PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Limiting face-to-face contact with others, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. “Physical Distancing,” also called, “Social Distancing,” means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. As the CDC reminds us, physical distancing should be practiced in combination with other everyday preventive actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including wearing masks, avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands, and frequently washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

This document presents physical distancing guidelines, considerations, options for implementing CDC guidelines and best practices. The information in this document reflects feedback from tribal consultations, best practices, and research. Information with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving and will continue to develop at a rapid rate. We will continue to provide the most up to date information.

This document is not an exhaustive list of every action that a school leader, student, or staff member will need to take with regard to physical distancing. Each school and tribal community is unique in its configuration, enrollment, and population. The purpose of this guide is to provide school leaders with a range of ideas and possible solutions for physical distancing as they enter SY 2020-21. The different circumstances at each school will require innovation and flexibility to develop comprehensive responses at each location.

School leaders are encouraged to collaborate, partner and share best practices with their tribal governments, including tribal education agencies, and states as they develop plans for execution at their local schools.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Strongly encouraged to wear face coverings.
- Teach and reinforce information appropriate social skills encouraging minimal contact.
- Monitor absenteeism.
- Consider keeping classes together to include the same group of students each day.
- Use homeroom stays or stagger class release.
- Space out seating to six feet apart, if possible.
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
- Remove any furniture to allow for six feet apart seating.
- Remove non-essential furniture that is touched frequently but not necessarily easily cleaned on a daily basis.
- Maximize the use of curricular digital resources and ensure proper quarantine procedures for paper texts prior to redistribution.
- Keep each student’s belongings separated from others’ and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas and taken home each day and cleaned, if possible.
- Do not allow students to share pencils, pens, and other school supplies; lockers or cubbies.
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible such as by opening windows and doors (Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or heath risk, e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).
- Use markings on the floor and or signage to mark 6-feet apart distances.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS

CORRIDORS & COMMON AREAS

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Stagger schedules (e.g., by cohort) or put in place other protocols to limit contact between cohorts and direct contact with others. Avoid crowding hallways and common areas.
- Limit mixing between groups.
- Create one-way routes in hallways and common areas.
- Close communal use spaces such as dining halls and playgrounds if possible; otherwise stagger use and disinfect in between use.

CAFETERIAS AND FOOD SERVICE AREAS

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Consider continuing to plate each student’s meal, to limit the use of shared serving utensils and ensure the safety of students with food allergies.
- Allow students to eat meals in the classroom.
- Close dining halls if possible. If not, stagger use and disinfect in between use; space seating 6 feet apart.
- Use small spaces, including outdoor areas (weather permitting) for meals to maximize physical distancing.
- Serve meals in classrooms instead of dining areas.
- Create pre-order cafeteria or meal service, e.g., online ordering.
- When feasible, encourage bag lunches from home.
- Use grab and go model for meals and snacks.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS

BUSES

• Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
• Consider staggering arrival and drop-off times or locations, or put in place other protocols to limit close contact with parents or caregivers as much as possible.
• Create distance between students on buses (e.g. Seat students one student per row, skip rows) when possible.
• Encourage parents/guardians/caregivers/students to maintain six feet apart at bus stops while waiting for transportation to arrive.

PLAYGROUNDS

• Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
• Stagger playground activities throughout the day or week.
• Close the playground if it would not support physical distancing and recreation in a safe manner.
• Consider suspending scheduled recess periods on the playground, and use the classroom or other space for physical activity.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Assess group gatherings and events consider postponing non-critical gatherings and events.
- Allow minimal mixing between groups.
- Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain physical distancing and support proper hand hygiene.
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
- Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF

• Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
• Maintain staff groupings as static as possible by having the same group of students stay with the same staff (all day for young students, and as much as possible for older students).
• Social distance six feet apart, if possible.
• Strongly encouraged to wear face covering.
• Wash hands and use hand sanitizer products provided by the school with 60% alcohol or greater frequently throughout the school day.
• Space out staff seating to six feet apart, if possible.
• Keep staff belongings separated from other staff.
• Do not share school supplies that are used and touched frequently with other staff members.
• Monitor absenteeism (responsibility of school leaders).
• Have a back-up staffing plan in case staff is absent.
• Cross-train staff and create a roster of trained-back up staff (e.g., substitute teachers, contractor sup-port).
• Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible such as by opening windows and doors. (Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or heath risk, e.g., risk of falling, trigger-ing asthma symptoms).
• Remove non-essential furniture that is touched frequently but not necessarily easily cleaned on a daily basis.
• Avoid sharing electronic devices, books and other learning aids with others.
• Remove non-essential furniture that is touched frequently but not necessarily easily cleaned on a daily basis.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

**BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF**

**CORRIDORS & COMMON AREAS**
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Limit mixing between groups.
- Limit direct contact with others and ensure 6 feet apart distance.
- Avoid crowding hallways and common areas.
- Create one-way routes in hallways and common areas.
- Avoid using common areas as prep space, eating, breaks, meetings and use classroom to the extent possible for all activities.

**CAFETERIAS AND FOOD SERVICE AREAS**
- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Wash hands before meals and snacks.
- Consider bringing meals to school.
- Use disposable food service items, e.g., utensils.
- Consider eating meals in the classroom or outside (weather permitting).
- Avoid groupings and stay 6 feet apart.
- Close staff lunch rooms or spaces normally used for refreshments and meals; or stagger use and disinfect in between use; space seating 6 feet apart.
- Clean and disinfect surface for any area used for meal service.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF

**BUSES**

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Bus drivers maintain a six feet distance from passengers, if feasible; wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizers frequently throughout the day.
- Staff supervising the transport of students should maintain a six feet distance from students and others as appropriate and feasible.
- Limit close contact with parents or caregivers as much as possible.

**PLAYGROUNDS**

- Intensify cleaning and disinfection.
- Staff supervising playground activities should maintain a six feet distance from students and others as appropriate and feasible.
- Practice healthy hygiene routines, including washing hands before and after playground activity.
PHYSICAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

BIE CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF

- Staff supervising extra-curricular activities should maintain a six feet distance from students and others as appropriate and feasible.
- Practice healthy hygiene routines, including washing hands before and after playground activity.
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for staff instead of a buffet or family-style meal.
- Avoid sharing of foods and utensils with others.

OPTIONS TO IMPLEMENT PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND SAFE PRACTICES IN BIE SCHOOLS

As we pursue our mission, the health and safety of BIE students and staff are dependent on the actions at the individual, school, and community levels. There is no single solution to this challenge. The diversity of our geography, building structures, tribal communities, and student needs necessitates a wide range of options to successfully implement physical distancing practices across our system. This document details a number of options that can be undertaken to fully implement physical distancing guidelines.

These strategies are based on current research and feedback provided by tribal leaders during consultations, BIE leaders, staff, and other stakeholders. As you develop physical distancing strategies in your schools, we encourage you to share your innovations with your colleagues. The impacts of COVID-19 are rapidly evolving, and it is essential that our response as a BIE community is flexible and informed.

HEALTHY HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Increase the frequency of hand washing routines throughout the school day, before meals, upon entering the building or classroom, after recess, when coughing, blowing your nose, or sneezing, and after using the bathroom. These routines should be coordinated between classrooms to prevent crowding at sinks and in restrooms.

- Set up handwashing stations where possible.

- Provide access to hand sanitizer with proper monitoring of student use.

- Encourage the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.

- Encourage students to limit touching their faces.

- Teach and reinforce healthy hygiene

- Schedule hand washing for lower elementary students throughout the day.

- Supervise young students when using hand sanitizers

- Manipulatives, if used, should be cleaned between use. Single use, disposable or multiple individually bagged sets of manipulatives should be used when available
LIMIT SHARING

- Limit sharing of supplies and equipment, and sanitize between student use.
- Keep each student’s belongings separated from others’ and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas to the largest extent possible.
- Encourage students to take their belongings home to be cleaned each day when possible.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- Physical education classes should be conducted outside with at least six feet between students to the extent possible.
- Students should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in class.
- Limit or eliminate the use of shared equipment. Any equipment should be cleaned between individual uses.
- Encourage students to bring their own water bottle for their personal use.

CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

STUDENTS

Strongly encourage face coverings be worn by students, if feasible. Face coverings are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. CDC does not recommend cloth face coverings for anyone who has a diagnosed respiratory condition, trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.

STAFF

Strongly encourage cloth face coverings be worn by staff, if feasible. Face coverings are most essential in times when physical distancing is difficult. CDC does not recommend cloth face coverings for anyone who has a diagnosed respiratory condition, trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.

INDOOR VENTILATION

- In coordination with local facilities staff, maximize ventilation when possible without violating security measures or compromising the integrity of the HVAC system. Open windows and doors when possible. Use fans to circulate the air throughout the building.
CLEAN, SANITIZE, AND DISINFECT HIGH-TOUCH SURFACES

- Frequently clean surfaces, paying particular attention to high-touch areas (stair handrails, door handles, counters, desks, tables, chairs, lavatories, computers, books, etc.).

- Clean and disinfect surfaces after each cohort of students leaves a facility or classroom, including between class changes if applicable, between groups in the cafeteria when utilized, and after each school day.

- Custodians perform some cleaning and disinfecting while some are the responsibility of the school staff. Talk with the local Facilities Specialist to coordinate responsibilities.

CORRIDORS & COMMON AREAS

Students and staff must remain vigilant as they transition to and from classrooms, labs, gyms, locker rooms, and offices to maintain physical distancing guidelines at entry points and throughout corridors, common areas, and communal spaces.

ENTRY POINTS

- Utilize multiple entry points when possible.

- Monitor entry point to ensure students and staff maintain physical distancing and security measures.

- Implement protocols to limit close contact with parents or caregivers, such as staggered arrival and drop-off times and locations.

- Encourage families to transport students to and from school either by car or on foot.

CORRIDORS

- In coordination with local facilities staff, maximize ventilation when possible without violating security measures or compromising the integrity of the HVAC system. Open windows and doors when possible. Use fans to circulate the air throughout the building.

- Restrict movement in the corridors unless it is absolutely necessary. If feasible, consider requiring students to remain in a single classroom during the day and teachers to transition between rooms between periods.

- Designate corridors and stairways for one-way traffic to minimize the chance for close contact. Use tape to show the direction students and staff should travel in each corridor to reduce congestion.
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- Remove items from the classroom or hallways that are frequently touched but are not easily cleaned on a daily basis.

COMMON AREAS

- Restrict mixing between groups.

- Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain physical distancing and support proper hand hygiene. Restrict attendance of those from higher transmission areas.

COMMUNAL SPACES

- Close communal use spaces if possible; otherwise, stagger groups and disinfect between uses when appropriate.

- Custodial Staff will clean and disinfect surfaces between groups in the cafeteria when utilized.

BUSES

Physical distancing on buses, while challenging, can be accomplished through a lower headcount each day and through additional students taking alternate modes of transportation.

ENTERING AND DEPARTING THE BUS

- Direct students to enter through the back of the bus one at a time if the bus design allows.

- Avoid crowding when waiting to enter or depart the bus. Request students remain in their seats until the student before them is several rows in front of them or exiting the bus.

SANITATION

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily.

VENTILATION

- When possible, open windows to increase ventilation.
PLAYGROUNDS

While playgrounds may offer a much-needed outlet from the more sedentary protocols adopted in the classroom, new precautions are needed to maintain physical distancing and reduce the risk of virus transmission during recess. Best practices emerging from government guidelines and state school plans recommend that staff and administrators implement the following:

PLAYGROUND USE

- Assess what can be done to limit risk of exposure or direct physical contact in physical education classes, sports or other physical activities, and play in playgrounds, wet areas, and changing rooms.

- Reduce the load on common areas through alternate scheduling and by marking playground areas for physical distancing where possible.

- Ask students and staff to maintain physical distancing while on the playground. Students and staff are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings. The CDC does not recommend cloth face coverings for anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the covering without assistance.

- Practice healthy hygiene routines, including handwashing before and after playground use if possible.

- If playground use cannot be staggered throughout the day or week, or the outside space is limited and would not support physical distancing, or staff do not feel confident that physical distancing would be maintained during playground use, consider suspending scheduled recess period.

- Clean and disinfect surfaces and equipment after each cohort use.

LARGE GROUP EVENTS, EXTRA-CURRICULAR, AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

School events and activities are important to creating a sense of normality for students and communities. Balancing this sense of normality with physical distancing can present a distinct challenge. Student needs, building configurations, health conditions on the local communities, tribal governments, state and local government guidance must all be considered when making decisions.

CANCELLATION & SCHEDULING

- Collaborate with tribal governments, local health official, and other stakeholders to limit gatherings, events, and curricular and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain physical distancing and support proper hand hygiene in accordance with local installation guidelines.
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- Provide virtual activities students can participate in at home.

- Do not use equipment. Use floor/surface marking (floor tape, sidewalk chalk) to provide visual social distancing cues.

**SEATING**

- Space seating to at least six feet apart.

**PARTICIPATION**

- Consider limiting nonessential visitors and volunteers.

- Restrict attendance of those from higher transmission areas.

**FOOD**

- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing foods and utensils.

**LOCKER ROOMS, GYMS, AND INDOOR SPACES**

- Close communal use spaces if possible; otherwise, stagger groups and disinfect between uses when appropriate.