



# COVID-19 planning checklist: Preparing for staff to return to school buildings

During our May 6, 2020, webinar, "[Life with COVID-19: Preparing K-12 Spaces for Return to Work](#)," we discussed several measures that schools should consider as employees are recalled or otherwise requested to perform end-of-year and summer work. These measures may also need to be extended and/or revisited as fall approaches. Below is a summary of considerations.

- Review the most recent state and federal requirements and guidance for employers, and develop a plan of action with input from your local health department, if possible. Current requirements include teleworking when possible, social distancing, facial coverings, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, and monitoring employees for illness.

#### Resources:

- Ohio Department of Health's RestartOhio: [Responsible Protocols for Getting Ohio Back to Work](#)
  - ODH's guidance for [general office environments](#)
  - CDC's [Guidance for Business and Employers](#)
  - CDC's [Guidance for Childcare and School Programs](#) and its [Interim Guidance for Administrators of U.S. K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs](#) (The interim guidance contains a decision tree graphic to help schools determine which set of mitigation strategies may be most appropriate for their current situations based on whether there is no outbreak, minimal to moderate community spread of the virus or a substantial community spread of the virus in the area.)
- Develop a written return to work and school plan of action that addresses the following:
    - Recommended building capacity
    - Staff reporting procedures (including possible staggered start and release time) and symptom-free confirmation
    - Use of and provision for personal protective equipment (ODH has stated that facial coverings are required to be worn by employees in general office environments, unless the employee meets one of the [exceptions](#).)
    - Placement of sanitizer and hand-washing facilities

- Work environment logistics and protective measures and markers in order to maintain social distancing
- Rules for common areas, such as break rooms and lunch rooms
- General information about paid and unpaid employee leave available as result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications
- Information about the [FFCRA and FMLA](#)
- Information about staff requests for work from home arrangements (Be prepared for some staff members to indicate that they do not have child care.)
- A written plan regarding symptom reporting and actions steps if a staff member reports symptoms or is officially diagnosed with COVID-19 and the extent to which the school community will be notified (Resource: [Ohio Department of Health Guidance for Potentially Exposed Workers Checklist](#))
- Board policies regarding emergency preparedness and visitors
- Sick leave and medical leave policies in light of new legislation, including the FFCRA, in preparation for leave requests
- Relevant sections of the board's collective bargaining agreement regarding reassignments, contractual hours and leave to understand or negotiate around limitations
- Management and tracking of each employee's use of leave, including the duration and reasons for the leave
- Availability of substitute employees when an employee uses leave or reports that they are ill

**Be aware of the increased risks for discrimination claims.**

- Review EEOC's [guidance](#) addressing the potential employee discrimination risks when addressing employee concerns regarding reporting to work during COVID-19.
- Review and enforce the board's anti-harassment and anti-discrimination policies.
- Be prepared to grant reasonable requests for leave and/or accommodations.
- Make ADA-compliant medical inquires. (Resource: EEOC's [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#))