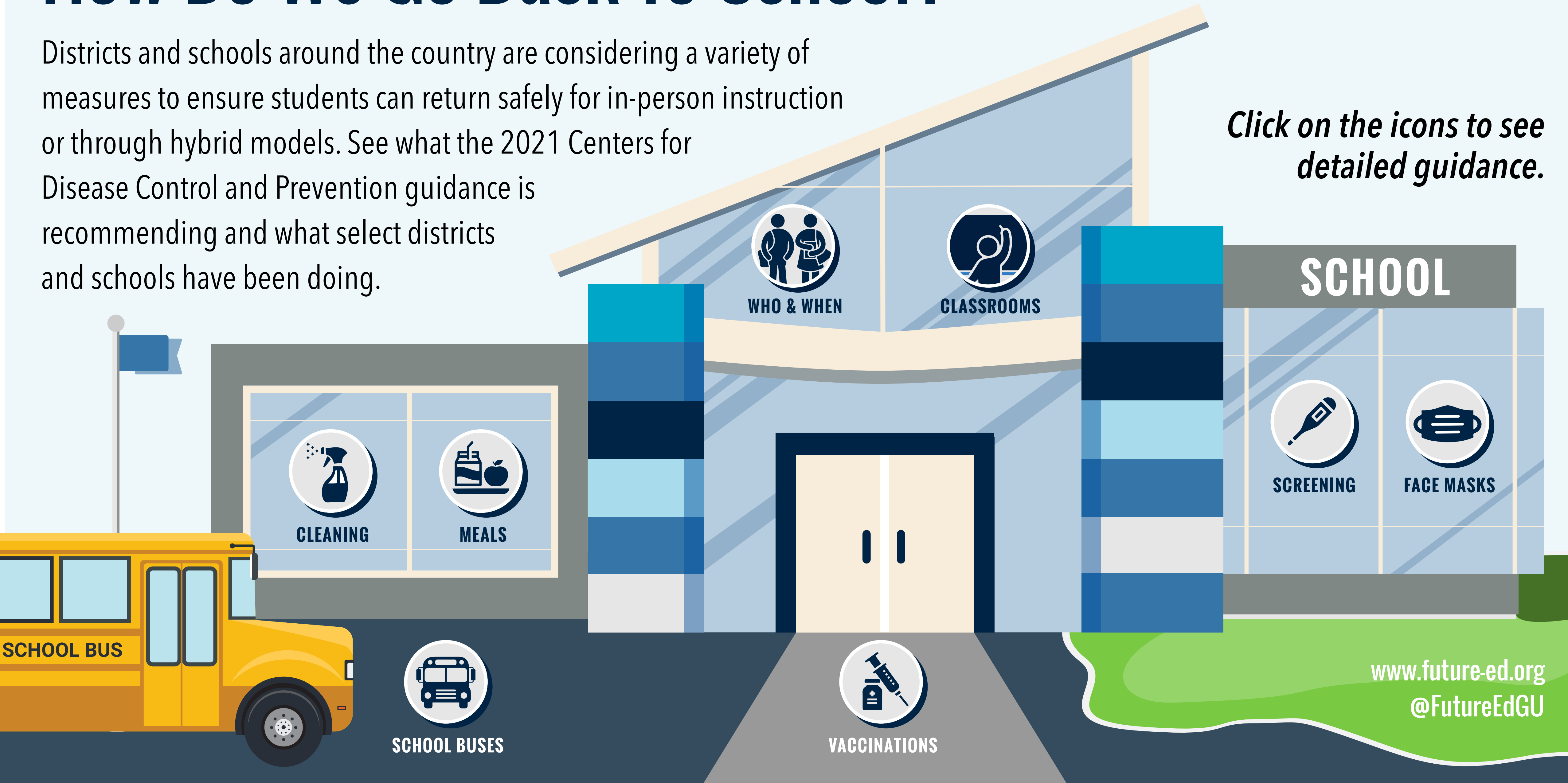


How Do We Go Back To School?

Districts and schools around the country are considering a variety of measures to ensure students can return safely for in-person instruction or through hybrid models. See what the 2021 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance is recommending and what select districts and schools have been doing.

Click on the icons to see detailed guidance.



CLEANING AND SANITIZING

Proper cleaning and sanitizing of schools and up-to-date ventilation systems are critical for keeping students healthy and in the classroom. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Clean frequently touched surfaces — playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains — daily; provide hand sanitizer; consider ventilation system upgrades or improvements to increase the delivery of clean air and dilute potential contaminants; disinfect after a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Shoreline, WA: Disinfect all touchpoints at least once each week in addition to daily cleaning of door handles, push bars and more.

Little Rock, AR: Clean common areas; provide disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer for all students entering and exiting classrooms; encourage frequent handwashing.

Blount County, TN: Replace old HVAC units, install bipolar ionization technology to clean air in ventilation systems with new round of Covid-19 relief aid.



CLEANING

Sources: Shoreline Public Schools, Little Rock School District, The Daily Times.

SCHOOL BUSES

Social distancing has proven to be an effective measure for curbing coronavirus on school buses. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

All students and staff must wear masks on buses regardless of their vaccination status. If safe, open windows to improve air circulation.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Houston, TX: Require students to sanitize their hands and scan badges upon boarding; fill seats from back to front, sitting one per seat by the window; sanitize buses after each drop-off; keep 4-6 windows down whenever possible for circulation

Tampa, FL: Load buses from back to front and keep students socially distanced as much as possible; wipe down high-touch areas between each run.

Stamford, CT: Require cleaning contractors to keep logs of their sanitizing completions.



SCHOOL BUSES

Sources: Houston Independent School District, Hillsborough County Public Schools, The Connecticut Post.

MEALS

At lunch time, students typically gather in a cafeteria, which could contribute to Covid's spread. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

For unvaccinated students and staff, maximize physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating, especially indoors; use additional spaces outside of the cafeteria for mealtime seating such as the gymnasium or outdoor seating. Clean frequently touched surfaces. Promote hand washing.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Booneville, AR: Split students into two groups, each eating in the cafeteria for one week and in the classroom for the next.

Inverness, FL: Use touchless, barcode scanning system for students; spread students out as much as possible, facing in one direction.

South Burlington, VT: Serve meals in classrooms for Pre-K through 5th grade students and in cafeterias for middle and high school students; package meals in recyclable, covered, meal trays or containers.



MEALS

Sources: Booneville Democrat, Citrus County School District, South Burlington School District.

WHO GOES WHEN

The CDC guidance stresses the importance of having all students back in school and recommends creating cohorts of students when possible. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Keep students in cohorts or pods when possible to minimize exposure across the school. Avoid separating fully vaccinated and unvaccinated students into separate cohorts. Ensure that cohorts do not perpetuate academic, racial, or other tracking.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Dallas, TX: Bring students into schools for in-person classes twice a week and engage in remote learning three days a week.

Little Rock, AR: Give all students the choice of virtual or on-site instruction.

Jericho, NY: Bring elementary students in full time and secondary students on alternating days



WHO & WHEN

Sources: Dallas Independent School District, Little Rock School District, Jericho School District.

IN THE CLASSROOM

CDC guidance stresses the importance of offering in-person learning with protections in place for those who are not vaccinated. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Adjust classroom to allow physical distancing of 3 feet when possible, with 6 feet preferred between students and staff who are not fully vaccinated; when not possible, layer multiple other prevention strategies, particularly indoor masking.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Des Moines, IA: Provide physical distancing to the extent possible, even if 6 feet of distance is not feasible.

San Antonio, TX: Keep students in small cohorts with staggered arrival and drop-off times; leverage outdoor learning spaces; use physical barriers such as plexiglass and distancing guides and signage.

South Burlington, VT: Remove furniture and other items from classrooms to provide open space for physical distancing.



CLASSROOMS

Sources: Des Moines Public Schools, San Antonio Independent School District, South Burlington Public schools.

SCREENING

Screening unvaccinated student and staff and tracing contacts for infected individuals can help limit the spread of COVID. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Do not conduct regular screening or require quarantines for fully vaccinated students and staff. If not fully vaccinated and exposed to an infected individual, students and faculty should quarantine for 5 days after exposure and then wear a mask for 5 days. If positive for Covid, they should isolate for at least 5 days or until symptoms dissipate, then wear a mask for 5 days. Schools may consider "Test to Stay" as an option for keeping asymptomatic close contacts in the classroom as an alternative to quarantine at home. Consider using pooled testing. Encourage families to keep symptomatic children home. Collaborate with local health department to trace contacts.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Tacoma, WA: Require students and staff to fill out symptom screens before arrival; isolate students without screens until parents fill out forms.

Washington, DC: Ask students, visitors, and staff members to verbally confirm that their temperature was lower than 100.4 degrees; or take temperatures at the door.



SCREENING

*Sources: The News Tribune,
District of Columbia Office of the
State Superintendent of Schools,
Education Week.*

FACE MASKS

Face masks are another effective measure to avoid the spread of the disease. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

All students and staff should wear masks indoors, on school buses, and in crowded settings regardless of vaccination status. In general, masks do not need to be worn outdoors.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Frankfort, KY: Require students to wear a mask if they cannot be 6 feet apart and in heavily populated areas like hallways or buses.

Billings, MT: Require masks for all staff, volunteers, visitors, and school-aged students, regardless of vaccination status. Require masks at outdoor school activities with 50 or more people, where social distancing is not possible or observed.

Cobb County, GA: Provide disposable masks to students without face coverings; send home students who refuse to wear masks and schedule conferences to discuss digital instruction.



FACE MASKS

Sources: Frankfort Independent Schools, Billings Gazette, Cobb County School District.

VACCINATIONS

The CDC guidance declares that vaccination is “the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic” and encourages schools to promote shots for all eligible students and staff. Read what the CDC is advising and what measures schools and districts are taking:

U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

Promote vaccinations among teachers, staff, families, and eligible students by providing information, encouraging vaccine trust and confidence, and establishing supportive policies and practices that make getting vaccinated as easy and convenient as possible.

WHAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE BEEN DOING

Baltimore, MD: Partner with Johns Hopkins Medicine to vaccinate at least 500 school employees a week.

Denver, CO: Give teachers in high-poverty schools first priority for vaccinations.

Marin County, CA: Grant school employees priority status for vaccinations.



VACCINATIONS

Sources: Maryland Matters, ABC News, Colorado Chalkbeat.