



# Initial Fall Reopening Guidance

A planning resource to ensure a safe return to school for the 2020-21 school year

June 25, 2020

**DESE is grateful for the continued engagement of multiple stakeholders from the education and medical communities whose perspectives have shaped our guidance**



## Stakeholder engagement

### Health experts and medical community

- COVID-19 Command Center Medical Advisory Board
- Dr. Sandra Nelson, MD, Infectious Disease, Massachusetts General Hospital
- Dr. Lloyd Fisher, incoming President, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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### Return-to-School Working Group

45-member group consisting of students, parents, teachers, superintendents and school administrators, leaders from educational non-profit organizations, and municipal officials

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### Collaboration with key stakeholders

Superintendents, administrators, parents, experts in public health and teaching and learning, teachers' unions

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Goals for fall return to school</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Health &amp; safety requirements</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Reopening plans</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Upcoming comprehensive DESE guidance</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Appendix</b>

# DESE is asking districts to prioritize the safe return of students to in-person school settings to maximize learning and address students' holistic needs

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## Initial Fall Memo

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DESE's initial fall memo is intended to help districts achieve the goal of safe, in-person student learning and includes the following



**Return to school**

### **Health & Safety Requirements**

for in-person learning this fall

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### **Reopening Plans**

to address three possible learning models

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### **Upcoming DESE Guidance**

to support fall planning

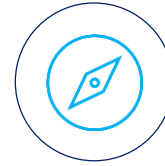
# Our philosophy and approach balances COVID-19 related health and safety risks with risks of keeping students out of school



Our goal is the **safe return of as many students as possible to in-person school settings**, to maximize learning and address our students' holistic needs



Our initial fall guidance is based on an **extensive review of current medical literature**



Our guidance attempts to **balance the health and safety risks of COVID-19 with the health, safety, socioeconomic, and achievement risks** of keeping students out of school



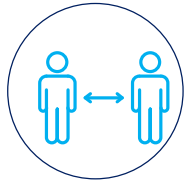
It is not one mitigation strategy but **a combination of mitigation strategies taken together** that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission

# Getting students and educators back to school in-person, safely, relies on a combination of strategies, including key health and safety measures



## Masks/ face coverings

Primary route of transmission for COVID-19 is respiratory. **Masks/ face coverings protect against COVID-19 infection** (study estimates 80% effectiveness in reducing transmission<sup>1</sup>)



## Physical distancing

Physical distancing helps mitigate virus transmission. Aim for six feet between individuals when feasible; **a minimum physical distance of three feet is appropriate as informed by evidence when combined with the other measures outlined in the list of safety requirements**



## Handwashing / hand sanitizing

Handwashing removes pathogens from the hands. While **handwashing with soap and water is the best option**, alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60 percent ethanol or at least 70 percent isopropanol) may be utilized when handwashing is not available



## Staying home when sick

**Students and educators should stay home if they are sick** or have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19

1. <https://gh.bmj.com/content/bmjgh/5/5/e002794.full.pdf>

# Review of medical literature suggests that children are less susceptible to and less likely to transmit COVID-19

## Schools do not appear to have played a major role in COVID-19 transmission

- In a review of COVID clusters, only ~4% (8 of 210) involved school transmission<sup>1</sup>

## In general, rates of COVID-19 infection are lower for children than for adults

- Based on an analysis of data from six countries, children under 20 are half as susceptible to COVID-19 infection than adults<sup>2</sup>

## If exposed, children may be less likely to become infected with COVID-19

- In China, in households with COVID-19 exposure, children under the age of 18 were infected at a rate of 4% compared with 17% for adults.<sup>3</sup>

## If infected, children may be less likely to infect others with COVID-19

- In Switzerland, a study of household clusters found that only 8% had a child as the index case. In nearly 80% of the cases, the child got COVID-19 from an adult family member.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leclerc, Q. J., Fuller, N. M., Knight, L. E., Funk, S., Knight, G. M., & CMMID COVID-19 Working Group. (2020). What settings have been linked to SARS-CoV-2 transmission clusters?. *Wellcome Open Research*, 5(83), 83. Available at <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/articles/5-83/v2>

<sup>2</sup> Davies, N.G., Klepac, P., Liu, Y. et al. Age-dependent effects in the transmission and control of COVID-19 epidemics. *Nat Med* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41591-020-0962-9>

<sup>3</sup> Wei Li, Bo Zhang, Jianhua Lu, Shihua Liu, Zhiqiang Chang, Cao Peng, Xinghua Liu, Peng Zhang, Yan Ling, Kaixiong Tao, Jianying Chen, Characteristics of Household Transmission of COVID-19, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, , ciaa450, <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/cia450>

<sup>4</sup> Posfay-Barbe, C., Wagner, N., Gauthey, M., Moussaoui, D., Loevy, N., Diana, A., & L'Huillier, A. (2020). COVID-19 in Children and the Dynamics of Infection in Families. *Pediatrics*, e20201576. Available at <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2020/05/22/peds.2020-1576>

# Each district and school needs to plan for three possibilities on the continuum of reopening



## Continuum of fall reopening models

**Return without restrictions**

Students return in-person and restrictions are lifted

**1 In-person learning with new safety requirements**

Students learn in-person with new safety requirements

**Our goal for fall: to get as many students as possible back into schools for in-person learning – safely**

**2 Hybrid learning**

Students learn both in-person and remote

**Available in the event districts/schools are unable to bring all students back to school despite best efforts, or in case of COVID-19 related circumstances**

**3 Remote learning**

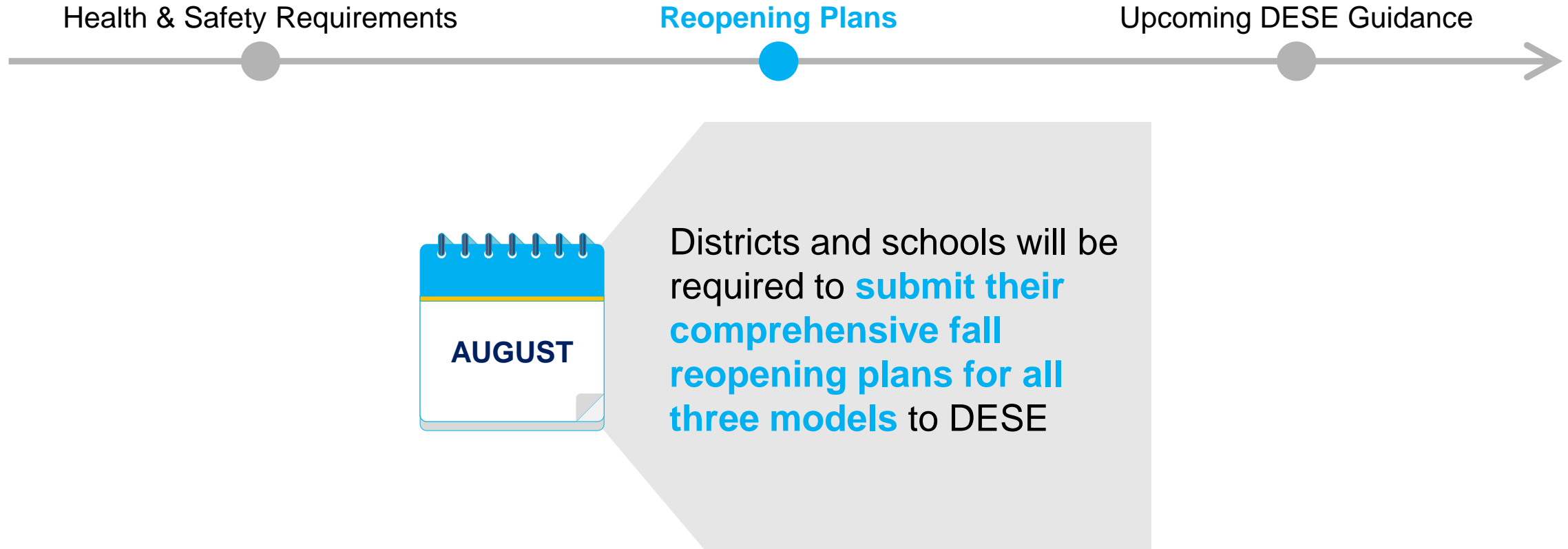
Learning takes place remotely

**Available for individual students who cannot yet return in-person and for all students in the event of future closures due to COVID-19**

Across all three models all districts and schools need a plan for how special populations will receive necessary services and accommodations



## Districts and schools will be required to submit their comprehensive fall reopening plans (all three models) to DESE in August



**DESE will provide more guidance to districts shortly**

To facilitate planning, DESE is working on additional, comprehensive guidance for districts on the following topics

