This committee's overriding goal is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and reopen schools as soon as possible. The best way for the community to support school openings is by wearing a face mask, social distancing, using appropriate hand hygiene, and following local guidance specific to avoiding gatherings and other high risk settings.

In order for schools to reopen, community health conditions must first be met to allow for in-person learning. The physical space for learning must also be conducive to limiting the risk of disease transmission while providing the conditions for social connection and intellectual growth. Educators, staff, and students in the school environment will need the following:

- cloth face coverings and additional personal protective equipment (PPE), as appropriate,
- classrooms/education spaces that support necessary physical distancing and access to appropriate personal hygiene such as hand washing,
- appropriate ventilation/filtration and environmental controls within those buildings,
- clear signage,
- necessary grade level-appropriate training to achieve all these recommendations,

Staff in high risk groups should have access to alternate remote assignments, other reasonable accommodations, or disability benefits where applicable.

School nurses need access to appropriate PPE (masks, gowns, and gloves) including fit testing of N95 masks and proper training in donning and doffing of all PPE and protocols to advise their day-to-day activities in relation to COVID-19 risk. Appropriate space for isolation rooms must be available.

Schools should have access to testing with rapid results to assist in carrying out safe, healthy learning practices, and procedures to follow when positive cases occur. We recommend strong testing protocols to aid schools in deciding their return-to-school plans as tests have become more widely available.

Recommendations below provide guidance on school re-opening and student re-entry, and are based on the most current scientific and clinical data, combined with local, state, and national public health guidance. When additional data or evidence becomes available, the committee will work to update recommendations.

The Dallas County Public Health Committee will determine the current COVID-19 risk level, which will guide the reopening of schools as defined in the table below. All risk-level designations are based on carefully considered metrics regarding the level of community spread and impact. These key metrics and current risk levels are publicly available. Within the

orange and yellow risk levels, certain student populations are prioritized for return to on-campus, in-person education. These priorities take into account that facilities may have limited space or other factors that could prevent all eligible students from returning to on-campus learning. Any consideration for return to in-person learning under orange and yellow risk levels must also meet the following criteria. If these criteria cannot be met, even for priority groups, virtual learning must be maintained.

- School buildings should conform to the current recommended standards for building safety (https://www.ashrae.org/about/news/2020/ashrae-introduces-updated-reopening-guide-for-schools-and-universities).
- Strict adherence to cleaning and disinfection protocols should be ensured (e.g. EPA protocols). CDC
- Space and scheduling must allow for appropriate physical distancing to accommodate the students who return to on-campus learning.
- Physical barriers or markers, and easily understood signage should be present to facilitate behaviors that mitigate risk. CDC
- Compliance with face mask guidance for all persons is required within the school building. DCHHS

Table. Guidance on School Re-Opening by COVID-19 Risk Level, including recommendations for student re-entry by population, and suggested operational guidance. If any priority cannot be met at a higher risk level, it should shift to the new first priority at the next lowest risk level.

COVID-19 Risk Level	Recommended Student Populations	Examples of Recommended Operational Considerations
High Risk (RED)	All students remain off-campus.	Remote learning only. No on-campus activities for students or staff beyond minimal necessary operations to support remote learning.
Moderate Risk	**1st priority for on-campus learning**: - Younger learners: all students in grades pre-K through 2nd grade.	- Maintain physical distancing with students and staff at least 6 feet apart in all spaces.

(ORANGE)	• Special education: students with IEP or 504 plans in grades pre-K – 5th. • Others at-risk: students without access to internet or remote learning devices in elementary school. **2nd priority for on-campus learning**: • All students in grades 3 – 5 as space constraints allow.	• Maximize use of all school campuses and all open classrooms to increase capacity for social distancing so that all younger learners can be accommodated. • Keep class groups as distinct and separate as possible and limit student movement between classrooms. • Special education: group students into cohorts for small group/individualized support or in smaller groups within regular classrooms according to their IEP.. • Maintain seating charts for all classes, buses, cafeteria areas for rapid identification of close contacts of cases. • Avoid large groups and gatherings inside and outside of school. • Limit non-essential visitors and volunteers.
	Non-priority: Grades 6 – 12.	Continue remote instruction only.
Low Risk (YELLOW)	**1st priority for on-campus learning**: • Younger learners: all students in grades pre-K through 5th grade. • Special education: students with IEP or 504 plans in grades pre-K – 8th. • Others at-risk: students without access to internet or remote learning devices in elementary school. **2nd priority for on campus learning:**	• Maintain physical distancing with students and staff at least 6 feet apart in all spaces. • Maximize use of all school campuses and all open classrooms to increase capacity for social distancing so that all younger learners can be accommodated. • Keep class groups as distinct and separate as possible and limit student movement between different classrooms. • Special education: group students into cohorts for small group/individualized support or in smaller groups within regular classrooms according to their IEP...

	• All students in grades 6 – 8 • <u>Special education</u>: students with IEP or 504 plans in grades 9 – 12.	• Maintain seating charts for all classes, buses, cafeteria areas for rapid identification of close contacts of cases. • Avoid large groups and gatherings inside and outside of school**.** • Limit non-essential visitors and volunteers.
	3rd priority for re-opening: • All students in grades 9 – 12 as space constraints allow.	• Open with a hybrid schedule, alternating remote and on-campus instruction with only subsets of students present at a given time to maintain physical distancing and reduced on campus numbers.
New Normal Risk **(GREEN)**	All students and staff returned to on campus.	All schools open with maintenance of personal protective measures, hygiene, and building controls to reduce risk.

Sample of sources referenced in developing this document:
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https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/clean-disinfect-hygiene.html
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc
https://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/guidance-health.php
https://www.childrens.com/covid-19/for-patient-families/back-to-school-guidance
https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-guidance
https://www.readyharris.org/A-Roadmap-to-Reopen-Schools
https://www.tn.gov/education/health-and-safety/update-on-coronavirus/reopening-guidance.html
https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/31/us/coronavirus-school-reopening-risk.html
https://sites.cns.utexas.edu/sites/default/files/cid/files/covid-19_school_introduction_risks.pdf?m=1595468503
https://bioethics.jhu.edu/research-and-outreach/projects/eschool-initiative/school-policy-tracker/

https://www.nsba.org/Resources/coronavirus
https://www.advisory.com/daily-briefing/2020/07/23/covid-indicators
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https://covid19risk.biosci.gatech.edu/
https://equityschoolplus.jhu.edu/reopening-checklist/
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html