



Ready, Set, Reopen!

Best practice resource for **Education & Child Care Programs**

Reopening requires planning to not only survive but thrive. For education and child care programs, we've distilled the key steps for a safe reopening. Here are three steps to take:

- 01 Put safety first**
- 02 Ready your employees**
- 03 Adapt your services**

Released July 7, 2020



01. Put Safety First

Education and child care organizations must create a safe environment that gives employees, students, and visitors the confidence to work, teach, and learn at. Properly disinfecting and designing areas that work for your staff and students is critical. Here's what we suggest you do:



Order supplies, pre-clean, and establish your ongoing cleaning plan

- Review [OSHA](#) and [CDC](#) guidelines for detailed guidance and disinfecting how-to's.
- **Order at least a 30-day inventory** of cleaning supplies, [EPA-approved](#) disinfectants, hand sanitizers, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face masks, filters, face shields, gloves. Plan to have extra face masks on hand for staff, students, or visitors who may forget to bring one.
- **Order touchless thermal scanners** or other equipment to measure body temperature.
- **Order extra hand wash stations and physical barriers** like plexiglass to help maintain distancing.
- **Thoroughly clean and disinfect** all spaces *before* reopening.
- Work with your custodial staff to create an **ongoing cleaning schedule for all areas** (e.g. classrooms, restrooms, staff break rooms, high-touch areas such as door handles, classroom desks and chairs, room tables, countertops, bus seats)
- **Add hand sanitizer stations** at entrances, exits and common areas to make it easy for everyone to maintain good hygiene. **Provide sanitizing wipes to staff** to clean high-touch surfaces or objects after use.
- Follow **OSHA/HIOSH guidelines** for proper labeling, use and storage of chemicals. Make sure cleaners and disinfectants are kept securely out of reach from children.
- Check your **HVAC, fire, and life safety systems** to make sure they are working properly.
- Wherever possible, **keep doors and windows open** to increase ventilation in enclosed spaces.
- Have an enhanced cleaning plan ready should a **positive COVID-19 case** be reported. For more information, review our guide on to [How to Handle a Positive COVID-19 Case at Work](#)



Create appropriate PPE & physical distancing rules

- **Reduce occupancy** based on county and state capacity rules. Establish an occupancy monitoring protocol to maintain appropriate capacity and plan to maintain a 6-foot distance between individuals at all times.
- **Require staff to wear appropriate PPE** based on their role. For teachers, consider having them use a clear face shield instead of a mask so that students can see their entire face while teaching. For custodial staff, make sure they are wearing gloves in addition to face masks to protect from disinfectant/chemicals.
- **Require students to wear a face mask/shield** at all times, especially when physical distancing is difficult. Ensure that students wearing a face mask are able to do this safely, meaning they are able to put on the mask, keep it on for an extended time, and remove them on their own.
- **Do not allow students to wear a mask** while sleeping/during naptime, or if they are under the age of 2 years old, or have breathing issues.
- **Post signage** to communicate key distancing rules and good hygiene reminders in areas where people may gather like reception areas, classrooms, breakrooms, and restrooms.



Determine handling of shared materials & limit access to common areas

- **Determine standards** for using shared areas and items, scally classroom supplies.
- Consider **removing self-serve items** (e.g. shared condiments and food in staff rooms and cafeteria). Instead, ask everyone to bring their own or provide single-use items.
- Consider **removing porous materials** (e.g. plush toys, blankets, rugs) as these types of materials are more difficult to clean and disinfect.
- Consider **low-touch or no-touch options** for switches, doors, drawers, faucets, soap dispensers
- **Limit sharing equipment**, like school supplies, science lab materials, art supplies, and PE equipment. If sharing items is necessary, **post clear directions** on how to clean shared-use equipment after use.



Reorganize your floor plan and traffic flow

- **Designate specific entrances and exits** to control traffic and reduce contact. Install the thermal scanners at specified entrances
 - Designate **one location for any deliveries**, require all vendors to wear face masks, disinfect all items, and only allow vendors to enter when escorted by an employee.
 - Adapt classrooms and work areas to **ensure 6 feet between individuals** by reconfiguring seating and traffic flow. Repurpose large rooms, remove unnecessary furniture and place barriers as needed.
 - **Stagger use of spaces** (breakrooms, restrooms, library) to limit the number of people in an area.
 - **Add floor markers** in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, or waiting areas to help with distancing.
 - **Install physical barriers** like plexiglass or thin clear plastic where distancing may be an issue, such as the front office, shared cafeteria or library tables, or immovable office desks.
 - **Establish paths** (e.g. one-way, clockwise) to minimize proximity for staff and students.
 - Make sure that your new floor plan is **compliant with ADA and fire safety codes**.
-

02. Ready your employees

The return to work will introduce new norms and uncertainties for your team. Keeping the communication lines open is crucial to ensuring a smooth reopening. Take care of your employees and they'll take care of your students and each other.



Energize and build trust

- Reconnect employees to your **culture and brand values**.
- **Address employee concerns** with compassion and confidence.
- **Confirm schedules, salaries, benefits and HR policies** and highlight/explain changes.
- **Proactively seek feedback** from employees and include them to brainstorm solutions.
- **Revisit HR and safety policies**, focusing on the most vulnerable groups, such as temporary employees, people with disabilities, single parents, or those who lack adequate health benefits.
- Find creative ways to **support employee well-being** during this crisis.

Communicate new processes clearly

- Communicate **clearly, early, often, and with compassion**.
- **Before work, require employees to self-evaluate their health.** Explain what self-certification means and [post a notice](#) at your entrance to remind employees. Use the thermal scanners to check temperature daily before an employee begins work.
- **Find alternatives to in-person meetings**, like communication boards, text or video.
- Make it clear that **employees should not come to work if they have symptoms** or are feeling ill.
- Remind employees of **hygiene basics** like frequently washing their hands properly.
- **Review expectations** for routine cleaning and sanitizing of high-touch areas.
- Create easy ways for employees to **maintain social distancing**. Point out easy markers like six 1-foot tiles on the floor or place plants 6 feet apart as a visual reminder for employees.
- Clearly communicate **expectations for mask/PPE use/disposal** and **consequences** for not abiding.
- Identify a **safety coordinator or committee** to be responsible for enforcing and reminding everyone to abide by the new protocols. Consider inviting a student representative(s) to participate to empower students with a voice and choice in the process.
- Discuss **who/how to handle individuals** who don't want to wear masks or abide by the social distancing guidelines while in your establishment.

Train staff on your "new normal"

- Train staff on self-certification procedures and how to report symptoms or exposure.
- Review how to **properly store/use/dispose of PPE, cleaning and disinfecting supplies**.
- **Train health aides** to recognize COVID-19 symptoms, especially with children, and next steps. If a student shows signs or has been exposed to COVID-19, he/she must be isolated away from others. Their parent/guardian must be contacted immediately to pick up their child from school.
- Provide training on **how to handle communication with students and families** regarding the COVID-19 crisis. This includes having conversations on symptoms, use of PPE, social distancing guidelines, and other related topics that may come up.
- Educate your staff on how to handle **suspected/confirmed cases** of COVID-19 and what steps they should take if they experience symptoms or feel sick.

Prepare & post signage!

- [Post a notice](#) on **entrances** stating that no one with COVID-19 symptoms is permitted to enter.
- **Use floor markings** and **physical items** to direct traffic in all areas, including waiting, seating, and restroom areas.
- [Post signs at areas where groups gather](#) to remind people to maintain social distancing guidelines, ongoing cleaning, and frequent hand washing.

03. Adapt Your Services

Reopening in the “new normal” presents an opportunity to rethink how you operate. Here are some things to solve for as you adjust your priorities and strategy for reopening.

Reimagine student safety and instruction

- **Be creative with your signage and barriers** (e.g. use student-made signage or add your school mascot) to make the signage look more friendly to teachers and students to increase adoption.
- For students who are unable to wear face masks, **consider making a creative face shield** by attaching a plastic film to baseball caps.
- **Encourage students to create a student health and safety commitment** upon returning to school. Post their creation and refer to it frequently as a reminder of their commitment to keeping the school safe and healthy.
- **Establish student cohorts** so that the same group of students and staff are together throughout the day, minimizing interaction among bigger groups of students.
- Consider limiting the number of students physically in school by **offering staggered instruction days** or a mix of **in-person and online instruction**.
- **Adapt curriculum to meet safety guidelines** by limiting physical contact during PE classes, changing off-site field trips to virtual field trips, and no singing or wind instruments in music classes.
- **Pay special attention to students with special needs** by modifying PPE and learning plans to their needs.
- Language teachers should wear face shields instead of masks so that **students learning English** can still see their facial expressions and mouth movements. Provide info to students in their home language so that they can understand the new protocols.
- Social distancing will be a challenge for **early learners**, so restrict mixing of playgroups and make sure they are distanced from each other during naps.

Support your staff and teachers

- Consider **additional training, technology and other instructional support** to help teachers adjust to new ways of teaching in the classroom and online.
- Allow adequate time for teachers to **prepare for distance, e-learning, and other support options** in the event of a dismissal, which may mean closing your school anywhere from 2 days to 2+ weeks.
- Ensure your **health aide or a designated staff member is trained** on how to identify COVID-19 symptoms and how to handle suspected cases.
- Offer **professional development** for teachers to help them respond to student needs during this crisis.
- Use **alternative forms of communication** like video or text to minimize in-person training and meetings.

Review campus health and safety

- Once your new safety protocols are set, review and update your **Emergency Operations Plan**.
- **Monitor and plan for absenteeism** and report any significant increases to local health officials.
- **Outline your policy for responding** to anyone who do not follow health and safety guidelines.
- **Make safety highly visible** with signs for sanitizing stations or bright vests for cleaning staff.
- Clearly communicate safety policies and procedures with parents and provide them with tools to talk with their kids about safety and learning in the “new normal”.

A Note from ProService Hawaii:

The workplace has changed, it will not be business as usual. Our "new normal" will look very different from what we've known it to be. Recovery will require new ways of teaching and interacting with your staff, students, parents, and partners. It will take a long time to arrive at our "new normal." Anticipating and preparing for this new environment will take innovation, patience, and a whole lot of grit. **You've got this.**

Sources:

- [Businesses and Workplace Guidance](#), Center for Disease Control
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#), Center for Disease Control
- [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#), Environmental Protection Agency
- [Guidance for Reopening Schools](#), Hawaii Department of Education, Hawaii State Charter School Commission and the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- [Return to Learn: School Reopening Plan](#), Hawaii Department of Education