

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

# Working with Schools

Below are shared core principles that local health departments (LHDs) in Nebraska consider when making recommendations and advising our local schools about how to safely reopen and stay open during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **LHDs statewide are monitoring and evaluating public health data related to COVID-19 in our local jurisdictions daily.**
- **LHDs want Nebraska schools to open and stay open.** We recognize the unique nature of schools and the education system's role in the economic and mental wellbeing of children and adults.
- **LHDs work closely with our local schools and ESUs to develop reasonable plans for social distancing and masking in school facilities to reduce the spread of COVID-19.** These plans need to be locally-responsive and aim to create school environments that will minimize the impact on the school community and the student learning experience when students or staff test positive for COVID-19. **Key recommendations that these plans will include** when community spread is occurring include:
  - All staff and students wear cloth face coverings over their nose and mouth whenever possible.
  - General physical distancing of 6 feet between individuals whenever possible.
  - Frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing.
- **When a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed in a school, that individual will be excluded and allowed to return based upon current guidance from CDC at the time. LHDs will work with schools to consider the following questions when determining how that case will impact others in their classroom and/or school building.**
  - What is the level of community spread outside the school building?
  - Was the individual with COVID-19 wearing a mask most of the time?
  - Were other students and staff who were within 6 feet of the individual with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes masked?
  - Was the individual with COVID-19 part of a cohort within the building or did they interact with a large number of students and staff throughout their day?
  - To what extent is the school community implementing other non-pharmaceutical interventions (hand washing, hand sanitizers, etc.)?
- The answers to these questions will determine 1) the number of close contacts, 2) if the close contacts who are not symptomatic may stay in the classroom, and 3) the number of other students and staff who will need to be quarantined.