

FRAMEWORK FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS

UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, World Food Programme, UNHCR

Checklists for governments, school authorities,
teachers and other staff



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for every child

As outlined in the Framework for Reopening Schools, released in April by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and the World Food Programme, the timing of school reopenings should be guided by the best interest of the child and overall public health considerations, based on an assessment of the associated benefits and risks and informed by cross-sectoral and context-specific evidence. This analysis will also help to prioritize risk mitigation measures.

When select schools have been identified for reopening, six key dimensions should be used to assess their states of readiness and inform planning for a safe return of students and staff: policy, financing, safe operations, learning, reaching the most marginalized and well-being/protection.

Below is a checklist of key actions for governments, school authorities, teachers and other staff to consider, before, during and after schools are reopened.

For further detail, refer to the full framework at www.unicef.org/coronavirus



Before schools reopen

POLICY

- Provide or distribute clear national guidance on parameters for decision-making on school openings, including guidance on sub-national assessment and decision-making.
- Review policies to ensure educational facilities are not used as shelters, health treatment or quarantine centers during emergencies.
- Develop alternative academic calendars based on different public health scenarios and taking into consideration modalities to be used for remote learning.
- Revise personnel and attendance policies with teacher unions to accommodate health-related absences and support remote and blended teaching.

FINANCING

- Identify response and recovery financing for immediate investments in school water, sanitation and hygiene, including contingency plans and stocks.
- Assess impacts on the private education sector and consider possible responses, including expanding public supply or public financing of private supply.
- Direct education funding to schools hit hardest by the crisis, for example through formula-based funding that prioritizes the most marginalized.
- Ensure continuous and timely payment of teachers' salaries.

SAFE OPERATIONS

- Develop detailed protocols on hygiene measures, including hand-washing, respiratory etiquette, use of protective equipment, cleaning procedures for facilities and safe food preparation practices. This should include clear and easy-to-understand protocols on physical distancing measures.
- Train administrative staff and teachers on physical distancing and school hygiene practices.
- Train cleaning staff on disinfection and equip them with personal protection equipment, as much as possible.
- Establish clear procedures to follow if students or staff become unwell, including identifying space to temporarily separate them without creating stigma.

LEARNING

- Train teachers and school leaders on remote learning and ways to support their students while schools are closed.

WELLBEING AND PROTECTION

- Take measures to mitigate protection risks while girls and other marginalized groups are out of school, through increased community engagement and improved referrals.
- Equip teachers to deal with both learning recovery and students' mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) needs.

POLICY

- ❑ Provide or distribute clear national guidance on parameters for decision-making on school openings, including guidance on sub-national assessment and decision-making.
- ❑ Review policies to ensure educational facilities are not used as shelters, health treatment or quarantine centers during emergencies.
- ❑ Develop alternative academic calendars based on different public health scenarios and taking into consideration modalities to be used for remote learning.
- ❑ Revise personnel and attendance policies with teacher unions to accommodate health-related absences and support remote and blended teaching.

During reopening

POLICY

- ❑ Education authorities should strengthen communication and coordination mechanisms that promote local dialogue and engagement with communities, parents, and children on education matters.
- ❑ Revise admissions policies and requirements to entry, to align with the goals of universal education, working proactively to reintegrate marginalized and out-of-school children.

SAFE OPERATIONS

- ❑ Update emergency plans and contact lists and maintain regular contact with local health authorities.
- ❑ Plan for phased or staged school openings (initially opening only a few days of the week, or only opening certain grades/levels).
- ❑ Increase the share of schools with safe water, handwashing stations, cleaning supplies and, wherever possible, establish or expand sex-segregated toilets or latrines, including provisions for menstrual hygiene management
- ❑ Promote hygienic practices at all levels and for all staff of the school system, with an emphasis on handwashing and respiratory etiquette.
- ❑ Train administrative staff and teachers on implementing physical distancing and school hygiene practices, increasing staff at schools as needed.
- ❑ Train cleaning staff on disinfection and equip them with personal protection equipment to the extent possible.



LEARNING

- Establish or update equivalency standards and official recognition for alternative learning pathways.
- Implement large-scale remedial programs to mitigate learning loss, with a focus on literacy and numeracy for primary-age children and accessibility accommodations for children with disabilities.
- Consider accelerated education models to integrate out-of-school or over-age children.
- Provide teachers and school leaders with support and training on remote learning and ways to support their students while schools are closed.

WELLBEING AND PROTECTION

- Re-establish regular and safe delivery of essential services including nutrition, WASH and health services such as school feeding, vaccinations, protection referrals and services for children with disabilities.
- Increase mental health and psychosocial support services that address stigmatization/discrimination.
- Conduct a risk assessment for teachers and other staff (considering age, chronic conditions and other risk factors), then implement a staggered approach for returning to school.

REACHING THE MOST MARGINALIZED

- Strengthen dialogue and engagement with communities, parents, and children on education matters, including on supporting girls' return to school.

- Remove barriers that may prevent children and youth from returning to school, including by waiving school fees and other costs (i.e. school uniforms) wherever possible.

After schools reopen

POLICY

- Develop a decision model for reclosing and reopening schools as needed.
- Consider universal promotion wherever possible and assess students' levels of learning to inform remedial efforts.

FINANCING

- Increase funding for teacher capacity-building and training and innovative teacher support methods, such as coaching or tutors to boost capacity more rapidly.
- Prioritize financing to support new recovery needs, especially for disadvantaged students.
- Consider suspending or temporarily revising performance-based elements in per-capita funding, which can prevent funding reductions due to lack of achievement or compliance.

SAFE OPERATIONS

- Encourage the use of hand sanitizer wherever available.
- Emphasize the proper use of cloth masks where recommended by national authorities.

- Ensure information on hygiene is widely available and accessible, including in minority languages or braille, and in child-friendly language.
- Emphasize behavior change to increase both the intensity and frequency of cleaning and disinfection activities and improved waste management practices.

LEARNING

- Increase investments in remote learning, whether for on-going closures, future closures, or to supplement classroom instructional hours.
- Ensure critically important examinations (such as those used for secondary school graduation or university entrance) are carried out in a valid, reliable, equitable and safe way.
- Increase funding for expanded innovative teacher support methods, such as online professional development, coaching, or use of tutors to help bring capacity development efforts to scale more rapidly.

WELLBEING AND PROTECTION

- Share clear and accurate information about COVID-19; normalize messages about fear and anxiety and promote self-care strategies for students, their families, teachers and other staff.
- Review and strengthen referral systems and ensure providers are aware of other care services, including for GBV/PSEA and sexual and reproductive health services that are youth-friendly and fully accessible.

REACHING THE MOST MARGINALIZED

- Ensure learning materials/platforms, information, services and facilities are accessible to people with disabilities, including for those with auditory or visual impairments.
- Ensure water, hygiene and sanitation services are accessible.
- Plan for continuity of assistive services if schools are reclosed.







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