

### THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR WILL BE A UNIQUE SCHOOL YEAR.

COVID-19 impacts the priorities and activities of school nurses. Activities should not be performed in the fall simply because traditionally they have occurred in the fall. This is true for schools reopening for in-person as well as virtual learning.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGES TO SCHOOL NURSING PRACTICE THAT MAY BE UNIQUE TO SCHOOLS REOPENING POST COVID-19 CLOSURE.

- ▶ Work with school administrators to identify policies and processes that address student health (see NASN's [guidelines for school reopenings](#) for specific information). This includes:
  - Current best practices as outlined by evidence-based sources, including state guidelines and regulations. For example, not doing universal screening of students or staff entering school building, but helping parents/guardians assess students before sending them to school.
  - Infection control measures, including physical distancing, ventilation, cleaning, and appropriate PPE.
  - Identifying a process to respond when students or staff exhibit symptoms of COVID-19. This includes identifying an appropriate isolation area, cleaning process, school policy on exclusion, etc.
  - Regular communication with local/state health departments to ensure compliance with most current school-based guidance, including how to respond to newly identified positive cases.
  - Tracking absences and/or student engagement. Although COVID-19 will impact attendance rates, it is still important to monitor [chronic absenteeism as an evidence-based approach for identifying students at risk](#).
- ▶ Stay current on emerging evidence, particularly regarding COVID-19 and youth.
- ▶ Proactively educate school staff, students, and community regarding COVID-19 (especially as new evidence is learned). Clarify misinformation and myths regarding COVID-19.

- ▶ Provide opportunities for students and staff to be up-to-date with recommended immunizations, including the annual influenza flu vaccination.
- ▶ Be vigilant of students who have chronic health conditions, such as asthma or other respiratory conditions that may mask symptoms of COVID-19. Provide additional training and planning for meeting individual student needs.
- ▶ Proactively identify students whose families may be at risk due to socio-economic changes and provide information on local resources. This includes access to food, safe housing, transportation, access to health insurance and medical needs. This may also include providing tools and resources to address increased levels of stress/anxiety and possibility of domestic violence and/or abuse.
- ▶ Identify data points unique for the school year that is important for school nurses to collect.

### FOR SCHOOL NURSES WHOSE STUDENT POPULATION IS LEARNING VIRTUALLY, ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES MAY INCLUDE:

- ▶ Find ways to engage with students virtually or in-person by doing home (front yard/porch) visits. Use assessment skills to identify needs (food insecurity, increased stress) or at-risk behaviors (substance abuse). In-person visits can only occur if the neighborhood and home is determined to be safe for the visit. A team approach by partnering with a school social worker or school counselor is also an option.
- ▶ Help to coordinate meal &/or resource delivery. Use the opportunity to check up on students and families who may be at risk.
- ▶ Contact parents/guardians of students with chronic health conditions to assess for the need for nursing services.
- ▶ Provide virtual COVID-19 trainings for staff. Topics to include:
  - How to prepare for when students return to school.
    - ▶ Hygiene basics – handwashing, face coverings, when to stay home from school
  - Student health and wellness basics (e.g., chronic health conditions [asthma, diabetes, seizures, sickle cell]; healthy eating; exercise)

- ▶ Provide virtual support for mental health:
  - In collaboration with school mental health staff, provide staff trainings on how to manage stress and/or anxiety.
  - Provide virtual support groups (e.g., grandparents raising grandchildren, students at risk for various issues, bereavement)
- ▶ Provide virtual office hours for students, families, and school staff.
- ▶ Conduct virtual IHP, 504 & IEP meetings.
- ▶ Review and update district pandemic plans, health office protocols, and school health policies.
- ▶ Support compliance with required and recommended immunizations.
  - Arrange drive through immunization clinics
  - Proactively contact parents to remind them about needed immunizations - or well-check-ups.
- ▶ Ensure adequate PPE and other recommended equipment will be in place once schools reopen.
  - Plan for storage of student face coverings during lunch and outdoor activities
  - Determine if medical PPE can be reused or cleaned at school
- ▶ Consider taking a contact tracing training course.

*Special thanks to Linda Neumann and school nursing colleagues for suggestions of school nursing activities.*