Returning to School in the Context of COVID-19

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The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.”
Physical Distancing Guidelines

• CDC guidance
  – 6 feet distance between desk/kids when feasible
  – Some countries have been able to successfully reopen schools using 3 feet distance between students without increases in community spread.*

• Important to encourage social distancing between adults
  – Increasing evidence of higher degree of spread between adults than from children to adults

• Grade specific:
  – Pre-Kindergarten/Preschool: Cohort classes to decrease crossover
  – Elementary: Spacing of desks and cohorting
  – Secondary: Spacing of desks, minimizing/eliminating lockers, increased spacing if activities include increased exhalation (singing, exercise)

*Based on evidence in *Lancet* that spacing of 3 feet may approach the benefits of 6 feet, especially if students are asymptomatic.
Special Distancing Issues

• Bussing
  – Taking into account physical distancing and recommendations for use of face coverings
• Hallways
  – Strategies to reduce traffic in hallways
• Meals/Cafeteria
  – Maximizing distancing by reimagining where students eat (classrooms and other spaces
• Playgrounds
  – Enforcing physical distancing outdoors may difficult and most effective strategy to reduce risk
  – Managing group sizes and cohorting are models to help manage risk
Face Coverings and PPE Guidelines

• Cloth face coverings should be used as possible based on developmental capacity and on feasibility
• Critical for staff to wear face coverings particularly if closer than 6 feet with students
  – Consideration for when teaching language/reading
• Masking and protective equipment for medical procedures should be based on current recommendations
• Grade specific:
  – Prekindergarten/preschool: May be difficult to implement
  – Elementary: Use of cloth face coverings should be encouraged when harms do not outweigh benefits
  – Secondary: Universal use of cloth face coverings for middle and high school students when not able to distance at least 6 feet
Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines

• Frequent handwashing

• Reduce high touch areas as much as possible and at least daily cleaning if not possible to reduce

• Cleaning of high touch outdoor spaces should be included in plans
Screening and Testing

• Temperature and symptom screening at schools may not be feasible in person
  – Regardless, parents should be encouraged to keep their child or adolescent home if they are ill

• Testing prior to school re-entry will only give a false sense of security

• Staff or students with symptoms should be encouraged to connect with their medical provider to discuss the need for testing
School Attendance for Sick Children/Adolescents

- Many more children will be sent home from school when sick this school year.
- Schools are likely to require clearance from pediatricians before return is permitted.
- Guidance encourages testing for known exposure to COVID-19 patient or COVID-19 symptoms:
  - Symptoms are extensive (see to right)
  - Can expect guidance to change as flu season and COVID-19 cases increase.

COVID-19 Symptom List:
- Fever, chills, rigors
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Rash
- Nasal congestion or rhinorrhea
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting or diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Myalgia
- Poor feeding or poor appetite
CDC Return to School Criteria

Pediatrician-confirmed alternative diagnosis and afebrile for for 3 days without fever reducing meds or:

• 3 days without fever reducing meds **and**
• Respiratory symptoms have improved **and**
• 10 days since symptoms first appeared **or**
• 10 days after test if no symptoms **or**
• 14 days after exposure to known contact **or**
• 2 negative COVID tests 24 hours apart
COVID-Positive Individual: School Open or Closed?

Original recommendations:
- Individual in one class: Close class for cleaning
- More than one individual impacted: Close school
- Across multiple schools: Close district

Updated data:
- Increasing evidence of low risk of transmission from child to adult (Iceland) and adult to adult transmission in schools (Australia)
- Isolation of sick individuals
- Contact tracing
- Cleaning of spaces
AAP’s Consistent Messages on Reopening Schools

• School is important for child health
• Schools must be flexible and nimble to reopen safely
• Schools must adapt based on COVID transmission in school and community
• Schools need funding for safety measures
Stay Tuned ...