

## Considerations for Public Health-Based Temporary Closure and Transition to Remote Learning in Response to COVID-19

School and childcare temporary closure and transition to remote learning will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE). This will be considered only where other mitigation strategies have proven to be inadequate or are unable to be implemented, or when the spread of COVID-19 is so rapid that there is no way to safely evaluate the effectiveness of less disruptive measures.

Temporary closure and transition to remote learning will also be considered if the school does not have the staff that they need to safely operate. Schools should have the staff they need to safely operate, including adequate teachers, bus drivers, food service workers, maintenance staff for the school to run smoothly and safely. This is the most important factor to consider when making decisions about in-person learning.

### Communication Plan

DDPHE will be in close communication with the school/childcare facility if a temporary closure is being considered. This will allow for time to ensure that resources necessary for remote learning (e.g. laptops, workbooks, etc.) are sent home with students and allow parents the opportunity to adjust work schedules or make childcare arrangements. Schools should share local resources with families and staff for support during school closures. This may include detailed instructions on [how to isolate](#) or [how to quarantine](#), documentation of quarantine or isolation orders to share with employers, food security resources, and technology support for remote learning.

Families and staff should understand that when a temporary closure and transition to remote learning is warranted it is for the protection of the community, students, and staff. Students and staff who attend a school which has shifted to remote learning should avoid activities that could lead to further spread of COVID. Students and families should stay at home as much as possible, except for necessary trips, and avoid large gatherings. Schools and local public health should remind staff and families about how important it is to [get vaccinated](#) as soon as you are eligible, monitor for [symptoms](#), seek [testing](#) if symptoms develop and isolate if you test positive.

During the temporary transition to remote learning, we should all do our part to keep our communities safe and support a return to in-person learning including limiting contact and distancing from others outside of our homes, wearing a mask indoors when you are away from home, avoiding crowded settings, especially indoor settings and always practice good hand washing and respiratory etiquette.

## **Considerations for Temporary Closure and Transition to Remote Learning**

- Safe operations
- Student Absenteeism
- Number of Classrooms Impacted
- Percent positivity in the school or community
- Public health response capacity
- Hospital capacity
- Mitigation strategies

## **Duration of Temporary Closure and Transition to Remote Learning**

Remote learning periods should be adequate to halt transmission and based on disease transmission dynamics. In general, temporary closures should be ten to fourteen calendar days to include at least one full or reduced quarantine period, with students and staff symptom screening daily at home and seeking testing if symptoms develop. Keep in mind that anyone that has been identified as a case or a close contact of a case should follow public health instructions regarding isolation and quarantine. Shorter temporary closures may be appropriate in specific circumstances; for example, if staff illness prevents safe supervision of children in the classroom, closure may only be necessary while substitute educators are unavailable.