 compared to adults, children can be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, can get sick from COVID-19, and can spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. Children, like adults, who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms ("asymptomatic") can still spread the virus to others.

Most children with COVID-19 have mild symptoms or have no symptoms at all. However, some children can get severely ill from COVID-19. Because children with the virus that causes COVID-19 can spread it to other children and to adults, it is important to take measures to minimize risk of spread in school settings. Implementation of multiple mitigation strategies – including limiting group size, ensuring social distancing, requiring face coverings,

increasing ventilation, and regular disinfecting of high-touch surfaces – can limit the spread of the COVID-19 in many settings. Application and adherence to multiple mitigation measures provided in this document help schools reopen and stay open safely for in-person learning.

Decisions regarding instructional models should be guided by information on school-specific factors such as mitigation strategies implemented, local needs, stakeholder input, the number of cases among students, teachers, and staff, and school experience. A decision to remain open for in-person or hybrid instruction should involve considerations for further strengthening mitigation strategies and continuing to monitor cases to reassess decisions. This should be driven by a “classroom-first” approach; **in-person or hybrid instruction should be prioritized over extracurricular activities including sports and school events**, a common source of school transmission, to minimize risk of transmission in schools and protect in-person learning opportunities.

Expecting and planning for the occurrence of one or more cases of COVID-19 in schools can help schools respond immediately to mitigate the impact, minimize spread within schools, and allow the school to remain open for in-person or hybrid learning. When mitigation strategies are consistently and correctly used, the risk of spread within the school environment is decreased<sup>1,14,15</sup>. For schools to operate in-person learning safely for some or all students, the association between levels of community transmission and risk of transmission in school must also be considered. **Communities that fully implement and strictly adhere to multiple mitigation strategies, especially universal and proper masking, will reduce COVID-19 incidence within the community as well as within schools to protect students, teachers, and staff members.**

### Pre-K-12 Education Mitigation Timeline

*The following restrictions and measures apply to the use of district/school/pre-K provider facilities for educational purposes, including but not limited to delivering in-person or hybrid instruction; instructional activities such as special education evaluations and individualized tutoring; administering assessments; administrative activities by educators, staff, or students; professional development and instructional planning; and family and community engagement activities such as school registration, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, and volunteer and partnership planning.*

*Guidance regarding athletic events is provided by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA).*

	Current Restrictions	New Measures starting Thursday, February 18 at 12:01am
CAPACITY	County school districts, charter schools, and private schools that reopen school buildings or facilities must ensure that <b>occupancy shall not exceed the lesser of 50% of the listed fire code capacity of a single space within a school site or fifty (50) persons</b> in an appropriately sized space that enables all social distancing requirements to be satisfied. <sup>^</sup>	<b><i>For schools that have been open for at least 20 days of in-person instruction, including hybrid instruction:</i></b>  Occupancy in county school districts, charter schools, and private schools that reopen schools buildings or facilities must not exceed the <b>lesser of 250 persons or 75% of maximum occupancy based on listed fire code capacity of a single space within a school site</b> and must abide by all guidelines promulgated by the Nevada Department of Education.
SOCIAL DISTANCING	(1) For pre-school, elementary and middle school students, not less than <b>3 feet apart</b> from other pre-school, elementary, or middle school students;  (2) For high school students and district and school staff at all levels, including pre-school elementary, and middle school, not less than <b>6 feet apart</b> from all other individuals. <sup>#</sup>	County school districts, charter schools, and private schools may adopt social distancing protocols with a <b>minimum allowable distance of not less than 3 feet apart between students at all levels</b> , including pre-school, elementary, middle school, and high school, while in school buildings and facilities.

SOCIAL DISTANCING CONT.		<p>Physical distancing of 6 feet or more (to the greatest extent possible) is encouraged, per the <a href="#">CDC recommendations</a>.</p> <p>For district and school staff and any other adults in school buildings or facilities at all levels, <b>adults must be not less than 6 feet apart from students and not less than 6 feet apart from other adults.</b><sup>#</sup></p>
TRANSPORTATION	<p>Occupancy shall not exceed <b>50% of capacity</b>. Regardless of age, for all passengers on school buses while on school buses <b>3 feet apart from other passengers and 6 feet apart from the driver.</b><sup>#</sup></p>	<p><b>School transportation vehicles, including school buses, may operate at 66% capacity.</b></p> <p>Social distancing of <b>at least 3 feet between students</b> and <b>6 feet between students and adults</b> should be maintained to the maximum extent practicable, especially when community transmission rates are high.</p>
LARGE GATHERING PLANS	<p><b>NOT</b> allowed for submission and approval</p>	<p><b>School Large gathering plans*</b> allowed for submission and potential approval, per <a href="#">Directive 037</a>.</p> <p><b>NO approvals will be provided until March 1</b> at the earliest. Refer to the further explanation and process below.</p> <p><i>*Districts/schools planning large gatherings for purposes outside of the educational purposes outlined above, which may include performances, graduations, and other ceremonies or celebrations, must submit a Large Gathering Plan for possible approval by local public health authorities, review by the Nevada Department of Education, and possible approval by the State Chief Medical Officer. Large in-person gatherings can present risk for increasing the spread of COVID-19 if social distancing, face covering requirements, and other mitigation guidance is not followed. Districts/schools are encouraged to plan remote events and gatherings as an alternative to hosting in-person gatherings.</i></p>
FACE COVERINGS	<p><b>Face covering directives will apply to county school district and charter school settings as follows:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All kindergarten through 12th grade students (regardless of whether they would be exempt from a face covering ordinance based on their age) and all school staff must wear cloth face coverings while on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses unless approved for an exemption under this section as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. School building administrators may approve exemptions for students: i. Who are medically fragile as documented per an existing Individualized Education Program or health-related 504 Plan; or ii. Who can produce documentation from a medical professional that they are exempt in</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p>Students, employees, and visitors <b>MUST</b> always wear face coverings as required by <a href="#">Directive 028</a> with the following limited exceptions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>RECESS:</b> K-12 students actively exercising while at recess or in physical education class do not need to wear a face covering if activities are taking place outdoors. If activities must take place indoors, face coverings must be worn at all times. Social distancing of at least 3 feet should be maintained between students at all times, including while exercising, whether indoors or outdoors.</li> <li>2. <b>MUSIC &amp; PERFORMING ARTS:</b> Students may remove their face covering while</li> </ol>

<p><b>FACE COVERINGS CONT.</b></p>	<p>accordance with subsection 3 of section 7 of Directive 024.</p> <p>b. School building administrators may approve exemptions for school staff who can produce documentation from a medical professional that they are exempt in accordance with subsection 3 of section 7 of Directive 024.</p> <p>2. Parents, vendors, volunteers, visitors, and guests who are unable or unwilling to wear cloth face coverings under any circumstances or exemptions should not be allowed on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses.</p>	<p>actively playing an instrument that requires use of their mouth. When students are not playing an instrument that requires use of their mouth, they must wear a face covering (unless class is outdoors and social distancing of not less than 6 feet can be maintained). When singing, individuals must wear a face covering.</p> <p>3. <b>SPORTS:</b> Guidance regarding the use of face coverings during youth sports will be promulgated by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association</p> <p><i>Based on CDC guidance:</i>  <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/CFC_Guide_for_School_Administrators.pdf">https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/CFC_Guide_for_School_Administrators.pdf</a></p>
<p><b>NEVADA INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION (NIAA) SPORTS</b></p>	<p>Student athletics training, practices, and competition may reopen in accordance with guidance promulgated by the NIAA and any applicable conditions set forth by this and subsequent Directives regarding allowable sports and athletic events.</p> <p><b>Full-contact and close-contact sports** may resume only on a limited basis for athletic conditioning, drills, and practices</b> in which dummy players, sleds, punching bags, and similar equipment are used, but athletes do not come into contact with other players.</p> <p>Sporting events are subject to the gathering restrictions.</p>	<p><b>Full-contact sports governed and regulated by the NIAA may commence practice and competitions</b> in accordance with guidance promulgated by the NIAA and the applicable conditions set forth by Directive 038.</p> <p><b>TESTING &amp; MITIGATION PLAN:</b> The NIAA <b>MUST</b> promulgate a <b>mandatory COVID-19 testing and mitigation plan</b> for full-contact sports that must be adopted and followed by each school district and school intending to allow full-contact and close-contact sports. A plan must require <i>at a minimum</i> weekly testing of coaches, staff and athletes participating in these sports.</p> <p>Prior to the commencement of competitions of full-contact sports <i>between schools</i>, the local county school district or county school superintendent <b>MUST</b> approve the commencement of the particular full-contact sport including agreement to implement the NIAA testing and mitigation plan.</p> <p>Spectators will be allowed to attend all NIAA sporting events subject to the applicable limitations set forth in <a href="#">Directive 037</a> for <a href="#">gathering and events</a>. Host schools will be responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable gathering and event guidelines, capacity limitations and protocols as set forth in Directive 037.</p>

<sup>^</sup>County school district, charter school, and private school leaders may request a variance for all school facilities or specific buildings among school facilities from certain requirements subject to the review by the Nevada Department of Education and approval by the State's Chief Medical Officer

<sup>#</sup>County school districts, charter schools, and private schools may maintain social distancing protocols that are stricter than these standards as laid out in [Directive 028](#), but they may not adopt standards that are less restrictive without an approved variance

*\*Statewide directives that will remain in place to mitigate the spread will include, but not be limited to: face covering mandate and social distancing safety protocols*

*\*\* For the purposes of this guidance and related Emergency Directive, sporting activities shall be categorized as follows:*

- **Full-contact and close-contact sports:** Sports that require or are likely to have routine or sustained close proximity or physical contact between participants, and including without limitation, football, rugby, wrestling, cheerleading, basketball, hockey, group dance, group cheer, water polo, lacrosse, boxing, and martial arts.
- **Minimal-contact sports:** Sports that are characterized by some close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place between participants, characterized by intermittent close contact, or characterized by its use of equipment that cannot be cleaned between participants, including without limitation, softball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, and flag football.
- **Non-contact sports:** Sports that can be done individually, do not involve person-to-person contact and do not routinely entail individuals interacting within six feet of one another, including without limitation, tennis, pickle ball, swimming, golf, cross-country, track and field, sideline or no-contact cheer and dance, snow skiing, snowboarding, cycling, swimming, diving, disc golf, horseback riding, and figure skating.

## **LARGE GATHERING PLANS for County School Districts, Charter Schools, and Private Schools**

Per Directive 037, beginning on **March 1**, event or gathering venues and organizers, *including county school districts, charter schools and private schools*, who plan to host a gathering, event, performance, or other congregation of people in a space with fixed seated capacity of 2,500 or more, may submit a Large Gathering Venue COVID-19 Preparedness & Safety Plan ("Large Gathering Plan") for approval prior to hosting the large event or gathering.

Large Gatherings will NOT be permitted to take place until March 1 at the earliest and can only take place upon receiving review, must follow strict social distancing requirements and be able to adhere to all mitigation protocols. Large Gatherings will **not** be allowed without approval of a submitted plan.

In order for county school districts, charter schools and private schools to host a Large Gathering **prior to May 1** per [Directive 037](#), they must submit a Large Gathering Plan which will be considered for approval as follows:

- 1) First, the Large Gathering Plan must be submitted to the local health authority with jurisdiction over the location of the gathering or event for review and confirmation that the Plan meets the local public health standards and will not place an unacceptable burden on the local health infrastructure. ([See "Large Gathering Venue COVID-19 Preparedness & Safety Plan Submission Guide" for list of local health authorities by jurisdiction](#))
- 2) Following written confirmation by the appropriate local health authority, **the Large Gathering Plan must be submitted by the host to the Nevada Department of Education for review and to the State Chief Medical Officer for final approval.** County, city, and municipality local government authorities may not approve a Large Gathering Plan.

[CLICK HERE for the Large Gathering Venue COVID-19 Preparedness & Safety Plan Submission Guide \(Updated February 17, 2021\)](#)

## ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

[CDC Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation \(Updated Feb. 12, 2021\)](#)

[CDC: Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in K-12 schools](#)

[CDC: K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs -- FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents \(Updated Feb. 12, 2021\)](#)

[CDC: Guidance for Wearing Masks \(Updated Feb. 11, 2021\)](#)

[CDC: Additional Considerations for the Use of Masks Among K12 Students](#)

## REFERENCES:

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