School Reentry Considerations

**Distance Learning for Physical Education and Health Education**

**Depending on the local circumstances surrounding COVID-19, schools may need to provide distance or remote learning for students.**

Even when students are learning at home, health and physical educators should provide students with guidance and activities to help them meet the [national recommendation](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/guidelines.htm) of 60 minutes or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily for children and adolescents ages 6-17.

School districts and schools must create equitable distance learning opportunities for all students, including those students without access to the internet, mobile devices, or other equipment. Health and physical educators should follow guidelines from their district or school regarding distance learning when creating curricular units, assessments, and learning activities.

This section includes general considerations and strategies for distance learning for physical education and health education. Teachers should also use the suggestions provided in the Teaching Strategies for School Reentry section (Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility; SEL; Trauma-Sensitive Learning Environment; Conducting an At-Home Student Survey; and Student Assessment) to determine what content and skills to focus on. Teachers should continue to provide an array of learning activities for students to complete at home that provide opportunities to work toward the National Health Education Standards and all National Standards for K-12 Physical Education.

The specific considerations below are important to think about when operating under a distance learning model for physical education and health education:

**Develop connections**

* Teachers must make more of a concerted effort to connect when in a distance learning environment. Students need to feel like part of their school community and that they are cared for in order to learn. Develop strategies to connect with students if your school/district will not be facilitating online learning or if students will not be able to meet online due to limited accessibility at home (e.g., create assignments focused on getting to know each other, facilitate pen pals).
* Create many opportunities for students to share and connect with one another.

**Assess your curriculum**

* Do an inventory of your current curriculum and determine which lessons or activities can be repurposed as at-home work or for online use (depending on students’ access to technology). There may be lessons or activities within your current curriculum that can easily be adapted for students to complete at home or online.
* Consider if your students can participate safely in the selected activities. (Will students have enough space? Will an adult need to help or supervise the activity?)

**Communicate expectations**

* Be sure to explain class expectations to parents/guardians and students and convey the relevance/importance of what students will be learning. Explain where they can find materials, how they will submit their work, and what to do if there is a problem (e.g., internet goes down, they can’t find an assignment).
* Make sure expectations are realistic for students, especially for younger students if they require assistance from an adult to complete assignments. Consider the home dynamics of your students as referenced earlier in the section on Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility.
* Re-communicating to students and parents is important. Don’t just explain it one time. Explain it each week.
* Reach out to those who aren’t engaging and figure out what their individual situation is so you can determine a solution together.
* Be patient and understanding. Not all students are in the same situation and you don’t know what could be going on at home.
* Be flexible. Understand that there are many factors that contribute to successful distance learning and some of those factors may be out of your control. Educators may need to make modifications or change the direction of a lesson/activity to make it work. Remember to be flexible with students and yourself as well.

**Create consistency**

* Think about your regular daily classroom routines and procedures. How can you translate them into an online environment? This will help students feel a sense of familiarity while reinforcing the sense of community for the class. Teachers might ask students to participate in a group moment of pause or reflection activity.
* Can special events or activities still be done remotely (e.g., [At-Home Family Field Day](https://www.shapeamerica.org/uploads/healthmovesminds/resources/hmm-at-home/HMM-At-Home_%20Family-Field-Day.pdf))?
* Consider using videos or pictures of yourself teaching so students can hear your voice and see your face.

**Make content accessible for all learners**

* Think about your students and what individual needs they may have. Often, modifications to address a specific need for one student can be used to enhance learning for all students. Will you need to provide video captioning, transcripts, or graphic organizers for students?
* Choice is important. Allow students to have a choice with each lesson that will meet them at their own skill level.
* Provide content using a variety of methods to ensure all students can access it.
* Connect with special education specialists or ELL teachers for support.
* Consider whether you can use [Universal Design for Learning](http://udlguidelines.cast.org/) with your students.

View the [School Reentry Considerations: K-12 Physical Education Distance Learning Supplement](https://www.shapeamerica.org/advocacy/Reentry/appendix_k-12-physical-education-distance-learning-supplement.aspx) for examples of National Standards & Grade-Level Outcomes that physical educators should prioritize with distance learning. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but to provide some specific examples that hopefully serve as a catalyst for educators to generate additional ideas.

Some of the activities included in the [School Reentry Considerations: K-12 Physical Education In-School Instruction With Physical Distancing Supplement](https://www.shapeamerica.org/advocacy/Reentry/appendix_k-12-physical-education-in-school-instruction-with-physical-distancing-supplement.aspx) may also be appropriate to use in a distance learning environment. For additional activity ideas and best practices view the [Guidelines for K-12 Online Physical Education](https://www.shapeamerica.org/uploads/pdfs/2020/guidelines/Online-PE-Guidance-Document.pdf).

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The recommendations and strategies provided herein are obtained based on guidance for schools provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and national recommendations for physical education, health education, recess, and classroom-based physical activity. The COVID-19 outbreak is an ongoing, rapidly developing situation. Educators are encouraged to monitor publicly available information and to always follow federal, state and local health organization guidance and government mandates. This information may vary and will be updated as necessary.