

# Activating the Planning for the Next Normal at School Playbook



## Overview

Kaiser Permanente's Thriving School's playbook: ["Planning for the Next Normal at School: Keeping students, staff, and families safe and healthy"](#) aims to equip school and district leaders with specific, evidence-informed guidance and operating procedures for keeping school communities mentally and physically safe as they shape a new approach to learning following the COVID-19 pandemic. Each chapter of the playbook includes five "starter plays" that provide practical strategies and actionable steps improving health in both in-person and virtual school environments.

School nurses are critical members of the school leadership team, bridging both health and education to ensure that students are healthy, safe and ready to learn. To assist school nurses in activating the plays included in the playbook, NASN has created five tip sheets: one for each chapter. These action-oriented tip sheets are focused on actions specific to the school nurse role and are based on the principles of NASN's Framework for 21st Century School Nursing Practice™.

## Suggestions on how to use the Planning for the Next Normal Tip Sheets

- Share the playbook with school staff, leaders, and administrators if they are not aware of it.
- The intent of the School Nurse Tip Sheets is not to imply that you must accomplish all the items listed. Start by highlighting the items that you are already doing. Find opportunities to highlight these activities within the school and larger community.
- Next, using actions that you are engaged in, review the resources listed below to identify additional resources to assist your work.
- Finally, identify actions that you are not currently engaging in, and select those that are indicated, based on your workload, school community, COVID-19 infection rates, etc.

# School Nurse Tip Sheet: Enhancing Mental Health and Well-Being

Evidence shows that children's mental health is being impacted by COVID-19. Responsibility for addressing mental health in the schools can vary. Some school nurses may be highly engaged and take the lead in providing mental health programming and support for the school community. Other school nurses may provide more individualized mental health support to students by performing mental health assessments and referrals for students who are seen in the school nurse's office. School nurses are encouraged to collaborate with other student services team members to evaluate student's mental health concerns in their school community. Below are some additional suggested school nurse action steps:

- Review [Trauma Informed Care](#) Resources and information on [Psychological First Aid](#)
- Complete [continuing education](#) regarding students and mental health, including [Mental Health Training Intervention for Health Providers in Schools \(MH-TIPS\)](#)
- Complete a "[mini mental health](#)" assessment on students who access health services
- Review [NASN Mental Health](#) Resources
- Include information in school communications for parents/guardians, such as newsletters, regarding [child and adolescent mental health, early childhood](#) information and include [resources](#) parents/guardians can access [if they have concerns](#)
- Identify students who are high utilizers of school health/nursing services, through data review such as office visit frequency or referral from teachers/parents/guardians and schedule time to meet one-on-one (in-person or virtually) with these students to evaluate their physical and mental health and refer students with emergent mental health needs to appropriate [resources](#)

## PRACTICE TIP

Given the increased workload related to COVID-19 management, prioritize one-on-one visits for students with complex health concerns, limited social supports and/or students who have a history of mental health concerns. Collaborate with student support team to support all students in need.

# School Nurse Tip Sheet: COVID-19 Prevention Strategy

School nurses are highly engaged in COVID-19 prevention, using their expertise and experience with disease prevention, surveillance, and mitigation to implement action steps and interventions aimed at keeping students and school staff healthy and safe. You may have already begun implementing the action steps listed below. However, review the action steps below to identify if there are additional resources to assist or expand your nursing practice. Moreover, for actions you have implemented, look for opportunities to educate and inform the school and the larger community, about these actions, and the role of the school nurse in ensuring health and safety.

- Maintain COVID-19 [health education](#) to school staff regarding [COVID-19 transmission, symptoms](#), and effects on local [communities](#)
- Use [data on attendance](#), student engagement, student health records, and public health data to identify student support opportunities
- Continue to [implement COVID-19 prevention strategies](#) to decrease disease transmission
- Review student health records to [identify students who may be at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19](#)
- Continue to educate families about [when to send children to school, safety protocols](#), and who to contact with questions or concerns
- Communicate what's required for students to return to school, like [well child visits, immunizations, screenings](#) and [testing](#) if exposed or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19
- Collaborate with [local public health agencies](#) and ensure up to date COVID-19 information is shared between agencies
- Work with local public health agencies, health care providers, and community-based organizations to provide students and families with [resources](#) and support
- Use local data to identify [communities](#) and students who are [disproportionally impacted](#) by COVID-19 and provide resources and support
- Collaborate with culturally specific organizations to develop COVID-19 educational materials for families such as the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#), the [National Alliance for Hispanic Health](#), the [National Indian Child Welfare Association](#). The [National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association](#)
- Connect with [State School Nurse Consultant](#)
- Collaborate with local public health agencies to discuss [COVID-19 vaccinations](#) and school-based vaccines and begin to develop communication materials for students and families
- Advocate within the school community to [destigmatize COVID-19](#) by addressing bullying, harassment, and racist behavior.

## PRACTICE TIP

Given the frequently changing guidance regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies, quarantine, and isolation, keep current on evidence and best practice. Review NASN's COVID-19 resource, CDC Guidance, and collaborate with the State School Nurse Consultant, your state's School Nurse Association, and school nursing colleagues to develop tools and resources for use in your individual school district.

# School Nurse Tip Sheet: Social Drivers of Health

School nurses are a trusted member of the school community and often become aware of social and environmental concerns that are impacting a student's physical and mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic has put significant strain on families, impacting housing, food security, and economic opportunities. Addressing these concerns is not new to school nursing but with an increase in the number of students and families impacted, it will require the school nurse to be creative in identifying the necessary community resources.

- Partner with other Student Support Staff and School Administrators to [reach out to students experiencing chronic absenteeism](#).
- Assist students and families [find meals](#) and [food banks](#) in their community
- Explore whether your community has [Blessings in a Backpack Program](#) to provide food on the weekends for elementary school children
- Inform families of the [extension of free lunches](#) for all students through the 2020-21 school year
- Be an advocate for your district's food program--find ways to develop plans for schools to be food centers for [meal distributions](#)
- Understand that families of color are more likely to have chronic health problems; provide free-health clinic information by reviewing your state's department of health website
- Work with your homeless coordinator ([McKinney-Vento Liaison](#)) to offer access to shelter for families
- Educate parents and families about [211](#) to assist with finding necessary services and resources
- Share [COVID-19 benefit opportunities](#) and [assistance](#) resources with parents and families via district communications, such as newsletters or posting information on social media accounts.

## PRACTICE TIP

School nurses understand that [Social Determinants of Health](#) have a significant impact on students' mental and physical health. Consider including a universal screening question, such as, "are there any other needs that I can assist you with today", during your interactions with students and/or their families to encourage individuals to disclose their needs.

# School Nurse Tip Sheet: Implementing Physical Activity, Physical Education, and Health Education

School nurses have long been involved in primary prevention by providing health education on topics including nutrition and exercise. Given the additional COVID-19 responsibilities school nurses are engaged in this school year they may not be able to prioritize traditional health education done in previous years. School nurses can collaborate with physical and health education teachers to promote student access to physical education and health education regardless of the educational setting.

- Collaborate with physical education teachers to [promote physical education in the classroom](#)
- Collaborate with health education teachers to incorporate [COVID-19 education](#) and [lesson plans](#)
- Collaborate with physical education teachers to develop accommodations for students who have [health impacts from COVID-19](#)
- Assist physical education teachers in [implementing physical distancing](#)
- Advocate to prevent the [withholding of recess as punishment](#)
- Assist physical education teachers in [care of student with chronic healthcare conditions](#)

## PRACTICE TIP

Advocate for physical and health education professionals to incorporate resiliency and social emotional learning curriculum into their classes to continue to educate children and youth on how to manage and navigate challenging times.

# School Nurse Tip Sheet: Enhancing Staff and Teacher Well-Being

Some school nurses may be actively participating in planning and promoting staff wellness, other school nurses may currently feel overwhelmed with managing their own physical and mental health. If the school nurse is unwell, they could cause harm to themselves and potentially others. Contact emergency medical services or the [National Suicide Hotline](#) at 1-800-273-8255 for support. The action steps below provide suggestions on how to support staff wellness and, how to care for your

- Collaborate with School Wellness Committee to review [resources](#) and [staff wellness activities](#)
- [Identify and share employee assistance program information](#)
- Schedule time for school health staff to meet and check-in
- Find time in your day to focus on [self-care](#)
- Spend time learning how to [manage stress](#) and [burnout](#)
- Connect with your [State School Nurse Association](#) for ongoing support
- [Connect with other school nurses](#) to discuss best practices and ways to support one another
- Begin to plan for staff [COVID-19 vaccination](#), [requirements](#) and [communication materials](#)

## PRACTICE TIP

School nurses must understand that [self-care is not selfish](#) but a necessity. Prioritize self-care, build it into your daily schedule and do not cancel the appointment!