

HIDOE AC Operation Guideline during COVID-19

▪ **General Direction**

It is becoming more evident that COVID-19 can spread by airborne aerosols. The best prevention strategies are to wear masks and face shields, wash hands, clean shared surfaces, and social distance. However, in the limited space of a classroom, students' ability to social distance may be compromised and required interaction within six feet of each other. In such confined spaces, masks, face shields, and proper ventilation become keys to reducing the risk of exposure. Maximum fresh air ventilation can be achieved with all windows and doors opened and without air condition (AC). Yet, without AC, excessive heat may be a factor for classes in leeward schools or on hot summer days. Depending on the type/design of the building, the ability to supply outside air may differ. As such, each school can select one of the following options A, B, C, or D to meet their needs.

Exception: Library

To protect books from moisture, keep windows closed and AC running. The Office of Facilities and Operation's (OFO) action is the same as "Classrooms with a small area of operable windows" below.

▪ **Classrooms with a Large Area of Operable Windows – Most of the classrooms** (Window AC, Ductless Split AC, Small Packaged AC, etc.)

- A: BEST – Opened windows, without AC
 - School Actions:
 - Remove the plexiglass on jealousy windows, mark each plexiglass (to be replaced in the exact room and location in the future), and store/reuse the plexiglass in the same room if possible (such as creating a guard around the teacher's desk).
 - Open all of the jealousy windows during school hours.
 - Notify OFO that the school is going to operate with this option.
 - OFO Actions:
 - Make sure that the operable window area exceeds at least 5% of the floor area.
 - Disable AC.
- B: BETTER – Closed windows, with AC
 - School Actions:
 - No specific actions are required.
 - OFO Actions:
 - Operate AC.
 - Make sure that fresh air fans are operational and increase the flow as much as possible.

This guideline is based on current recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

- **Classrooms with a Small Area of Operable Windows – Central Plants, New Buildings**
(Chillers, Large Packaged AC, etc.)
 - C: BEST – Opened windows, with or without AC
 - School Actions:
 - If the outside relative humidity is below 65%, open windows as much as possible during occupied hours.
 - If the humidity is over 65%, keep windows closed.
 - How to check humidity: Google search with “weather” + city, HI
 - If a school wants to help us save energy and can operate without AC, please notify OFO to disable AC.
 - OFO Actions:
 - Operate AC normally, except when school requests to disable the AC (Make sure that the operable window area exceeds at least 5% of the floor area before disabling AC).
 - Run AC for two hours after occupancy and flush the air in classrooms.
 - Open the outside air damper to maximum possible position while maintaining acceptable indoor conditions. Disable the demand control ventilation.
 - Maintain and operate disinfection UV-C lights where available.
 - D: BETTER – Closed windows, with AC
 - School Actions:
 - No specific actions are required.
 - OFO Actions:
 - Same as option C above, normal AC operations.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Can we install air purifiers? *The use of air purifiers is a school decision. The school is responsible for air purifier purchase, operation, and maintenance.*
- Can we use fans? *It is OK to use ceiling fans. Other fans should not be used directly at students.*
- Can we use HEPA filters? *Most, if not all, HIDEOE HVAC systems are not designed to accommodate true HEPA filters. Currently, HIDEOE is unable to install MERV13 filters for all AC units due to budgetary constraints. However, each school may purchase and replace non-HEPA filters with MERV13 filters. Please contact OFO, Facilities Maintenance Branch if MERV13 filters are being considered.*
- Should everyone wear a mask in classrooms? *Please follow the HIDEOE Guidance for Reopening Schools and Return to Learn School Reopening Plan – Health & Safety Handbook.*
- Can we switch from option B to A in fall and go back to option B before summer? Yes.

This guideline is based on current recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).