

Checklist for School Reopening During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The best way to address health and safety concerns is to put a COVID-19 response plan in place before students and workers are re-introduced into the workplace. This must be done in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee(s) or the Health and Safety Representative (JHSC/HSR), as appropriate.

The checklist below addresses the recommendations in Ontario's "[Approach to reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year \(June 6, 2020\)](#)" document as well as other considerations that should be included in the pandemic return to work plan.

Refer to the CUPE documents "[Health and Safety Practices while Working During a Pandemic](#)" and "[Preventing exposure to COVID-19 Education sector](#)" for additional best practices for infection prevention and control of COVID-19 at work.

| General | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| Has your board developed a plan for ongoing consultation with the Union(s) and other stakeholders (public health unit, trustees, parent groups) | | |
| Has the JHSC/HSR been consulted about the plan to return to school? (s.9(18), s.8(11)) | | |
| Do(es) the JHSC/HSR have a copy of the hazard assessments for classification or groups of classifications? | | |
| Does the plan address the 3 phases of reopening? | | |
| Does the plan indicate how the board will address possible staff shortages due to illness? | | |
| Does the plan indicate how reports of occupational illness notices and exposures will be shared with the Union and the JHSC? | | |
| Does the plan set out how and when workers will receive training on the plan? | | |
| Is the training specific to each classification or group of classifications? | | |
| Does the plan include protocols to be carried out in workplaces other than schools (board offices, learning centers, maintenance shops, etc.) | | |
| Does the plan distinguish protocols for elementary and secondary schools? | | |
| Does the plan set out how the board will ensure the co-horting of staff and students and maintaining social distancing? | | |
| Does the plan set out how the administration at the school level, in consultation with workers, will implement the plan? | | |
| Does the plan include measures and procedures to follow for shared learning spaces? (libraries, gyms, labs, technical classes, etc.) | | |
| Does the plan include a program to screen parents and essential visitors prior to entry to the workplace? (See Appendix A: Screening Program) | | |
| Does the plan set out how schools will limit the movement of a parent or essential visitor upon entry to the school? | | |

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| Does the plan address limits on which personal belongings students are permitted to bring to school? | | |
| Does the plan address how the school will reduce exposure during lunch? (i.e. ensuring physical distancing in the cafeteria, in-class lunch, no sharing of food, etc.) | | |
| In general, does the plan address how schools will safely carry out child-care programs before and after school? | | |
| Does the plan address how schools will safely carry out sports activities and other extracurricular activities | | |
| Does the plan address how the board will provide resources and support to staff and new hires who may be struggling with the challenges of a modified school day, new and additional tasks, and adaptive learning? | | |

Additional notes or comments

For more information about JHSC/HSR resources, please visit the CUPE National Health and Safety Section of the website (see links below).

| COVID-19 Hazard Assessment | Yes | No |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Has a hazard assessment been performed for the workplace? If no, please communicate with your National representative. | | |
| Does the assessment assess/apply to each activity/task that workers will be doing? | | |
| Does the assessment assess each point of contact with a student/parent/visitor? | | |
| Does the assessment assess what to do in the absence of appropriate PPE? | | |
| Does the assessment assess work done outside of the school? (i.e. mobile work, working at different sites) | | |
| Does the assessment assess the high touchpoints at the workplace? | | |
| Does the assessment assess heightened risks of workplace violence and harassment arising from the COVID-19 pandemic? (Many are stressed and scared.) | | |
| Does the assessment consider staffing levels (increased levels because of increased cleaning and disinfection, decreased because of staggered working hours, isolation or illness)? | | |
| Does the assessment assess the risks of staff shortages and working alone? | | |
| Does the assessment assess what to do in the presence of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 or other illnesses that may be similar? (staff and student) | | |
| Does the assessment identify the appropriate locations for screening for entry? (suggest single entry screening sites) | | |
| Does the assessment give clear direction about what to do if people disregard the screening protocol? (Workplace harassment and violence are of particular concern here.) | | |
| Does the assessment assess how physical distancing going to be/not be possible within the workplace? | | |
| Does the assessment assess the risks of exposure in common areas considered? (office/workrooms, bathrooms, elevators, hallways, staircases, etc.) | | |
| Does the assessment assess new staff orientation? (for example, new hires, contract or redeployed workers) | | |

Additional notes or comments

| Control measures – Cohorting, physical distancing, cleaning, screening, ventilation | Yes | No |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Does the plan set out how custodial staff will effectively clean and disinfectant high touch points and surfaces? | | |
| Does the plan identify the high-touch points in the workplace? | | |
| Does the plan set out if cleaning/disinfecting of outdoor equipment and surfaces are required? | | |
| Does the plan set out how custodial will receive additional training on the use of any new chemical products, processes or equipment (PPE)? | | |
| Are there protocols in place to wipe down(sanitize) shared equipment? (i.e. computers, tablets, photocopiers) | | |
| Does the plan set out how enhanced cleaning will be carried out in the case of a positive test result in a student or staff? (clean up crews, additional hours, etc.) | | |
| Does the plan include a process for workers to self-assess for symptoms of COVID-19? | | |
| Are the control measures in place for each time and place that workers require them to perform a particular task? | | |
| Is there a protocol to inform the public health unit in the event of a suspected case and a positive test result? | | |
| Does the plan set out how administrative/secretarial staff will provide student and staff contact information to the public health unit for contact tracing, including class/bus cohorts? | | |
| Is there a protocol if a student becomes ill or develops symptoms during the day? | | |
| Is there a protocol if a staff member becomes ill or develops symptoms during the day? | | |
| Is there a designated and well ventilated “sick room” with available PPE, masks, tissues, sanitizer, etc.? | | |
| Are there protocols to ensure adequate ventilation in all rooms, regular filter changes and the steps taken to eliminate air recirculation? | | |
| Is there a clear and appropriate waste management plan? | | |
| Is the local confident that the control measures won’t penalize workers*? | | |

*Note – If control measures are negatively impacting workers, it reduces the likelihood of the control’s successful implementation. That would leave preventable gaps in the infection prevention and control plan. In addition, it might also contribute to staffing shortages.

Additional notes or comments

| Effective Communication Plan | Yes | No |
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| Is there a plan to communicate COVID-19 measures and procedures clearly with workers? | | |
| Is there appropriate signage displayed outside at all entry points to indicate what the health and safety expectations are for entering and being in the space? (This could be PPE or physical distancing requirements, for example.) | | |
| Are there measures to communicate physical distancing protocols? | | |
| Are there measures to communicate when to self-isolate and self-monitor? | | |
| Do workers understand what procedures they should be using and when*? | | |
| Do workers understand how to report a possible exposure to COVID-19? | | |
| Do workers understand how to signal a health and safety concern to their supervisor? | | |
| Does the plan include clear, age-appropriate communication about COVID-19 and what to expect when students return to school? (communication should be provided to children, youth and parents/caregivers in advance of school reopening) | | |
| Does the plan provide information to parents/caregivers on how the school intends to carry out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cohorting, • physical distancing, • limiting school access to essential visitors • school hours • transportation services | | |
| Does the plan provide information to students and parents/caregivers on how to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess students for symptoms of COVID-19 • pick up and drop off • reinforce hand hygiene and the respiratory etiquette • arrange alternative delivery methods for parent/staff meetings • arrange to have a student picked up from school if they become ill or develop symptoms during the day | | |

*Note – It is crucial that whatever the plans are, they must be clearly implemented in the workplace in a manner that works for the workers. Without this clear communication at the time and place it is needed, adherence will not be as successful, leaving gaps in the infection prevention and control plan.

Additional notes or comments

| Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) | | |
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| Does the plan identify classifications required to wear PPE when physical distancing can not be maintained? | | |
| If workers are required to wear PPE, does the plan set out what types of PPE should be worn for each task? | | |
| Is there a process to ensure appropriate PPE is accessible to workers? | | |
| Is PPE available at the points where they are needed? | | |
| If PPE is not in its original packaging, can workers easily know/confirm that they are wearing the appropriate level of protection if the PPE is new, reused or expired? | | |
| Are workers trained in the proper use and limitations of the PPE they are using, including how and when to take it off properly? | | |
| Is there a contingency plan when the stock of PPE runs low? (Consider determining what procurement time would be to purchase stock supplies as there may be shortages.) | | |
| Does the plan set out how workers are permitted to wear face masks as source control voluntarily? | | |

*Note – if workers are not using PPE properly fitted to them, or not using it properly, it could make the PPE much less effective.

Additional notes or comments

Additional Resources

JHSC/HSR Resource Kit

<https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-committee-resource-kit>

General Occupational Guidelines for COVID-19

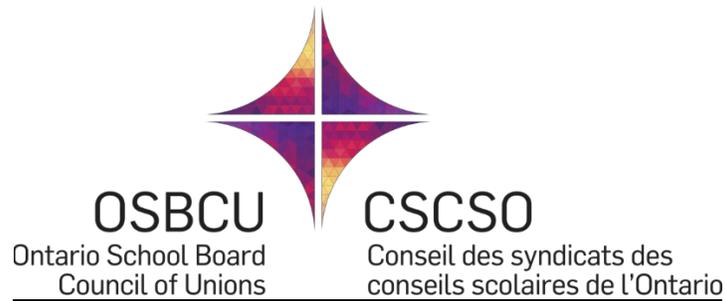
<https://cupe.ca/general-occupational-guidelines-covid-19>

Health and Safety Practices While Working During Pandemic

<https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-practices-while-working-during-pandemic-all-sectors>

Occupational Health and Safety Specific Sector Sheet

<https://cupe.ca/preventing-exposure-covid-19-sector-specific-resources>



APPENDIX A

Screening Guidelines

The implementation of an effective screening program is one of many control measures to limit a worker's exposure to a person who has COVID-19. By no means should it be assumed that the screening program will completely eliminate the possibility that the workplace is free of a person carrying the disease.

Many infectious diseases are at their most virulent when a person is demonstrating symptoms of the disease. The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 is not like other viruses like influenza and the common cold. The science on the transmission of the virus is evolving. Studies have determined that viral shedding of COVID-19 can occur when a person with the disease is pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic. It is for this reason school boards must adopt a robust system of controls to make the chances of transmission as close to zero as possible. The best practices for a system of controls are covered in the CUPE documents [“Health and Safety Practices while Working During a Pandemic”](#) and [“Preventing exposure to COVID-19 Education sector.”](#)

The following items are important considerations to include in a screening program.

1. Location

Best practices are to have screening take place ahead of time over the phone or by email. For person to person screening, limit the location to a single point of access to the workplace. The screening must take place in a well-ventilated location, behind a plexiglass barrier (or similar device) or at a distance of greater than 2 meters.

2. Staffing

The program must indicate which staff members will perform the screening. At no time should students perform screening. Staff members, including administration, who perform screening, must receive information and instruction on the program.

3. PPE and hand sanitizer

Where a physical barrier does not provide adequate protection or a 2-meter distance is not possible, personal protective equipment must be worn to protect the screener. PPE must include a mask, eye/face protection (goggles or face shield), gloves and a gown.

4. Writing materials (pen, paper, clipboard)

The screener should have the necessary tools to create a daily log of the persons who passed or failed the screening, as well as the time and date.

5. Signage, information for parents/guardians, essential visitors and external agencies

The program must indicate what information and signage will be provided at a screening location. The signage and information should indicate the purpose of screening and who will be allowed or denied entry to a building.

Note: Paramedics do not require screening before entering a building.

6. Information provided to the person that passes or fails the questionnaire

Whether a person passes or fails the screening, ensure they receive information and instruction as to the next steps to follow. (See #8).

7. Protocols for a person who does not comply with the program

Ensure the program has information and instruction for a worker to follow when a person refuses to comply with the program or refuses to leave after failing the screening questionnaire. A risk assessment must be carried out to determine if adequate controls are in place to protect a worker from workplace violence and the ability to signal for immediate assistance when workplace violence is occurring or likely to occur.

8. Appropriate script and screening questionnaire (in person, phone or email)

The screener must have a prepared script and screening questions.

Example:

Greet everyone with a friendly, calm, and reassuring manner.

“Good morning/afternoon! As you know, COVID-19 is a concern for public health. Given this, we are conducting active screening for potential risks of COVID-19 with everyone entering the building to ensure the safety and well being of staff and students.”

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms?

- Fever
- Cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- Chills
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Runny, stuffy, or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Lost sense of taste or smell (new or recent onset)
- Headache, that is unusual or long-lasting

- Digestive issues like nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain (not related to other known causes or conditions)
- Muscle aches that are unusual or long-lasting
- Extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- Loss of equilibrium (new or recent onset)
- For young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

- Yes
- No

2. Have you travelled internationally within the last 14 days (outside Canada)?

- Yes
- No

3. Have you had close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case?

- Yes
- No

4. Have you had close contact with a person with an acute respiratory illness who has been outside Canada in the last 14 days?

- Yes
- No

How to Respond

If the individual answers **NO** to all questions, they have passed the screening and can enter the building. Provide information and instruction as necessary.

“You’re cleared to enter the building. Please use the hand sanitizer, wear a mask, and limit your movement while in the building. Thank you for your patience and enjoy the rest of your day.”

If the individual answers **YES** to any of the screening questions, or refuses to answer, then they have failed the screening and cannot enter the building. Respond in a friendly and calm manner. “I’m sorry, but based on these answers, I’m not able to let you enter the building today. Please contact your local public health unit or Telehealth Ontario for further instruction.” (Provide information on the Telehealth Ontario number).

If they become upset or refuse to comply, contact the appropriate supervisor, or if necessary, call 911.