




STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

January 4, 2022

TO: Complex Area Superintendents
Principals

FROM: Keith T. Hayashi 
Interim Superintendent

SUBJECT: **Response to the Impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 for the Second Semester of School Year 2021-2022**

Happy New Year! As we begin the second semester of School Year 2021-2022, the Hawaii State Department of Education (HIDOE), with the hard work and dedication of you and your staff, remains committed to in-person learning for our students. We do understand that there are concerns regarding the rising number of positive Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and know that your schools may need additional guidance should your school be severely impacted by the virus.

The following guidance is in alignment with the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Key points are summarized in the [Return to School/Work Criteria flyer](#) and become effective immediately for those isolating and quarantining due to COVID-19:

Response to Confirmed or Probable COVID-19 Cases for the HIDOE tri-level (school, complex area, and state office):

1. Continue to implement the mitigation strategies described in the [COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidance](#).
2. Remind students and staff to stay home when not feeling well and get vaccinated to protect themselves against infection. Anyone who shows signs of illness at school will be sent home immediately.
3. Prepare for outbreaks that will happen in our schools, households, or communities as children or adults with mild/undetected COVID-19 may bring illness to the classroom or to the household.
4. Report confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 via the online case reporting tool. The DOH is currently refreshing the tool to reflect the updated guidance on isolation.

5. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate for five days regardless of their vaccination status.
 - a. They may return to school or work after five days if symptoms are improved and no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - b. While masking continues to be required on school campuses and in the HIDOE facilities, individuals recovering from COVID-19 must also continue to wear a mask for five days off-campus and off-site following isolation.
6. Identify and notify individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 (i.e. close contacts)
 - a. **Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated or completed their vaccination series prior to the past six months (or prior to the past two months for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and are not boosted:**
 - i. Quarantine for five days after exposure and if continued exposure occurs (e.g. a household member), quarantine for five days after the positive case is released from isolation.
 - ii. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended on day five.
 - iii. Return to school or work after five days if no symptoms develop.
 - iv. While masking continues to be required on school campuses and in the HIDOE facilities, individuals must also continue to wear a mask for five days off-campus and off-site following quarantine.
 - v. Monitor for symptoms of illness for 14 days.
 - b. **Close contacts who were boosted, fully vaccinated with a two-dose series within the past six months (or within the past two months for the Johnson & Johnson vaccine), or infected and recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days:**
 - i. Quarantine is not required unless symptoms develop.
 - ii. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended on day five.
 - iii. While masking continues to be required on school campuses and in the HIDOE facilities, individuals must also continue to wear a mask for ten days off-campus and off-site following exposure.
 - iv. Monitor for symptoms of illness for 14 days.

Decision-making and communication protocols are set forth to help guide the actions taken at the state, complex area, and school levels. Response for schools and across the state will look different as operational features, such as facilities and staffing, impact the capacity to adhere to health and safety guidelines.

State level – The state offices continue to work with the Department of Health and other agencies to provide support and direction to complex areas and schools regarding health and safety and to minimize the impact on students and the communities.

Complex Area level – The responsibilities of the Complex Area Superintendents include:

1. Monitor and support schools within their respective complex areas to prioritize in-person learning and mitigate disruptions to school operations.

2. Lead necessary transitions in the complex area and communicate with the HIDOE state leaders and impacted schools and communities.
3. Notify the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of any closures. Seek approval for closures exceeding one day. The Superintendent will notify the Board of Education Chairperson.
4. Notify and update the legislators of their communities, the mayor, and other community leaders of any closures and COVID-19 response efforts as a courtesy.

School level – Processes for closing classrooms due to the lack of supervision of students as a result of staff absences related to COVID-19:

Schools should plan for rolling absences and providing student work aligned with lessons missed for extended absences. For disruptions exceeding one day, schools should create a plan for the continuation of learning for the classroom(s) affected. Plans should include:

1. Teaching and learning expectations if adjustments include use of hybrid and virtual learning and the distribution of devices and hotspot;
2. Prioritization of high-needs learners;
3. Attendance expectations as stipulated in the attendance guidelines;
4. Communication with and directions for families, employees, and service providers;
5. Services that will remain operational, yet modified (e.g., food services, school office hours and services, instructional delivery);
6. Services and programs that may be paused and the rationale for the pause; and
7. Projected reopening date.

Plans must be discussed with and approved by the Complex Area Superintendent. Closures exceeding one day should include approval from the Superintendent or Deputy Superintendent.

Once approved, parents should be notified about the classroom closure, the reasons for the closure, the expected length of the closure, how to access learning, and how they will receive future communications. Parents should be instructed on how to pick up their child(ren) from school during the day of the closure. Students must be supervised by an adult until they can be reunited with their parent or guardian.

For schools in which students have multiple teachers during a school day (e.g., high school), schools should, to the extent possible, have an alternate location or learning hub with an adult supervisor for students to report to during the period in which there is no teacher for their class.

Schools are responsible for meeting the needs of all students, including the needs of students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, and English language learners, regardless of the mode of instruction.

In the event of statewide disruption:

The Superintendent will communicate any adjustments needed to the school models or school schedules. In cases of emergency, the HIDOE, in collaboration with and under the guidance of DOH, will direct immediate actions to be taken to ensure the health and safety of students and employees. In all other scenarios, shifts in the educational programs statewide will be announced

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at least three weeks prior to implementation to give schools and the community time to adjust to the changes.

Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do to support our students, staff, families, and communities during this challenging time.

KTH:pu
c: Deputy Superintendent
Assistant Superintendents