



Q&A: Schools and COVID-19



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Are children at lower risk of COVID-19 than adults



Children under 18 represent about 8.5% of reported COVID-19 cases, with relatively fewer deaths and usually mild disease. However, cases of critical illness have been reported.

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What should be monitored after re-opening schools



Several elements should be monitored including: effectiveness of reporting, monitoring, testing and tracing, as well as effects of policies on education and health of children.

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Are there specific recommendations on school ventilation and air conditioning use



Yes, ensure adequate ventilation and increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, and rely when possible on clean, natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows).

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Does WHO recommend that children wear masks at school



Different considerations apply to different age groups when considering mask use. However, mask use by children & adolescents in schools should only be considered as one part of a strategy to limit the spread of COVID-19.

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What prevention and control measures should be maintained during transportation to and from school



Respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene, physical distancing, mask use, and open windows (if safe and possible). These are necessary measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

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Checklists for students and children:



Students and children should wash their hands, steer clear of touching their faces and sharing objects, and avoid stigmatizing their peers.

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Checklists for parents/caregivers and community members:



Parents, caregivers, and community members should: monitor their children's health, teach them good hygiene practices, encourage them to express their feelings, and to avoid stigma.

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What prevention and control measures should schools put in place?



Special provisions should be considered at policy and behavioural levels to ensure safety of children and staff, including hygiene practices and screening and protection of individuals at high risk.

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What benefits would school re-opening provide



School closures have clear negative impacts on children's education, health and development, family income and the overall economy.

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What should be considered when deciding whether to re-open schools or keep them closed



Deciding to close, partially close or reopen schools should be guided by a risk-based approach, to maximize the health & educational benefits for students, teachers, staff, and the wider community, and help prevent a new outbreak.

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What is the COVID-19 incubation period for children



The incubation period for children is about 5 to 6 days between exposure to COVID-19 and when symptoms start, and lasts from 1 to 14 days.

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Should teachers and other staff with underlying health conditions return to school?



This depends on local disease trends and measures put in place by schools to limit spread of COVID-19.

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Should children with underlying health conditions (asthma, diabetes, obesity) return to school



This depends on: their health condition, current COVID-19 transmission within the community, and protective measures the school and community have in place to reduce transmission.

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