

Title 28
EDUCATION

Part CXV. Bulletin 741—Louisiana Handbook for School Administrators

Chapter 4. Reopening School Facilities for the 2020-2021 School Year

§401. Purpose and Background

A. This Chapter provides minimum health and safety standards regarding the reopening of school facilities for the 2020-2021 school year in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic in order to ensure that students, faculty, staff, and others on school property are protected to the maximum extent possible and practical.

B. The requirements contained within this Chapter were developed by the LDE in coordination with the LDH using guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) regarding school settings, defined as a setting in which educational services are provided to children. As research and information about COVID-19 is updated or if the LDH or CDC revise guidance regarding school settings, LDE will review the standards contained within this Chapter and, as appropriate and necessary, propose revisions of this Chapter to BESE.

C. While the requirements outlined in this Chapter are designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to create a safe and healthy environment for students, faculty, staff, and others on school property, no requirement or plan guarantees that individuals will not contract COVID-19.

D. By executive order, the governor establishes the statewide phase(s) of reopening (phase 1, phase 2, or phase 3). If the local governing authority of a parish or other municipality has established a more restrictive phase of reopening, the LEA located within that parish or municipality must conform to the more restrictive requirements.

E. Medical or disability impact exceptions to any standard in this Chapter should be addressed on an individual basis by the LEA in accordance with local policies.

F. For the purposes of this Chapter, the following definition will apply.

Physical Distance—the act of an individual maintaining a space of six feet or more from another individual.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6, 17:7, 17:439.1, and 17:3391.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§403. Minimum Requirements for Reopening and Operating School Facilities

A. Group Sizes

1. The maximum group size that may convene indoors in a single room, irrespective of room size, or outdoors at any given time are as follows:

- a. phase 1—10 individuals;
- b. phase 2—25 individuals; and
- c. phase 3—50 individuals.

2. Group Composition

a. Younger students who are unable to wear face coverings or maintain a physical distance from other students or adults should be assigned static groups. This must include, at a minimum, students in Grade 2 or lower. The static group composition should be maintained for as long as possible over the course of the 2020-2021 school year.

b. The composition of a group may change if students are able to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from other students and adults in a classroom or indoor setting, to the greatest extent possible.

c. Students with disabilities must continue to receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment. School systems must factor in any additional service providers who may need to enter the classroom, students who receive services outside the classroom (e.g. resource, APE), and/or students who receive services through alternate instructional methods.

B. Physical Standards for the use of School Facilities

1. If a group convenes indoors, it must convene in a room enclosed by a wall or partition. This includes large rooms, such as a gymnasium or auditorium, which may include more than one group if each group is separated by a wall or partition.

2. If groups convene outdoors, a physical barrier is not required, but each group must remain separated.

3. To the greatest extent possible, schools must limit crowding at entry and exit points and maintain maximum group sizes and physical distance recommendations.

4. If a room is used by more than one group in a single day, high-touch surfaces contained in that room must be cleaned before and after use by each group.

C. Monitoring Students and Adults for Symptoms of COVID-19

1. Each school must establish an area used to isolate anyone showing signs of being sick. The isolation area must be cleaned after it is occupied by any sick student or adult.

2. Upon arriving at the school facility, each adult and student must be assessed for symptoms of COVID-19, as defined by the CDC. This includes an initial temperature check.

D. Environmental Cleaning and Personal Hygiene

1. High-touch surfaces must be cleaned multiple times per day, including bathrooms.

2. Students must wash or sanitize hands upon arrival at the school, at least every two hours, before and after eating, before and after using outdoor play equipment, and before exiting the school facility.

3. While inside the school facility, all adults and students in grades 3 through 12 must wear a face covering to the greatest extent possible and practical within the local community context.

4. While inside the school facility, students in grades prekindergarten through 2 may wear a face covering.

5. While inside the school facility, children under two years old and individuals with breathing difficulties should not wear a face covering.

E. Hygienic Supplies

1. School employees must be provided adequate access to hygienic supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectant wipes or spray, paper towels, and tissues. Face coverings should also be provided when needed.

2. The quantity of hygienic supplies must be appropriately provided to the school employee, according to the role and the number and age of students or adults served by that employee.

F. Transportation

1. School buses used to transport students must not exceed the following maximum capacity requirements:

a. phase 1—25 percent, including adults, of the school bus manufacturer capacity;

b. phase 2—50 percent, including adults, of the school bus manufacturer capacity; and

c. phase 3—75 percent, including adults, of the school bus manufacturer capacity.

2. Passengers on a school bus must be spaced to the greatest extent possible as follows:

a. phase 1—passengers must ride one per seat. Every other seat must remain empty. Members of the same household may sit in the same seat or adjacent seats; and

b. phase 2 and 3—passengers must be dispersed throughout the bus to the greatest extent possible.

G. Student Programming Determinations

1. Student placement determinations in a distance or in-person education program should be made in consultation with the parent or custodian.

2. Student placement determinations should take into consideration a student's unique academic, social, emotional, familial, and medical needs of a student, as identified by the student's parent or custodian.

H. Essential Visitors to School Facilities

1. Essential visitors are individuals who must enter schools or early learning centers in order to conduct visits in accordance with Louisiana law or policy. Essential visitors include, but are not limited to, individuals who:

a. conduct CLASS[®] observations;

b. observe teacher candidates as part of the teacher preparation quality rating system; or

c. provide essential supports and services including, but not limited to, early intervention services, special education services, or mental health consultation.

I. Medical or disability impact exceptions to any standard in this Chapter should be addressed on an individual basis by the LEA in accordance with local policies.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6, 17:7, 17:439.1, and 17:3391.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

§405. Local Education Agency (LEA) Reopening Policies and Plans

A. Prior to the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, each local school board must adopt policies in accordance with the standards outlined in this Chapter.

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6, 17:7, 17:439.1, and 17:3391.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 46:

Chapter 37. Glossary

§3703. Definitions

* * *

Board or BESE—the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

* * *

Department or LDE—the Louisiana Department of Education.

* * *

Face Covering—a piece of material used to cover both the nose and mouth for the purpose of forming a barrier to droplets or airborne particles that are coughed, sneezed, or exhaled when talking. Face coverings are meant to protect both the wearer of the face covering and surrounding individuals.

* * *

High-Touch Surface—surfaces that are touched frequently, including but not limited to door handles, bathroom fixtures, drinking fountains, railings, desks, and other surfaces in school facilities or on school buses.

* * *

LDH—the Louisiana Department of Health.

* * *

Static Group—a group whose composition of students and adults does not change.

* * *

AUTHORITY NOTE: Promulgated in accordance with R.S. 17:6, 17:7, 17:439.1, and 17:3391.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, LR 31:1316 (June 2005), amended LR 39:2231 (August 2013), LR 46: