

Independent School Reopen Plan Education Subcommittee

May 29, 2020

This document is a working document and may be updated due to evolving guidance from federal, state and local authorities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Independent schools serve an important role in educating students throughout Connecticut and play an important role in the State's economy. They are also diverse. Independent schools in the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) include day and boarding schools: Montessori and Waldorf programs; small primary schools serving students beginning at 15 months; K-8, K-9, K-12, and K-12 PG schools some with enrollments over 1,000 students; schools with unique learners; single gender schools; and religious schools.

In response to the public health concerns created by COVID-19, public schools were closed throughout the State effective March 17 th, and all private and non-public schools encouraged to do the same. Despite closure of physical campuses, schools were permitted to continue to engage in "education-related functions." Independent schools have followed Executive Orders, and during this time, most independent schools have employed online methods to continue to educate students through the current statewide shutdown, and all look forward to reopening their physical campuses.

To re-open, independent schools will be guided by applicable law, Executive Orders and state and federal public health guidelines for the re-opening of schools and businesses consistent with applicable components of those established for the State of Connecticut Higher Education (for residential considerations); public K-12 schools; and Early Childhood.

The diversity of the State's independent schools means, similar to higher education, that "one size does not fit all." Individual schools will create plans to guide reopening using applicable state and federal public health guidelines, fit to each school's unique structural circumstances in governance, enrollment, facility, and program. All independent school plans must meet applicable State public health recommendations. Because many independent schools have smaller enrollment than public school counterparts leading to lower population density, as well as flexibility within their physical plant, they can pivot to the new guidelines as the state reopens and innovate in such areas as hybrid learning models, facility, schedule, and calendars to meet the needs of their students, faculty, and families.

Independent School Considerations for Re-Opening

There are "Considerations" for the opening of schools outlined in the Higher Education Report that are applicable and adaptable to independent schools. These considerations, as modified for independent schools are as follows:

Considerations:

1. The prevalence of the disease must be low enough to safely resume campus operations.
2. An adequate supply of viral tests is available within the state for use by independent schools as may be needed to meet applicable public health guidelines.
3. The State provides, when possible, consulting and support for schools to conduct contact tracing.
4. The State provides public health guidelines for K-12 schools, covering the wearing of face masks, physical distancing, group size, transportation, and the density of dormitories, dining halls, bathrooms, locker rooms, and classrooms.
5. An adequate supply of PPE and facemasks is available within the state for use by independent schools as may be needed to meet applicable public health guidelines.
6. Adequate surge capacity is available in nearby health care facilities and hospitals.
7. Safe Harbor from liability for those educational institutions that undertake the planning efforts outlined in this report is investigated as an option.

Considerations in the Development of Campus Reopening Plans

Each independent school should develop a plan for reopening that applies public health guidance to meet the structure and operations of its school. The plan should consider applicable aspects of school programming and operations, including the age and nature of student population, whether the school provides early childhood programming, any educational methodology that is essential to the mission of the school, the physical layout of the campus and its structures, and whether the school is boarding or day.

Each independent school plan must have four components:

- *repopulation* of the campus,
- *monitoring* health conditions to ensure detection of infection,
- *containment* to prevent spreading of the disease if infection is detected,
- *shut down* if infection cannot be contained or is otherwise necessary.

In formulating these plans, schools must be mindful that the course of the pandemic over the summer cannot be confidently predicted. It is possible that conditions may warrant reopening but the pandemic worsens in the fall to the extent that the Governor would order a new shutdown. Independent schools should be flexible and plan contingencies including a physical reopening and a potential closing with all scenarios for including delivering some programming online.

The heterogeneity of independent day and boarding schools and the different public health risks associated with different types of programs suggests that reopening dates and operating protocols will for good reason differ across institutions. Therefore, it is essential that

independent schools develop their own plans for reopening and operating for the duration of the current pandemic.

Independent schools should consider the multiple models for re-opening their campuses and select the one that makes the most sense for their unique circumstances of program, students served, location, and facility. These models include and are not limited to: a return of all students to campus with a variety of adaptations to meet state health requirements; some students returning and a slow integration of other students by age; cohorts of students on campus at different times; alternating days for students; the use of distance learning to “decompress” the campus population; extending the calendar and day schedule. Careful considerations of these and myriad other models allows an independent school to find the best approach for its school. Schools should be prepared to modify school calendars, the structure of a school day, the physical layout of their campuses, and policies for students, employees and visitors relative to hygiene, access to campus and safety protocols.

As independent schools fall in the intersection of three educational systems -- higher education, K-12, and early childhood -- independent schools should review all three plans for insights and ideas. It is important to note that all three systems will be following consistent guidelines from the State of Connecticut Department of Health, including those for social distancing, size of groups, testing and monitoring, isolating and quarantining, hygiene, and cleaning. Independent schools will determine how they can best meet the guidelines to the extent possible and reasonable in their plans.

For all independent schools, there will need to be coordination between independent schools and the regional Department of Public Health. Likewise, independent schools will need to coordinate with local public school districts that provide transportation for independent school students.

Boarding Schools

Boarding Schools in particular should reference the Higher Education report regarding residential issues, as the report specifically noted in its Introduction the applicability of its recommendations to boarding schools (“We have been asked to recommend guidelines for the reopening of colleges and universities in Connecticut. These guidelines are also relevant to boarding schools, since they face issues very similar to residential colleges.”) While these recommended guidelines for residential colleges and universities are relevant for boarding schools, it is also important to note that boarding schools are special places of learning and unique from colleges and universities and often have far smaller enrollments than their college and university counterparts, in general a smaller staff, and generally students ranging in age from 11-19. These factors are important in how boarding schools manage their opening plans. Independent boarding schools have similar repopulation issues as colleges and universities and so allowing students to arrive on campus prior to the opening of school is beneficial.

Before a boarding student is permitted to return to campus, boarding schools should require reasonable confirmation that the boarding student has either 1) tested negative for COVID-19 (an antigen test to look for viral activity); or has undergone antibody testing showing a strong likelihood that the student has already recovered from COVID-19. Schools may require families to obtain this testing themselves within 4 days of return to campus, or may elect to conduct the testing upon the student's arrival to campus. While present guidance suggests that COVID-19 testing within four days of the student's arrival to campus may be considered current (as of May 22, 2020), this may change with further scientific information emerging. There are no limits on the timeframe for antibody testing at present, but this, too, may change in the future.¹

Students with a positive test should be instructed to remain home until cleared for return to school. Distance learning is advised for the recommended 14 days of isolation. If a boarding school requires families to provide for the testing, schools should consider and develop a plan for how to assist families and students who, for a variety of reasons, may be unable to secure appropriate testing within the accepted time frame. Schools could welcome those students onto campus but require isolation for 14 days. Boarding schools should be prepared to retest boarding students at appropriate intervals following their initial return to campus and may elect to test (or require documentation of testing) from day students based on risk factors. Any boarding student who tests positive for COVID-19 after having already returned to campus should be cared for in accordance with medical directives and consistent with public health protocols. Background epidemiological conditions will play a substantial role in determining the need and frequency for repeat testing, i.e., active transmission in the community will be a different scenario than a lack of local transmission.

Components of an Independent School Plan:

An independent school plan should reflect the individual decision-making by the school regarding re-opening and ongoing operation. An independent school plan should include:

- Recognition it will follow State of Connecticut Health Guidelines as applicable.
 - This should include following applicable standards from the yet-to-be-released State of Connecticut health guidelines for K-12 schools regarding the use of facemasks for employees, students, and visitors; recommendations for screening (testing, temperatures); visitors to campus; responding to students or staff who are symptomatic, social distancing, personal hygiene, room cleaning, isolation or sick rooms, and the cleaning regimen for schools, day and boarding.
 - This should include the most recent State of Connecticut Health Guidelines for group size and accounting for communal spaces such as gymnasiums, libraries, cafeteria, and dining spaces.

¹ This plan maintains a standard of care and health as vetted by Dr. Sten Vermund, a Dean and Anna M.R. Lauder Professor of Public Health at the Yale School of Public Health; Dr. Vermund is also Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale School of Medicine.

- For boarding schools, this should include applicable recommendations for dormitories as set out by the Higher Education Report, including “Update #3 Recommendations for Dormitory Bathrooms,” (Appendix 3) as modified to fit the housing and residential structures of the school and taking into consideration related faculty housing issues.
- A transportation plan that adheres to applicable guidance and, where applicable, works in coordination with local public school districts in connection with the transportation of non-public school students.
- A process to develop and communicate the reopening plan including collaboration with constituents;
- Designation of an employee whose duties include acting as the school coordinator to monitor the plan and as a liaison to the local, regional, or state Department of Public Health;
- Development of protocols for how the school will open safely for all school members; students, faculty and staff, parents while meeting applicable state requirements for health, and protocols to regularly monitor school health;
- Development of a contact tracing plan that may include the training of a school employee and working in consultation with public health officials.
- Consideration for vulnerable populations of students and staff.
- Development of plans for shutdown should it be necessary and plans should there be a change in state health requirements.
- Commitment to maintaining such plans and making them available upon request by the Department of Public Health.

Conclusions:

Independent Schools play an essential role in the education of students and in the economy of Connecticut. The State has understandably recognized that for the state to “re-open,” it is essential that day care programs, public and non-public independent schools, and colleges and universities must be open as well.

Independent schools have the potential to be impacted with declining enrollment due to the economic downturn associated with COVID-19 as well as enrollment decline due to parental uncertainty. This, coupled with the need to promote a safe and healthy environment for students and staff, requires the need for partnership with the State of Connecticut to successfully reopen. Below is a list of areas of support to preserve the public health and allow independent schools to open:

- Availability of necessary tests.
 - An adequate supply of tests is available for all boarding and day school populations if testing of these populations is recommended by public health guidance.
- An adequate supply is available of appropriate PPE equipment, including masks, for all independent schools.
- An adequate supply of cleaners is available such as hand sanitizer, wipes, cleaning materials needed to protect the public health.

- Coordination regarding shared transportation with public school students.
- An investigation into the possibility of a “safe harbor” from liability based upon the development of a written plan consistent with the recommendations for Higher Education and K-12.
- Reporting protocols for informing health officials about known COVID+ cases.
- Acknowledgment that any recommendations are subject to change based upon further guidance, evolving public health recommendations and/or changes in circumstances that may occur prior to the commencement of the school year.

Finally, like other industries that drive the state economy, independent schools face serious financial harm even to the extent of jeopardizing their short-term sustainability given the serious economic decline the country and State are experiencing due to COVID-19. To help ensure that independent schools remain a vibrant part of the educational landscape, provide a choice for families, and continue to provide substantial and reliable employment the State should look at short-term, fixed-cost funding for independent schools to help them through a potentially significant enrollment decline for 2020-21. Independent schools are a key economic driver across the State, and much like other businesses and non-profits, funding to assist in the sustainability of these schools in the short-term will alleviate economic instability and provide the opportunity for continued strength in independent school programming, enrollment, and service.

The non-public, independent schools are strong and reliable partners in their communities. We look forward to re-opening our schools so we can continue to serve the students and families who are committed to their independent schools and also believe in their partnership with the state to support community health and an economic rebound for Connecticut.

Appendix 1

Ideas and Suggestions:

- Consider the school academic calendar to provide the best opportunity for a successful opening of school and continuation of programming.
- Develop multiple scenarios for reopening.
- Consider changes to time and space in calendar and scheduling to decrease density on campus such as elongating the school day or week, extending or altering the school calendar, repurpose spaces for classrooms, and other alterations.
 - Example: Compress the fall calendar for boarding schools so that students leave at Thanksgiving and do not return until the new year.
- Consider developing smaller “pods” of students and faculty to decrease interaction among groups; in the event that there is a person who tests positive, such limited grouping might create least disruption to the whole school. Similarly, develop “family” groups in boarding schools to decrease isolation and increase a safe community size of students ages 11-19 for rooming, dining, and bathroom use.
- Consider organizing the academic calendar into small sections so should there be a disruption, only part of the grading calendar is disrupted.
- Consider using hybrid or blended models to deliver some courses or leaving some courses entirely online.
- Consider using the late summer to offer online courses for students who need them.
- Consider the daily drop-off and pick up routines, the use of multiple entrances, the repurposing of spaces to limit interaction.
- Study various plans that are being implemented including:
 - Sequencing the return of students to campus.
 - A rolling return of students to campus.
- Explore flexible staffing configurations to accommodate faculty and staff.
 - Faculty in vulnerable populations (those with compromised immune systems or over the age of 60 or 65) may wish to teach remotely.
 - Offering courses where a faculty member is teaching remotely -- some residential institutions are considering having students come to a classroom, with appropriate social distancing, and have the faculty member projected onto a screen in the room. This might create a greater sense of community than having students participate by themselves.
 - Many institutions may have to cap the size of larger classes to accommodate social distancing, break them into multiple sections, or teach them remotely.
- Enhance professional development for faculty in online teaching as needed. When the State closed this spring, faculty had little time to learn best practices for online teaching. Online instruction may be the primary form of pedagogy in some instances and the default mechanism in the event of a second wave of infection.
- Consider how to manage extracurricular activities and athletics: athletics, arts, and many activities (e.g., debating clubs, student newspapers, Model UN) as many might be pursued virtually or with social distancing.

- Limit visitors to campus. Schools should consider how to limit visitors, parents, and vendors coming onto campus as an effort to limit the transmission of the virus.

Appendix 2

Planning Framework for Independent Schools

An independent school's reopening plan should have four components:

- repopulating the campus (the reentry of students)
- monitoring the health of students, faculty and staff
- containing cases that develop
- shutdown of the campus if it becomes necessary.

This plan should be filed at the school and available upon request to the Department of Public Health. For members of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools (CAIS), a copy should be sent to the association not for review or approval but so the plan can be kept as a reference.

Appendix 2 outlines the requirements for each plan component.

Reopening Plans for Independent Schools in Phase 3

Name of Institution:

Senior COVID-19 Coordinator (Name and Title):

Email and cell phone:

Intended date of arrival of the first students

Intended date of classes starting:

Intended duration of the fall semester, term, or quarter:

Date of plan:

PART 1 - REPOPULATING THE CAMPUS (the reentry of students)

Classrooms: Statement that 6-feet of physical spacing has been achieved or reasonable alternatives are provided.

Some limited commentary should be included to indicate how this was achieved (e.g., splitting the class into multiple sections, converting non-classrooms into instructional spaces, greater use of evenings, weekends or online instruction, reduction of students on campus).

Some limited commentary on how program will be delivered such as: in person, distance, hybrid, alternate days, alternating cohorts, extended calendar, extended days.

Note: some schools may want to provide guidance on the flow of students in and out of classrooms at peak times in order to achieve physical distancing.

Dining Halls: Statement that 6-feet of physical spacing has been achieved or reasonable alternatives are provided.

Some limited commentary about how this was achieved (e.g., two shifts for each meal; use of new spaces as spill-over dining halls; more grab-and-go meals)

Statement that the State’s restaurant guidelines with the exception of capacity limits have been achieved (e.g., single use condiments, cleaning of surfaces after every diner).

Spaces “where other groups congregate”: Statement that 6-feet of physical spacing has been achieved where students congregate, such as in libraries and common spaces/student lounge/student centers and with extracurricular activities.

Some limited commentary about how each is being achieved. A future Update on Athletics is expected.

Dormitories: Statement:

1. that the guidelines for dormitory density are being followed, which allow, but do not require, that roommates, suitemates, or other grouping can be treated as a family unit;
2. that six-foot spacing is being preserved with other dorm building occupants (beyond the room/suite, grouping);
3. that the institution is allocating bedrooms (in the dorms or elsewhere) to accommodate students who must be isolated or has a similar plan;
4. that dormitory common areas follow social distancing requirements or reasonable alternatives are provided;
5. about how the institution is accommodating those students who are at greater risk for complications from COVID-19.

Some limited commentary about how the institution has addressed these issues.

Statement that the guidelines for **dormitory bathrooms** are being followed where applicable. (See Appendix 3)

Some limited commentary about how this is being achieved.

Orientation/Arrival: Statement that the school is organizing orientation for students regarding social distancing and other health issues and that during the return of students, efforts will be made to maintain 6-foot physical distancing or reasonable alternatives are provided.

Some limited commentary about how this is being planned (e.g., is the return being “spread out” over a longer period or being staged differently?)

Personal protective equipment: Masks: Statement that all faculty, staff, and students have been informed to wear masks; and school has developed protocols for masks throughout the school day in accordance with public health guidelines.

Limited commentary about whether these groups will be supplied masks or counted on to provide their own with some backup inventory maintained by the institution for those who forget. Some commentary about how the institutions will respond to non-compliance (e.g., will students be prohibited from entering classrooms if they don't have masks?)

Other PPE requirements: Statement that special populations on campus (e.g., health care workers, kitchen or custodial staff) will follow any special PPE requirements mandated more generally for those populations.

Disinfection: Statement that (i) hand sanitizers are available at entrances to all buildings, classrooms and dining halls, (ii) disposable wipes or similar acceptable cleaners are available in all bathrooms, classrooms and other shared facilities (e.g., copy machines, coffee stations) for wiping down surfaces, (iii) students, faculty and staff are reminded to wash hands frequently, and (iv) public, corridor and office spaces and their bathrooms are cleaned in accordance with the State's general guidelines for businesses.

Travel: Statement that students, faculty and staff have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel domestically and internationally.

This counsel will be lifted as conditions warrant.

Staffing: Statement that faculty, students and staff have been explicitly instructed not to come to work or leave their rooms if they are experiencing COVID-like symptoms. Also, a statement about what advice, if any, the institution is giving to those who have higher likelihood of serious illness from COVID-19.

Access: Statement of the school's plans for visitors' access to the campus as well as plans for employee access should the employee engage in travel that the CDC has indicated should be subject to a 14-day self-isolation.

Transportation: Statement of a plan for transporting students to school including any coordination necessary with appropriate school districts that transport both public and non-public students. Day schools should include any commentary on arrival or dismissal plans.

PART 2 – MONITORING THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF

Monitoring health of students, faculty and staff: Statement the school has a plan for regular monitoring of health of students, faculty, and staff as well as safeguards should one become sick or symptomatic at school.

Testing of students in boarding schools for the COVID-19 virus prior to or upon arrival on campus: Statement that the boarding school will create a plan for the arrival of students that includes provisions for testing at home prior to arrival, testing of students who do not have a test result upon arrival (including plans for isolating students) or an alternative plan for a safe reopening of school should there be an insufficient number of tests available.

The present recommendation is that boarding school students could have a test administered four days prior to the arrival on campus (this recommendation may change); and the school will conduct tests for students without testing verification in a way that achieves physical distancing as well as a statement that students will be quarantined until the test results are known. (Note: there may be revised guidance from the State as the summer progresses.)

As an alternative, schools may accept proof of positive antibody test.

Some limited commentary about how these plans will be implemented. If a rapid test with immediate results is available by late summer, then students will not have to be quarantined.

Note that for day students at boarding schools, schools should consider if those day students will also provide test result from within four days of arrival or will be tested at the campus should there be a sufficient number of tests available.

Note that day schools with only local students need only ensure that those who are symptomatic be tested.

Statement of the institution's plan to conduct a second test when applicable and in the event this is the public health recommendation.

Public health guidelines will be forthcoming later on further testing during the course of the year.

Testing of faculty and staff who interact with students or their living spaces shortly before boarding school students return to campus: Statement that the institution has a plan to monitor the health of faculty and staff and necessary safeguards will be in place, which may include a plan for testing of some faculty and student-facing staff before the semester starts.

Testing strategy beyond the re-entry period. Statement that the day or boarding school will require testing of all symptomatic students, faculty, and staff who interact with students or their living spaces, as well as close contacts.

Public health guidelines will be forthcoming in the fall concerning the frequency of subsequent testing of asymptomatic students, faculty, and staff.

Appointment of a COVID-19 Coordinator: Statement of who the Coordinator is and that he or she will (i) be the liaison with the coordinators at the other schools who will convene

periodically during the fall if needed and (ii) will coordinate as needed with State and Regional Public Health Officials.

Protocol for collecting information about COVID-19 cases: Statement that the school has developed a protocol indicating that faculty, students, and staff have been asked to inform immediately the Coordinator (or a designated administrator) that they are experiencing possible COVID-19 symptoms, as well as a protocol for having symptomatic students tested. (For students, faculty, or staff using an external health care provider, the school should request that they inform a designated administrator if they test positive.)

Some limited commentary about this protocol, which will help the school respond with alacrity to any “hot spots” of infection on campus and to undertake the contact tracing.

PART 3 - CONTAINMENT

Isolation space: D Statement that the boarding school has designated rooms and feeding arrangements for students who test positive and must be isolated or an alternative isolation plan, and that day schools have appropriate facilities for isolation during the school day.

Commentary about where and how much isolation space has been designated.

Isolation protocol: Statement that when a case of infection is detected, the boarding school will isolate the infected students for 14 days, trace contacts, quarantine all roommates and suitemates and consider quarantining others with close contact OR a parent or guardian will pick up the student for quarantine.

Medical care for those isolated: Statement of how the boarding school intends to provide medical care for infected students, and how day schools will provide care for students who might become symptomatic while at school.

Daily telemedicine calls might be one part of monitoring.

Quarantine protocol: Statement that the boarding school intends to quarantine students who are judged to require it or have the students picked up by a parent or guardian.

Short commentary about who the school intends to quarantine (roommates, suitemates, and other close contacts?), and where (in a separate facility, or allowing roommates and suitemates to remain together if their shared bathroom is not used by others)

Contact tracing. Statement that day schools have a procedure in place consistent with applicable health guidelines concerning containment for students or employees who test positive for COVID-19 or have had contact with someone who has.

Contact tracing. Statement of how the school, boarding or day, intends to train personnel in contact tracing, conduct contact tracing, and/or consult with the local or regional Department of Public Health.

PART 4 – SHUTDOWN

Shutdown initiated by the institution if a serious outbreak occurs on campus: Statement of the protocol for an orderly shutdown if a serious outbreak occurs on campus or in the community that the school or relevant state or local authorities conclude requires shutdown.

For Boarding Schools, this may warrant different treatment of local students and those who need to travel to other states or countries. Schools may elect to require parents or guardians of students to transport them home by private car or have a local person or family designated to accept the student to avoid transportation.

Shutdown of the State: Statement that the institution will follow the instructions of the Governor if he determines that a statewide shutdown is required and the school's consideration if independent schools are required or recommended for closure.

Plan for continuation of instruction if a shutdown occurs: Statement about whether the school would intend to continue instruction online if a shutdown occurs.

Some short commentary about what is intended. Note that if the prevalence of the virus is not met this summer, the opening of the semester could be delayed; this, too, would require institutions to determine whether to start school online.

Acknowledgment: Statement that the plan is subject to change based upon further guidance, evolving public health recommendations and/or changes in circumstances that may occur prior to the commencement of the school year.

Completed Plan: This plan should be filed at the school and available upon request to the Department of Public Health. For members of the Connecticut Association of Independent Schools, a copy should be sent to the association not for review or approval but for filing.

The School will provide a **Statement of Completion of COVID-19 Plan** that attests to the completion of the plan and submit the statement to the regional Department of Public Health 14 days prior to the first day students arrive on campus for the regular school year.

Statement of Completion of Independent School Reopen Plan

Name of Institution:

Senior COVID-19 Coordinator (Name and Title):

Email and cell phone:

Intended date of arrival of the first students:

Intended date of classes starting:

Intended duration of the fall semester, term, or quarter:

Date of plan:

We attest to the following:

_____ A School Plan has been created and filed on campus and is available for review by the Department of Public Health.

_____ The Plan includes an employee designated as the COVID-19 Coordinator.

_____ The Plan includes commentary for each of the four components:
_____ repopulating the campus (the reentry of students)
_____ monitoring the health of students, faculty, and staff
_____ containing cases that develop
_____ shutdown of the campus if it becomes necessary

_____ The Plan and this Statement were completed and sent to the Regional Department of Public Health 14 days prior to the first day students arrive on campus for the regular school year.

_____ If the school is a member of CAIS, the school has sent a copy of the plan, not for review or approval, to be filed at CAIS.

_____ The Plan includes how the program will be delivered should the campus be closed due to COVID-19.

Name and signature COVID-19 Coordinator

Date

Name and signature of the Head of School

Date

Appendix 3

Note – these recommendations from High Education are provided for guidance where applicable.

Recommendations for Dormitory Bathrooms

Update #3 to the Higher Education Report: Recommendations for Reopening Undergraduate Colleges and Universities Recommendations for Dormitory Bathrooms (Based upon advice from the Public Health Guidelines Subcommittee, Reopen CT) Issued by Mark Ojakian, State Lead for Reopening Higher Education May 20, 2020

Bathroom usage

All Bathroom users:

- Minimize time in all shared bathrooms.
- No cell phone use in shared bathrooms.
- Personal items should not be stored in shared bathrooms.
- Toilet lids, if present, should be closed before flushing.

Multi-stall shared bathroom users:

- If toilets and showers are separated by physical barriers, all can be used.
- For sinks and open showers, 6 feet of separation should be maintained when in use.
- If there are multiple communal bathrooms available on a floor, bathrooms should be assigned by zone or other criteria, and users should only use their assigned bathroom, to limit cross contamination and assist with traffic control.
- If quarantined because of close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual, communal bathroom users should have a single-user bathroom, if possible.

Roommates/suitemates who are otherwise treated as a family unit:

- May share a common bathroom.
- Should maintain 6 foot distancing in bathrooms whenever possible.
- If quarantined because of close contact with a COVID-19 positive roommate /suitemate, they may continue to share a bathroom among themselves, but not with others.

Cleaning/Disinfecting practices

Similar to general cleaning recommendations:

- Multi-stall communal bathroom bathrooms should be fully cleaned/disinfected by housekeeping staff a minimum of once daily, using products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2. (see Hygiene rules for shared or common spaces).
- Bathrooms shared only among roommates or suitemates should be cleaned regularly by housekeeping staff.
- All bathrooms: Disinfectant wipes should be placed near sinks, shower stalls and toilets.
 - Sinks: Users should wipe sink basin/faucet handles and soap dispensers following use.
 - Showers: Users should wipe the basin of the tub/shower, and faucet handles after use.
 - Toilets: Users should wipe flush handle, seat, and doors / latches of stalls after use.
- Paper towel dispensers are preferred. No air hand dryers.

- Hands-free garbage bins are preferred.

Ventilation:

- Confirm that the bathroom has an exhaust system that meets applicable building codes. Ensure that the exhaust system is working properly and that the bathroom is under negative pressure.
- If the bathroom is not required to have an exhaust system, open windows where and when possible.

Implementation:

- Encourage involvement of students in designing the specific plan for their living arrangement that meets above requirements.
- Implementation will require teamwork with students, cleaning staff, and others.
- Use signage to educate and remind users of these guidelines.
- Provide an anonymous system for students to report concerns.

General bathrooms on campus

- Similar guideline, frequent cleaning. Follow CDC and AIHA guidelines (add references / links).

Brief Rationale:

- While bathrooms potentially provide greater opportunity for close contact to other students and exposure to SARS-CoV-2, duration of time spent in dorm bathrooms is relatively limited compared to time spent with roommates, suitemates and classmates.