

An Evaluation with Recommendations for St. Stanislaus Kostka School's (Adams, MA) Plan for the Fall School Reopening

Date of Plan's Review: July, 28, 2020

Infection Preventionist that Reviewed the Plan: Michael Perreault, MSN, RN, CIC

Others Present for Review: Mr. Rogge, Principal

Mrs. Barosso, Teacher

Ms. Brown, Teacher

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Evaluation & Recommendations Reviewed by Infection Preventionist: Nancy Keehnle, RN, CIC

Masks/Face Coverings

CDC & MA Department of Education Guidance:^{1,2,3}

- Students in grade 2 and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth.
- Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings.
- Masks/face coverings should be provided by the student/family, but extra disposable face masks should be made available by the school for students who need them.
- Transparent face coverings provide the opportunity for more visual cues and should be especially considered as an alternative for younger students, students who are deaf and hard of hearing, and their teachers.

School's Plan

- All staff will be required to wear a face mask or face covering
- 1st Grade students will be encouraged to wear a mask or face covering.
- Students in Grades 2-8 will be required to wear a mask or face covering with the exception of during lunch and mask breaks.
- Students in Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten will be encouraged, but not required, to wear a mask or a face covering.
- Mask breaks will occur within the classroom while students are at their desks. The 6 foot distance between desks meets the state standard for mask breaks. If weather permits mask breaks may occur outdoors with a 6 foot distance being maintained between students.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for masks/face coverings meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{1,2,3} The plan for mask breaks allows children a chance to take off their mask while maintaining a social distance of 6 feet. **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

- Require 1st graders to wear masks.
- Students in Kindergarten should be encouraged to mask.
- Students that can't tolerate masks may do better with a slightly less restrictive face covering such as a bandana.
- Staff and students should have spare masks so that their mask can be changed if it becomes wet.

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing (Hand Hygiene)

CDC & MA Department of Education Guidance:^{1,2,3}

- Provide handwashing or hand sanitizing stations in the following common areas sanitizing:
 - All entries and exits
 - In bathrooms
 - In classrooms
 - Shared activity spaces
 - Next to meal distribution and consumption areas
 - Next to water fountains that require touch to operate

- Ensure there are enough supplies (soap and sanitizer) at all times to accommodate frequent hand washing.
- Given the importance of maximizing handwashing and sanitization stations, it may be permissible to have students within 3 feet of distance for a brief period of time (20 seconds) during hand washing as long as masks are worn and students are not directly facing one another.

School's Plan:

- Hand sanitizer will be available at the points of entrance and exit.
- Wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed in the hallways outside the classrooms on both the first and second floors.
- Hand sanitizer will available in every classroom
- Sanitizer will be available in shared activity spaces such as the computer lab.
- Meals will be delivered to classes and students will be instructed to either wash their hands with soap & water or use hand sanitizer prior to eating their lunch.
- Water fountains are covered and will not be used this year.
- The school has sufficient supplies of soap and hand sanitizer.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for Hand Hygiene meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation^{1,2,3} Hand Hygiene is the one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infections.⁷ Confirmed that the hand sanitizer contained the correct amount of alcohol to be effective (>62% ethyl alcohol or 70% isopropyl alcohol). **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

- All individuals upon entering the building should be required to use hand sanitizer. This will help reduce the likelihood that bacteria or viruses on hands will be introduced to the school environment.
- Before leaving the school for the day, all individuals should be required to use hand sanitizer to reduce the likelihood that bacteria or viruses on a student's hands will leave the school environment and be brought to their home.
- Hand sanitizer should be used upon re-entry into any classroom.
- At the beginning of the school year, teachers should go over the importance of hand hygiene and set the expectation for when it should be done.
- At the beginning of the school year, teacher should review the steps of handwashing. These steps are:^{3,7}
 1. Turn on the faucet and make sure the water is warm (**NOTE:** temperature can effect a soaps ability to adequately clean a person's hands).
 2. Apply an adequate amount of soap (**NOTE:** both antibacterial and regular soap are acceptable for handwashing because it's the soap and suds which hold dirt, oils, bacteria, and viruses in suspension and allow them to be rinsed off the hands).
 3. Vigorously rub all surfaces of hands and fingers.
 4. Rinse Hands with water.
 5. Use a clean paper towel to turn off the faucet (**NOTE:** a person's hands were at their dirtiest when they initially touched the faucet to turn on the water so when a paper towel is used to turn off the faucet it prevents a person from re-contaminating their hands).

- Hang reminder signs on hand hygiene at bathroom sinks, at hand sanitizer dispensers, and in classrooms.
- Instruct students to cough or sneeze into a tissue. Used tissues should be thrown into the trash and the student should perform hand hygiene immediately.³

Entry & Exit Points

MA Department of Education Guidance:²

- Consider assigning multiple entry points or staggering arrival times to avoid crowding in entry areas.
- Post appropriate signage and reminders about the health and safety requirements that everyone needs to follow.
- Ensure hand washing or sanitization is available upon entry, as well as appropriate disposal containers.
- Ensure that all students, staff, and visitors, with noted exceptions for medical needs, are wearing masks covering their nose and mouth.
- Ensure that additional masks are available at the entry as may be necessary.
- Consider having staff monitor entry to ensure everyone properly disinfects their hands and is wearing masks.
- While there are no screening procedures required at the point of entry, school staff should observe students throughout the day and refer students who may be symptomatic to the school healthcare point of contact.

School's Plan:

- The school will have multiple entry points with each entry point assigned to specific cohorts.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at the entrances.
- Signs will be used to remind staff, students, and visitors to use hand sanitizer upon entering the building
- Signs will be used to remind staff, students, and visitors that a face covering is required when entering the building.
- Additional masks are available for situations where an individual entering the school does not have a mask.
- The entry points will be monitored by staff.
- Staff will be instructed on the signs and symptoms associated with COVID-19. Any symptomatic students will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for the entry and exit points meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation. ^{2,3}

No infection prevention issues identified

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

No recommendations to provide.

Learning Spaces
Grades 1-8
<p>MA Department of Education Guidance:^{1,2}</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools should aim for a physical distance of 6 feet when feasible; 3 feet is the minimum distance allowed. During meals, mask breaks, and other times when masks are not worn, 6 feet is the minimum distance allowed. Directly related to physical distancing is the idea of creating cohorts (e.g. self-contained groups) of students wherever possible and limiting the cohort from interaction with others. By grouping students and staff into cohorts, interaction will be limited. This means that if there is a positive COVID-19 case in the school, fewer individuals will have interacted with that person. Cohorts should be used to the extent feasible for classes, transportation, mask breaks, meals, recess, and extra-curriculars. To assist with establishing cohorts, all students should have assigned seating in each class and to the extent feasible for meals and other activities Develop clear movement protocols to avoid crowding, maintain cohorts, and minimize unnecessary person-to-person interactions. These protocols should include a plan for arrival and dismissal times, transitions between classes, and bathroom breaks, as well as outlining one-way movement pathways for hallways and cafeterias.
<p>School's Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All desk within the classrooms will be positioned so as to maintain a distance of 6 feet between students. Each student will be assigned for the school year a specific seat within the classroom, computer lab, or other area that is utilized. Each grade will be treated as a cohort. Interactions between cohort groups will be restricted. The front staircases will be designated only for walking up and the back staircases will be designated only for walking down. Grades 1-4 will remain on the first floor except for once a week when computer class occurs in the 3rd floor computer lab. Grades 5-8 will remain on the first floor except for once a week when computer class occurs in the 3rd floor computer lab. Interactions between the students on different floors will be restricted to the degree feasible. Water fountains will not be used. Students will be allowed to have a personal water bottle.
<p>Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:</p> <p>The school's plan for student placement and spacing meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{1,2,3} Assigning specific seats within the classroom and computer lab minimizes risk by restricting the number of individuals sharing a common space. The school has developed a well thought out plan for student movement within the building which will minimize unnecessary interactions between students from different cohorts. No infection prevention issues identified.</p> <p>Infection Prevention Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any textbooks used for the year should be assigned to a specific student and not shared among students.

- Reading books for the children (books for enjoyment and not textbooks) should be limited to a specific number of books per week that are chosen at the beginning of the week and returned the morning of the last schedule day of school for the week (most often Friday). Returning the books by the start of the day on Friday allows for the books to remain untouched for 72 hours. Current research has shown that COVID is undetectable on circulated library materials after by 72 hours.^{4,5}

Learning Spaces

Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten

MA Department of Education Guidance:^{1,2}

- Schools should aim for a physical distance of 6 feet when feasible; 3 feet is the minimum distance allowed. During meals, mask breaks, and other times when masks are not worn, 6 feet is the minimum distance allowed.
- Directly related to physical distancing is the idea of creating cohorts (e.g. self-contained groups) of students wherever possible and limiting the cohort from interaction with others. By grouping students and staff into cohorts, interaction will be limited. This means that if there is a positive COVID-19 case in the school, fewer individuals will have interacted with that person. Cohorts should be used to the extent feasible for classes, transportation, mask breaks, meals, recess, and extra-curriculars. To assist with establishing cohorts, all students should have assigned seating in each class and to the extent feasible for meals and other activities
- Develop clear movement protocols to avoid crowding, maintain cohorts, and minimize unnecessary person-to-person interactions. These protocols should include a plan for arrival and dismissal times, transitions between classes, and bathroom breaks, as well as outlining one-way movement pathways for hallways and cafeterias.
- Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear masks/face coverings.
- Water fountains will not be used. Students will be allowed to have a personal water bottle.

School's Plan:

- All tables or desk within the classrooms will be positioned so as to maintain a distance of 6 feet between students.
- Each student will be assigned for the school year a specific seat within the classroom.
- Each grade will be treated as a cohort. Interactions between cohort groups will be restricted.
- A student movement plan for each location will prevent unnecessary interactions among students or different cohorts.
- If children from kindergarten or pre-kindergarten access the main school building, they will be required to follow the school's student movement plan for grades 1-8(as described in the Learning Space Section for grades 1 – 8).
- Alternative locations for the kindergarten class are being explored but would continue to follow the plan described above.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for student placement and spacing meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{1,2,3} Assigning specific seats within the classroom settings minimizes risk by restricting the number of individuals sharing a common space. The school has developed a well thought out plan for student movement within the buildings where Kindergarten & Pre-kindergarten

are located. This student movement plan will minimize unnecessary interactions between students from different cohorts. Alternative Kindergarten locations were discussed and evaluated. **No infection prevention issues were identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

- Limit the number of toys available to make the cleaning & disinfection of those items manageable.^{1,2} Consider rotating selections of toys that are available at a given time.
- The school should not provide stuffed animals to be used for toys because of the inability to adequately wash and disinfect them. If children bring in stuffed animals from home, they should not share them with the other children.

Lunch

CDC & MA Department of Education Guidance:^{1,2,3}

- As students will be unmasked to eat, there is a strict requirement of 6 feet of physical distance between each student.
- Based on CDC recommendations, it is preferable for students to eat in classroom spaces.
- Meals can be delivered to classrooms, or students can bring food back from the cafeteria to eat.

School's Plan:

- Students will eat at their desks in the classroom.
- Meals will be delivered to the classroom in disposable clamshell-style containers.
- Single use silverware will be used.
- Children will be instructed to perform hand hygiene before eating.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for lunch meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{1,2,3} Given the fact that desks in the classrooms are spaced 6 feet apart, there is no issue with maintaining a 6 feet social distance between students during lunch. **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

No recommendations to provide.

Staff Office Spaces

MA Department of Education Guidance:²

- Rearrange furniture to support physical distancing, with staff desks facing in the same direction when possible.

School's Plan:

- The first floor school office has 2 employees that use the space. Their desks will be 6 feet apart and facing the same direction.
- Access to the first floor office will be restricted to the 2 office employees.
- Office employees will either make copies for the teachers or the copier will be moved to a different location so teachers can make their own copies.
- The Principal's Office on the second floor is only occupied by the principal.
- All staff will be masked.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for the staff office spaces meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{2,3}
No infection prevention issues were identified.

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

No recommendations to provide.

Nurse's Office & Medical Waiting Room

MA Department of Education Guidance:²

- A medical waiting room, which is a separate space from the nurse's office, will be used when a student presenting COVID-19 symptoms needs to be separated from other students.
- From a facilities perspective, every effort should be made to find a self-contained space, ideally near an exit/entrance and with a dedicated bathroom.

School's Plan:

- The nurse's office will remain on the first floor.
- A larger room on the second floor has been designated as the medical waiting room.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

Due to the age and design of the older school building, neither the nurse's office nor the medical waiting room have a dedicated bathroom that could be used by a child that is ill. Although a dedicated bathroom would be convenient and beneficial, it is not a state requirement. The use of the standard bathroom with a process in place for timely cleaning and disinfection would serve as an acceptable alternative. **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

- Provide goggles or a face shield to the nurse for use when interacting with a sick child.
- If a child suspected of having COVID-19 symptoms needs to use the restroom then the existing boy's or girl's bathroom can be used. Following its use in this scenario, the bathroom should be immediately cleaned and disinfected by staff before it is used by another child. There has been no cases of COVID-19 identified as having been transmitted through human waste.

Bathrooms

MA Department of Education Guidance:²

- Consider replacing hand dryers with disposable towels, as hand dryers increase the flow of air particles in the bathroom.
- Consider not allowing students to use the bathroom during transition times, and otherwise using a bathroom sign out system to reduce the number of students in bathrooms at one time. Ensure that students use their own writing instruments for the sign out log.

School's Plan:

- Paper towels will be used for drying hands.
- A limited number of students will be allowed to use the bathroom at a given time.
- A sign out log will be located outside the bathrooms so students can sign the log so children know whether or not to many children are in the bathroom.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for bathrooms meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening.² **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

No recommendations to provide.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

MA Department of Education Guidance:²

- Cleaning and disinfecting should occur at least daily for shared spaces and furniture.
- For high-touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, light switches, water fountains, and toilet seats) cleaning and disinfecting should occur three to four times per day and/or between uses.
- Desks should be cleaned at least daily.
- If shared, electronics must be cleaned between use
- Consider using an alcohol solution with at least 60 percent ethanol or 70 percent isopropanol, a diluted bleach solution (if prepared daily to ensure efficacy), or an EPA-approved disinfectant unless otherwise instructed by the manufacturer's instructions.

School's Plan:

- Desks will be cleaned at the end of every day in preparation for the next day.
- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned three times per day.
- The school is purchasing an electrostatic disinfectant sprayer.
- A cleaning/disinfecting schedule will be developed and documentation of the cleaning/disinfecting will be maintained.
- The keyboards of the computers and the area surrounding the computers will be disinfected after a student is done with the computer.
- The school has an adequate supply of disinfectants and cleaners.

Infection Prevention Evaluation of the School Plan:

The school's plan for cleaning & disinfecting meets all recommendations of the MA Department of Education's Guidance for Reopening as well as the Center for Disease Control's recommendation.^{1,2,3} Evaluated the disinfectant to be used and confirmed that it is an acceptable and effective disinfectant to be used. Reviewed the importance of reading the instructions on every disinfectant to be sure that the disinfectant is used appropriately; different disinfectants require them to remain on the surface for a specific time in order to ensure the surface is disinfected. **No infection prevention issues identified.**

Infection Prevention Recommendations:

- Consider a consistent cleaning schedule for high touch surfaces such as mid-morning, after lunch, and at the end of the school day.
- Consider purchasing a steam cleaner that indicates it kill microorganisms or microbes. This would allow for a cost-effective way to do disinfection of surfaces. This should not be used to replace the use of a disinfectant/cleaner but as an adjunct method for disinfection.⁶

References

- ¹ Riley, J. C. (2020, June 25). Initial Fall School reopening Guidance. Retrieved from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/return-to-school/guidance.pdf>
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