RETURN TO SCHOOL – HEALTH AND SAFETY PRACTICES

As school districts across the state engage in planning around a return to school this Fall, there are a number of health and safety issues that must be addressed. As always, we encourage local associations to work collaboratively with administrators and local school district leadership to arrive at agreements and plans that provide procedures and policies for addressing the range of health and safety concerns that will arise with a return to in-person instruction given the COVID-19 outbreak. The MEA provides the guidance in this document to help local associations determine what is needed and to thoroughly prepare now for a safe return to in-person instruction. In addition, you will find an Addendum with important considerations around student engagement and effective remote instruction.

At this point in time, the guidance on the following pages reflects what is currently known about the spread, best safety and health protocols to reduce the spread, and the impacts on individual health of COVID-19. This guidance is subject to additions or revisions as new information becomes available from science and medical experts on COVID-19.

In-person instruction may resume (in whole or in part) after the Maine DOE, in partnership with CDC and MEMA, has determined it is safe based on markers per the Maine Reopening Plan and after the district has met the CDC’s school capacity and readiness markers.

All new policies, protocols, and requirements must be reached collaboratively through the appropriate statutory processes and shall be clearly described in language that can be easily understood, and must be distributed to staff, families, and students in advance of their applicable dates.

The level of precautions may vary based upon the prevalence of COVID-19 cases in your general area and the level of community spread. If there is no community spread, less vigorous precautions may be implemented, however, districts must still prepare for COVID-19 in their community and vigilantly monitor for changes. Because of the incubation period of COVID-19 and the ability of it to spread through presymptomatic and asymptomatic cases, even districts with no community spread should consider implementing as many precautions as possible to protect the health of the community and limit potential school closures.

In all instances if there is a confirmed case in a school building, the risk needs to be assessed. To do this the building must be dismissed for 2 to 5 days to clean and disinfect the building (waiting at least 24 hours to begin cleaning and disinfecting) and contact trace, in consultation with local health officials, to determine necessary isolation before reopening the building can occur.

If there is minimal to moderate community spread in your area, the following recommendations must be implemented to minimize the risk to the community. Ways to accommodate children, families and staff at high risk must also be undertaken. If there is substantial community spread, schools should be closed until the substantial spread subsides and remote learning implemented.

One of the first steps is for a local Collaborative Planning Teams (CPTs) to be established. The CPT and/or local Associations must engage the school district before a return to in-person school with students to address the topic areas in this guidance.

Collaborative Planning Teams (CPTs)

- Local CPTs are established using the process outlined by the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center. [Click here for the process.](#)
• Local Associations should have designated representatives on the CPTs chosen by the local Association

NOTE - Items related to wages, hours and working conditions, including health and safety topics are mandatory subjects of bargaining and will need to be addressed formally in negotiations (MOUs and/or in regular contract negotiations).

Cleaning

• Utilize the CDC and EPA “Cleaning and Disinfection Decision Tool” to help guide plans for cleaning and disinfecting in school buildings.
• Establish a schedule for all areas of the school building to be cleaned and disinfected - classrooms, offices, common areas, bathrooms, handrails, doorknobs, light switches, elevators, vending machines, etc. (See section on Transportation for school bus specific points)
  o High traffic areas/common areas should be cleaned more frequently.
  o If students are switching classrooms, cleaning and disinfecting should be done using the EPA cleaning guidance and CDC cleaning and disinfecting steps.
    ▪ All door handles
    ▪ All light switches (consider signage to keep lights on at all times, or utilizing exiting motion sensor capabilities)
    ▪ Computer keyboards, mouses and touch screens
    ▪ Any other surface or item likely to be touched by instructors or students
    ▪ Chairs, tables, and benches
    ▪ Refrigerators, microwave, and other frequently touched objects and surfaces
    ▪ Time clocks
    ▪ Entry way
    ▪ Cash register, including touch screens, keyboards, mouse (in cafeteria if using)
    ▪ Restrooms
      • Toilet bowl, toilet paper holder, and flush lever
      • Sinks and faucets
      • Paper towel holders and/or air dryers
• Equip each classroom with cleaning “kits” including disinfectant wipes or sprays, disposable gloves, paper towels, cloth face coverings, hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies that are readily accessible throughout the classroom for areas that will be cleaned periodically throughout the day.
• Staff conducting cleaning and/or disinfecting must be provided gloves and gowns, and any other appropriate PPE
• Make sure there is adequate ventilation when using cleaners; some cleaning agents should not be used around children

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Stagger arrival

  o Communicate arrival procedure to parents and students prior to the first day of school.
o First day of school significantly staggered arrival (more than what will be the regular schedule) to allow student to fully understand and experience arrival process and established traffic patterns inside of the school building. Staff should be fully trained and all staff should be prepared to assist in the arrival of students.

o Parents not allowed into the school building during student arrival unless arranged in advance due to a unique situation.

**Drop off**

o Designated drop off zone to allow for one car at a time with student(s) exiting and entering the building maintaining 6 feet in distance. This spacing should be clearly marked with staff present to enforce.

o Designate specific parent drop off timeframe to avoid conflicting with the school bus drop off schedule in order to allow for social distancing.

o Consider having multiple drop off locations

o See Health Screening procedure – designate several staff members to ensure health screening procedure has been followed

**School Entry**

o Students enter the school and follow the designated foot traffic flow to directly to their classroom.

o Another option if viable is to have student enter classrooms through outside doors that lead directly into classrooms to avoid congestion in hallways.

o Do not use locker or hooks that are located in the hallway

o Serve breakfast in classrooms

**Departure Procedures**

- Stagger dismissal to minimize the number of students in hallways, etc. at the same time.
- Establish a distinct timeframe for student pick up/ students who drive themselves to be dismissed as to not conflict with the bus schedule.
- Utilize the reverse exit traffic flow to exit as the arrival flow with students remaining in their assigned classrooms and exiting through outside classroom doors if possible.
- Dismiss one bus at a time and wait until that bus is fully loaded to dismiss the next bus.
- Utilize staff to be sure social distancing is being practiced

**Health Screenings**

- A process for health screenings should be established using current information and guidance available from the CDC, Maine DOE, Maine CDC, etc. The screenings process/steps should be updated to reflect any changes in recommendations from health experts regarding best screening practices, etc.

- The precise steps to take for health screenings may be impacted by the level of the spread of COVID-19 in any community and corresponding mitigation strategies. For more information see the CDC’s Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission.
AT A MINIMUM, the following steps should be followed:

- Health screenings/checks should be completed by every individual entering a school district building:
  - Students and staff – before leaving home each day, health screening/check questions should be completed; responses to the questions should be submitted/confirmed completed prior to entry into the building or boarding a bus
  - Parents, delivery personnel, outside services, contractors, other visitors, etc. – should complete the health screening/checks prior to every entry to the building or at the entry area of the building
- Parents/Guardians/Caregivers should be instructed to screen students before leaving home.
- Health screenings should include the questions based on symptoms known by the CDC. These questions are from the Maine DECD General Checklist Guidance:
  - Have you had a cough or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever, or do you feel feverish?
  - Do you have shortness of breath?
  - Do you have a loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you been around anyone exhibiting these symptoms within the past 14 days?
  - Are you living with anyone who is sick or quarantined?
  - Have you been out of state in the last 14 days?
- Considerations related to temperature screenings:
  - Persons who have a fever of 100.4°F (38.0°C) or above or other signs of illness should stay home or be sent home.
  - Temperature screenings needed at school should be conducted by a school nurse or trained individual and done so in a manner that ensures student and staff privacy. For more considerations related to general safety guidelines for those administering and receiving temperature screenings click here for adults and here for children.

NOTE: The questions should be available in multiple languages, as necessary, and developmentally appropriate levels for younger students.

School districts should track the completion of health screenings. The use of “contactless” options such as an app or form available online that individuals can access via a personal electronic device, phone, etc. are strongly encouraged; however, to ensure access for all, forms for such should be available in both paper and electronic/digital forms.
  - Either process should be done in a manner that minimizes multiple people handling forms, pens, etc. and/or any electronic device used to submit responses.
  - Individuals should wash hands or use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) prior to handling any paper, pens, electronic devices, etc.
  - Any surfaces or equipment used should be sanitized after each use following CDC guidelines.

- Health checks should be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. CPTs should use examples of screening methods in
CDC’s supplemental Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open as a guide for screening children and CDC’s General Business FAQs for screening staff.

Hygiene

- All students, staff and visitors to any school buildings should wear cloth face coverings. See the CDC guidelines on cloth face coverings in schools.
  - Exceptions to requirements to wear cloth face coverings include:
    - Children younger than 2 years old
    - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
    - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
- Communicate with students, staff, families regarding the requirement to wear cloth face coverings.
- Plan to incorporate increased opportunities for handwashing by students, staff and visitors – upon arrival, throughout the school day, etc.
  - Consider whether increased handwashing stations are needed and where they should be placed based on needs and existing bathrooms, etc.
- Practice good hand hygiene
  - Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence by students, staff and visitors.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
  - Additional key times to wash hands include:
    - After blowing one’s nose, coughing, or sneezing.
    - After using the restroom.
    - Before eating or preparing food.
    - After contact with animals or pets.
    - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child).
    - After handling a shared object (pens/pencils, books, etc.)
- Provide hand sanitizer in all classrooms, offices, common areas, etc.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette
  - Encourage staff and student to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into their upper arm
  - Used tissues should be thrown out and hands washed with soap and water, or use sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Place posters with graphics that show and explain good hygiene practices throughout the school building. A variety of posters from the CDC can be found here.
- Consider creating videos to educate and reinforce the above best practices

Quarantine and School Closure Policies

School Closure procedure when positive case is identified in school building
• Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms. School nurses and other healthcare providers should use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people. See: What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection

• Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick home or to a healthcare facility.

• Notify health officials, staff, and families immediately of a positive case while maintaining confidentiality and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.

• Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection.

• Advise sick staff members and children not to return until they have met CDC criteria found here.

• Inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and to follow CDC guidance, here, if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate CDC guidance for home isolation, here.

School Dismissal and Disinfecting

• Dismiss students and most staff for 2-5 days to allow time for local health officials to help the school determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

• During school dismissals, also cancel extracurricular group activities, school-based afterschool programs, and large events (e.g., assemblies, spirit nights, field trips, and sporting events).

• Discourage staff, students, and their families from gathering or socializing anywhere. This includes group child care arrangements, as well as gathering at places like a friend’s house, a favorite restaurant, or the local shopping mall.

• Communicate with staff, parents, and students.
  • Communication to the school community should align with the communication plan in the school’s emergency operations plan.
  • Plan to include messages to counter potential stigma and discrimination.
  • In such a circumstance, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

• Clean and disinfect thoroughly according to CDC guidelines. Close off areas used by the individuals with COVID-19 and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets.

Quarantine

• Require any staff member or student (and siblings of students) who has been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, to self-quarantine for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

• Require any staff member or student (and siblings of students) who test positive, exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or is awaiting test results, to remain in isolation and follow CDC guidelines.
Mealtimes

Students

• Moving all dining spaces to the classroom setting
• Provide and deliver plated meals for students to their classroom environment
• Instruct student that they are not to share food, utensils, water bottles, etc.
• Avoiding communal stacks, bins, trays, and utensils that may be accessed by many hands.
• Suspending self-service areas such as salad bars, “grab and go,” etc. (including vending machines)

Food Service Staff

• Food services staff members must be trained in and follow all health and safety protocols and be outfitted with the appropriate PPE.
• Meal delivery may require increasing the number of food service staff
• Trained staff should teach and monitor all sanitation procedures while increasing the frequency of cleaning.
• Maintain all CDC standards for food service, masks/face shields, distance, hygiene
• Face shields that are open at the bottom, directing breath downward, are not acceptable replacements for face coverings for food service.
• Keep the same consistent food services personnel at each school site to reduce the risk of exposure
• Improve ventilation by running exhaust fans more than normal in the kitchen.
• Consider how meals will be offered to students not in attendance or half days.
• Establish contactless payment options/processes

Transportation

• Students should be screened prior to entering the bus either through a temperature check and CDC recommended screening questions administered by a trained bus monitor outside the bus at each stop or by parents who email the results to the school before leaving the house
• The number of students picked up from each bus stop should be limited to avoid congregating and six feet of separation between students and parents shall be maintained
• Cloth face coverings must be provided and used that cover the nose and mouth
  o For those unable to wear coverings, shields or other appropriate coverings should be provided
• Hand sanitizer must be available and used upon entry and exit from the bus
• Seating shall be one person per row, alternating in each row between left and right
• Windows should be down to the extent practicable. Avoid using the recirculated air option for ventilation. Use the vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.
• The aisle must be taped or more permanently marked to indicate six feet of separation for entering and disembarking the bus. The first student picked up will go to the last row of the bus and each new pickup will sit one row closer to the driver. Upon disembarking, students will
leave in reverse order of pickup with the front seats disembarking first while maintaining six feet of distance.

- Before a school bus loads the next group of students and/or changes drivers it shall be cleaned and disinfected using the CDC/EPA cleaning guidance. This includes:
  - All handles;
  - All driver and dashboard controls (e.g., switches, dials, buttons)
  - Keys;
  - Steering wheel and adjustment levers;
  - Gear shift lever;
  - Parking brake lever/button;
  - Safety belts, including latching mechanisms;
  - Seats;
  - Windows;
  - The interior of the bus;
  - Floors;
  - Any other surfaces likely to be touched by the driver or students.

- A plexiglass partition shall be installed around the driver’s area.

Classroom Space/Physical Distancing

Enter and exit, including lunch and bathroom breaks:

- Reduce congregation upon entrance and exit by marking 6 feet of separation outside classroom entrances and marking six feet of separation and one-way traffic flow throughout the classroom
  - Limit materials brought from home, but if coats and other materials are stored in the classroom, stagger access to such space to maintain 6 feet of separation
- Lunch is brought to the classroom and eaten at students’ own desks
- Bathroom breaks should be staggered, and bathrooms should limit capacity and space outside and inside the bathroom should be marked to maintain 6 feet of separation.
- Water fountains should be turned off and alternative arrangements made for hydration

Classroom setup:

- Always maintain physical distancing of 6 feet, including student seating
- Remove all furniture and miscellaneous items such as books, toys and educational tools that are not necessary and/or cannot be easily cleaned.
- Air flow should be tested to determine the time needed for total room air turnover and air circulation should be adjusted to maintain appropriate turnover for the number of people in the classroom
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
Instruction:

- Modify classroom exercises to ensure physical distancing among students
- No singing or other activities should be done that increase particle projection
- As much as possible, limit student mixing and movement between classrooms, keep cohorts of students together, and strictly limit contact with all people outside the cohort
- Determine how students will access the library to minimize contact and maximize social distancing

Prevention and Sanitizing:

- Cloth face coverings must be provided and used that cover the nose and mouth
  
  - For those unable to wear coverings, shields or other appropriate coverings should be provided
- Hand sanitizer must be available and used upon entry and exit from the room
- Hand washing should be available and used during the day, including after bathroom breaks, before and after recess on shared equipment and before lunch
- Prior to and after each class, clean and disinfect using the CDC/EPA cleaning guidance:
  
  - All door handles
  - All desks, tables and countertops
  - All light switches
  - Computer keyboards, mouses and touch screens
  - Any other surface likely to be touched by instructors or students

Monitoring:

- Accurate attendance must be maintained for who comes into the classroom throughout the day
- Screen visually for symptoms throughout the day and remind and encourage staff and students who become ill to immediately self-report and isolate any staff and students who are ill until they can leave the building

Recreation

Physical Education Classes

- Explore ways to be active while maintaining social distancing (no activities that require contact or props such as balls, Frisbees, etc.)
- Utilize the outside as much as possible, weather permitting
- Reduce class size as necessary to maintain social distancing

Recess

- Determine if and how play structures would be used with corresponding cleaning and disinfecting.
• Utilize staggered recess times as much as possible including limiting each recess period to only one class to reduce interaction between different classes
• Require or provide water bottles for students to eliminate the need to use water fountains

Athletics and Extra Curricular Activities

• Determine which events must be cancelled to ensure appropriate social distancing (including field trips, assemblies and other large gatherings)
• When considering whether to hold events give special consideration to events that might put students, staff, or their families in close proximity to others from communities that may have identified cases of COVID-19
• If events are cancelled work with coaches and mentors to find creative ways of engaging with athletes

If events are held:

• **Engage in social distancing while not actively engaged in play (e.g., during practice, on the sideline, or in the dugout).** During times when players are not actively participating in practice or competition, attention should be given to maintaining social distancing by increasing space between players on the sideline, dugout, or bench. Additionally, coaches can encourage athletes to use downtime for individual skill-building work or cardiovascular conditioning, rather than staying clustered together.
• Consider staging within-team scrimmages instead of playing games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.
• Make sure there are adequate supplies of typically shared items to eliminate the sharing of equipment to the extent possible (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, water bottles); otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
• Keep each player’s belongings separated from others’ and in individually labeled containers, bags, or areas.
• If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils. Offer hand sanitizer or encourage hand washing.
• Identify adult staff members or volunteers to help maintain social distancing among youth, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators (if state and local directives allow for spectators).
• Space players at least 6 feet apart on the field while participating in the sport (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills)
• Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
• Prioritize outdoor, as opposed to indoor, practice and play as much as possible.
• Create distance between players when explaining drills or the rules of the game.
• If keeping physical distance is difficult with players in competition or group practice, consider relying on individual skill work and drills.
• Encourage players to wait in their cars with guardians until just before the beginning of a practice, warm-up, or game, instead of forming a group.
• Limit the use of carpools or van pools. When riding in an automobile to a sports event, encourage players to ride to the sports event with persons living in their same household.
• If practices or competition facilities must be shared, consider increasing the amount of time between practices and competitions to allow for one group to leave before another group enters the facility. If possible, allow time for cleaning and/or disinfecting.
• Close shared spaces such as locker rooms, if possible; otherwise, stagger use and clean and disinfect between use.
• Make sure that coaches, staff, officials, players, and families know that sick individuals should not attend the sports activity, and that they should notify school officials (e.g., the COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Establish a plan to notify participants who may have come into contact with the sick individual.

**Group Size/Staffing**

**Maximum capacity:**

• Classrooms and other spaces shall have a maximum capacity of the lesser of:
  o the maximum number under current order or guidance; or
  o the number who can be in the space while adhering to social distancing requirements, such as maintaining six feet between desks and people

**Staffing:**

• Students will remain in stable homerooms, with subject-matter teachers moving between classes, as necessary.
• Educational Technicians will be available to provide classroom supervision so teachers can take breaks, as necessary, and a duty-free lunch and have planning time.
• Bathroom monitors will be employed throughout the buildings to clean and sanitize throughout the day.
• Cleaners will be employed who will clean and disinfect all door handles, all desks, tables and countertops, all light switches, all computer keyboards, mouses and touch screens, playground equipment and any other surface likely to be touched by students, staff and visitors regularly throughout the day in common areas and in classrooms or playgrounds before a new class enters the space.
• Staff who can perform their duties remotely shall do so.
• Only people essential to operating the school shall have access to the buildings.

**ADDENDUM – STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVE REMOTE INSTRUCTION GUIDANCE**

The Maine Department of Education has put out some general guidelines on their website for distance learning that will be helpful when your district or school begins to plan for the possibility of remote learning in the fall ([see Part IV](#)). MEA would like to offer some more specific suggestions and resources that you can use in your collaborative planning teams (CPTs) as you make those plans. If circumstances prevent your CPT from creating a plan, you can fall back on these guidelines as needed. Some of these suggestions are grade level specific, while most apply to all levels of instruction.
This guidance will focus on supporting student engagement rather than identifying specific resources, learning platforms, grading practices, or content for remote learning as those have been covered in prior guidance from the MEA and MDOE. Please refer to the MDOE’s Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources for Schools page for details and future updates.

SUPPORTING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DURING REMOTE LEARNING

According to an MEA survey, Maine teachers experienced widely varying levels of student engagement during the three months they were required to teach remotely this school year. The variations were directly related to the amount of training teachers received, available parental support, the availability of resources to support remote instruction, and access to and ability to use those resources. Student engagement will continue to be an issue in the fall.

The following recommendations developed by the Illinois State Board of Education and may help teachers facilitate improved student engagement while giving you some reasonable parameters for online contact with students.

Things to think about when planning remote learning:

- At-home support for students may not be consistent or in some cases may be non-existent. Provide instructions that students can understand independently as much as possible. Offer office hours where students can ask you clarifying questions about assigned work.
- Use headings, bullet points, appropriate fonts, and other text features to make the work easy to follow.
- Ask yourself the following:
  o How will a student know where to start?
  o How will a student now what to do next?
  o How will a student know when the work is complete?
  o How will you know the student completed the activity or assignment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Recommended Length of Sustained Attention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-K</td>
<td>20 minutes/day</td>
<td>60 minutes/day</td>
<td>3-5 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>30 minutes/day</td>
<td>90 minutes/day</td>
<td>3-5 minutes</td>
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<td>1-2</td>
<td>45 minutes/day</td>
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<td>120 minutes/day</td>
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<td>Class: 30 minutes/day Total: 180 minutes/day</td>
<td>1 subject area or class</td>
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<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Class: 20 minutes/day Total: 120 minutes/day</td>
<td>Class: 45 minutes/day Total: 270 minutes/day</td>
<td>1 subject area or class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These are just guidelines, but many Maine educators agree that there are no grade levels at which students should be expected to be engaged in remote learning for the length of entire normal student day as it is overwhelming for the student and difficult for the instructor to maintain.
Principles of Effective Online Instruction

Maine teachers have developed many effective approaches to remote learning during the past three months and we are sure those are being highlighted in the work the Maine Department of Education is doing to support teachers during the current pandemic. Still, we believe it would be useful to provide a summary of principles to guide instruction. Staff at Hanover Research published a report in 2015 that outlines best practice approaches to implementation of online courses. They offered some principles of effective online instruction. While the document addresses college level work, much of the information is pertinent to all levels of instruction. Below is a summary:

- Actively engage in online instruction
  - An instructor’s role as a guide, facilitator, and teacher is arguably more important in an online course due to the lack of any face-to-face interactions.
  - Instructors should pay attention to students’ course program, communicate course expectations, and manage students’ learning experience.

- Practice proactive course management strategies
  - The level of course management should be adapted based on the instructor, the size of the class, the students, and the demands of the course. It is often challenging for instructors to find the appropriate level of course management that works within their online classroom and works for their own time management.

- Establish patterns of course activities
  - The establishment of patterns and routines during an online course can help instructors and students develop a sense of time management to balance the expectations of the online course with their non-course, life activities.
  - A pattern of activities and timed expectations may assist students in their ability to keep pace with the class requirements.

- Prepare for potential course interruptions
  - Communicate any unexpected changes to students in order to reduce the level of stress and anxiety associated with changes to the pre-established course pattern.

- Respond to student inquiries in a timely manner
  - The research related to online student satisfaction levels cite instructor connectedness as the most rewarding or frustrating aspect of an online course experience.

It is clear that the development of online or remote learning courses is not as simple as transferring your current curriculum to a digital environment and that teaching and learning remotely differ substantially from the in-person experience. Knowing that, teachers should not expect perfection from themselves or their students while engaged in remote learning. Even so, the work that has been done so far goes far beyond what could have been expected and Maine educators should be proud of their accomplishments under these conditions. We all look forward to the day Maine teachers and students are back in their classrooms permanently. We hope these resources provide some support for the work you must do to support your students.