



Classroom Risk Management In the COVID-19 World

Communities continue to weigh how and when to safely reopen school buildings in response to COVID-19. For school divisions planning to reopen, teachers and students will be entering a new environment. Virginia Risk Sharing Association offers the following risk management recommendations to address concerns and challenges of teaching in this new environment and reducing disruptions to allow more time for education.

- 1) Communicate physical distancing boundaries with tape on the floor, signs on walls and placement of desks.
- 2) Store cleaning supplies properly and out of reach of children. All staff required to use cleaning supplies must be trained and use appropriate personal protective equipment.
- 3) Eating lunch in the classroom will be a new experience for many teachers and students. The addition of drink and food will increase the potential for hazards. School divisions may look to increase the size of trash cans with scheduled removal of trash throughout the day.
- 4) With increased usage of electronics, outlets become a necessity. Place power strips outside of walking areas, cover if possible and follow manufacturer recommendations for use.
- 5) For school divisions limiting or eliminating the use of lockers, storage may be a challenge to keep belongings separated. Consider providing additional individual hooks for backpacks and garments.
- 6) Shared materials may be limited to those that are easy to clean and disinfect between use. Adequate supplies should be considered when developing lesson plans.
- 7) Remove or greatly limit the use of rugs and carpets and personal furnishings in classrooms. Porous materials are harder to keep sanitized. Removal of rugs and carpets may create additional slip/trip/fall hazards by exposing cords and reducing traction.
- 8) Clean and disinfect upholstered chairs. Remove chairs with damaged upholstery.
- 9) Plexiglass may be used around each desk to provide additional physical barriers. Inform teachers of procedures in the event a physical barrier is damaged or becomes a hazard.
- 10) Teachers may find masks, shields or physical barriers restrict their ability to assist and communicate with students. Designate a place in the classroom where students can receive the needed assistance while maintaining physical distancing guidance.