



COVID-19 Considerations for Reopening Schools

August 10, 2020

Library Media Center

Providing school library services and materials to students and staff in the safest manner possible during the reopening of campuses is a top priority of Kentucky library media centers and school leaders. Library media specialists will consult with district and school administrators on implementing library guidelines in accordance with their local plans. Continuing the operation of the school library safely is important for your students' educational experience.

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Library Staff

Prior to opening, library staff can prepare the space to ensure safe operation of the school library by doing the following:

- Designate traffic patterns to help minimize contact to surfaces
 - Place entrance and exit signs on specific doors.
 - Utilize carpet-safe adhesives to mark spaces so students know where to stand while waiting to check out/in materials.
 - If read-aloud areas are to be used, mark seating area for social distancing.
- Furniture that cannot easily be sanitized should be removed or covered to limit routine use.
- Students should bring their own supplies to use in the library if possible. Use of shared materials (makerspace, games, puzzles, etc.) should be limited if not able to be sanitized between uses.
- Consider where occupancy limitations may be needed to ensure social distancing. Communicate any changes to staff and students as early as possible.
- Consider creating an online space for staff to view library areas for use, and possibly reserve available times. This can help maintain occupancy limitations, make the library schedule widely known, and provide a log of classes and students in the library if needed.



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- Work with technology and curriculum teams to provide professional learning for staff on the use of digital tools, including instructional strategies, data privacy, cyber security, and ethical practice.
- Work to leverage funds for student use of the Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL), with access to 217,000+ eBooks, 1,600 full text magazines and journals, encyclopedias, 55,000 primary source documents, ACT prep, etc.
- Promote and facilitate the use of online resources, such as eBooks, audiobooks, research databases and instructional tools.

Social Distancing and Sanitation in the Library Media Center

High-touch surfaces will need to be disinfected frequently. Library media specialists and staff should consult with their school and district administration to determine the frequency, methods and staff to accommodate sanitation needs.

- Maintain libraries to reflect district social distancing guidelines and clean space between student visits. Also:
 - PPE use should apply equally in the library as recommended in KDE reopening guidance.
 - Table seating should have students face one direction and appropriately distanced.
 - Meeting rooms and small group workspaces should be used for storing quarantined and/or delivered items.
 - A hand sanitation (washing or use of sanitizer) routine should be utilized before or upon entry to and exit from the library
 - Tables and circulation desk should be sanitized between class visits. Note this will require extra time between classes.
- Consider appropriate options for selecting materials to check out.
 - Use an online catalog to place holds on materials and have library staff retrieve items and check them out to students and staff.
 - Limit student browsing directly from shelves by having them select options in the online catalog before retrieving items.
 - Create a system where students at home can reserve items to be picked up at school or delivered with school meals.
- If students are selecting books for check out in the physical space, limit contact during process.
 - Have library staff operate computer with students scanning their book choices.
 - Older students can do a self-checkout by scanning the barcode on their ID and on book choices.
 - Provide hand sanitizer near shelves.



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- Develop a system for materials return (e.g., books) that allows for proper sanitation or handling
 - Re-shelving of books is not recommended until they have been sanitized with approved cleaning agents or a minimum of 4-5 days following return based upon recent findings from [REALM: COVID-19 Research Project](#).

Potential Library Services to Support In-Person and Alternative Learning Strategies

Districts likely will use multiple combinations of online, hybrid and in-person learning strategies during the school year. Library media specialists are experts in information, learning, literature and education technology. Their unique role in the school building is vital to providing a system of instructional support for teachers and learning support for students during this challenging time.

The examples below are ideas to help library media specialists collaborate with other school staff to determine how they can help fill the unique needs moving forward:

When Students Are In Person

- Library use
 - Library open but likely with altered capacity
 - Small group or whole-class work
 - Full browsing
 - Online catalog
 - Locating a selection of books on displays and shelves
 - Self-check-in/checkout
 - “To-go” style resource checkout
- In-library lessons
 - In addition to utilizing customary lessons:
 - Digital citizenship
 - Other technology-related content in support of classroom use
- Classroom co-teaching
- Curriculum and instruction support through collaboration (virtual or in person)
- Curated resources and tools
 - On-demand video tutorials
 - eBooks
 - Quality digital resources

When Students Are Remote/Distant

- Teacher virtual support
 - Lessons



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- Reading promotion
 - Digital citizenship
 - Other technology-related content in support of classroom use
- Virtual office hours for staff and students
 - Virtual Co-Teaching
 - Curated resources and tools
 - On-demand video tutorials
 - Curriculum and instruction support through collaboration (virtual)
 - “To-go” style resource checkout

Applicable Guidance in Existing KDE documents

- Modify classes/activities that normally require multiple students to engage in an activity that could cause close social contact, congestion or movement in the school hallways such as choir, gym class, art, music, etc. These do not have to be canceled if distance and sanitation needs are met. (Reference: [Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\), June 2020](#))
- Reduce congestion in common areas (school office, nurse’s office, guidance office, bus loading areas, etc.). (Reference: [Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\), June 2020](#))
- Assist janitorial staff by routinely disinfecting frequently touched items in the classroom/office such as desks, doorknobs, crafting equipment, pencil sharpeners, staplers, markers, white boards and items that students frequently share. Reference: [Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools \(K-12\), June 2020](#))
- Computer Labs: a. Seats should be separated by at least 6 feet with designated seating labeled. b. Seating should be set up away from the entrance to minimize traffic flowing past those seated. c. Computer workstations, desks, materials and seating should be disinfected after each use. (Reference: [COVID-19 Plan for Reopening Secondary Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) Facilities for Completion of Industry Certifications and Lab-Based Dual Credit Coursework, June, 2020](#))

Additional External Resources

[Kentucky Association of School Librarians Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance](#)
[American Association of School Librarians: Pandemic Resources for School Librarians](#)
[Education Forward: Reopening Wisconsin Schools \(Pages 59-64\)](#)
[Frisco \(Texas\) ISD: Campus Library Reopening Guidelines](#)
[Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums \(REALM\) Information Hub: A COVID-19 Research Project](#)

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