

Education Systems' Response to COVID-19

Brief: August 30th , 2020

Globally, 990 million children (almost 2/3 of the world's learners) are still impacted by school closures. Educators worldwide are facing the agonizing decision of whether to resume in-person instruction and how. Countries are taking different approaches. A few countries already opened 2 or 3 months after the start of the crisis, while others have now announced a return to classes at some point at the beginning of 2021. Many others, particularly in the southern hemisphere have not made any announcement. Many countries will start classes in the coming months, several in September, but with angst and confusion, and with varied options of in-person, remote or hybrid schemes.

COVID related school closures/openings status (countries)

	Africa	EAP	ECA	LAC and N. America	MENA	SAR	Total
Closed, Partly closed, Seasonal closures	29	11	20	39	19	8	126
Open and Open with limitations	19	14	30	4	2	0	69

Source: World Bank Education Team [COVID tracking database](#) and [map](#).

SCHOOLS REOPENING: *The school year has started for some systems but with much angst and confusion*

Some are returning or planning to return to the classroom under strict measures

- **Egypt's** Ministry of Education has proposed the start of the school year to be October 17th, with in-person presence for KG1- grade 3; and blended learning for grades 4-12. The ministry has also proposed a remote teacher training platform to equip them for blended learning and new assessment/ and EDU 2.0 reforms, as well as more mobile classrooms to compensate for lack of connectivity or digital devices. Final arrangements will be announced by early September.
- **United Arab Emirates** announced classes will welcome 1 million students back to school using a hybrid model. Parents have the choice of in-person or remote learning and physical attendance of students in schools will be staggered - 25 per cent at the start of the year to 50 per cent, 75 per cent and finally a full return. In **Abu Dhabi**, authorities began [testing teachers on ahead of the school year](#) and announced that students will be tested as well once classes resume.
- **Saudi Arabia** will follow a similar approach, with remote learning for the first 7 weeks. A new "[Madrasati](#)" platform has been launched. This connects pupils with their schools and teachers and sets out a structure for their day. First, the national anthem and exercises, then a review of the school schedule, then enter the classroom with the teacher. Training of teachers in using the platform has started. Laptops will be provided to some students.
- In **Djibouti**, a country of a million people on the Horn of Africa, the Ministry of Education reopened schools with social distancing measures. Additionally, the Ministry of Education is providing washable masks to students and teachers (3 masks per person). Students enrolled in vocational training schools are producing the masks. (source: country-based staff)
- Students in **Scotland's** secondary schools will be required to [wear masks in school corridors](#) as of August 31st. The policy, which had originally made masks voluntary, was changed to address scenarios of large crowds.
- In **England**, [secondary schools may implement a "rota system" -two weeks on site, two weeks at home](#) to limit the number of students attending schools at any one time, depending on local situation. This

guidance, issued days before schools reopen in early September, also includes additional measures such as the mandatory use of face coverings by teachers and students in corridors and communal areas. This guidance does not apply to primary school students.

- Before children return to classes this September 1st, **Poland** has given principals the [authority to suspend classes](#) (by groups of for the whole school) if outbreaks of COVID were to occur in schools. They can also decide whether to opt of a hybrid model (with face to face learning and remote learning) or to only rely on distance learning in accordance to the magnitude of the cases.
- The president of **Malawi** [announced](#) that schools would reopen by September and that the government will start to assess the readiness of each schools and only schools that can comply with safety and health measures will be allowed to reopen.
- Schools in **Sierra Leone** will reopen by 15 September for preprimary and by 15 October for primary schools, JSS and SSS. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education of Sierra Leone also announced that they will support accelerated learning activities using the new basic curriculum and that Radio Teaching program will be expanded.

Others are re-closing again

South Korea has re-[closed schools](#) in Seoul after nearly 200 staff and student tested positive for the coronavirus in the past two weeks. Remote learning will now continue till at least September 11th. South Korea returned to learning in May after over two months of closures, using a policy of delaying reopening in regions till infections were diminished, and reclosing/resorting to remote learning as they begin to rise.

The debate on safety of reopening continues

- A [Ministry of Education of Chile \(MINEDUC\) and World Bank joint study](#) found that students could lose on average [88% of the learning achievements](#) of one year if schools were to remain closed for 10 additional months (the whole school year). This scenario worsens for vulnerable children, who risk losing 95% of learning achievements. Additionally, gaps in access to remote learning persist, with a coverage of 27% in poorer schools and 89% in richer ones. Accounting for the long-term consequences of keeping students out of classrooms is one of the factors guiding the decision on whether to reopen schools or not. Ministry has not yet decided on a date, but stated schools should be prepared to return as soon as possible.
- In the **United States**, the debate rolls on and [the new academic year is off to a chaotic start as schools and universities open in some parts of the country](#), in a context in which new infections are already going down but are still at very high levels. New York City public-school teacher union (United Federation of Teachers) has [announced](#) that its members won't return to work in schools unless the city could ensure health and safety considerations such as testing all students and staff and ensuring that there is a nurse present in each school. Before the pandemic [less than 40% of schools in the US had a full time nurse](#). A [report](#) by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association shows that Coronavirus infections among children [increased 40%](#) in the last two weeks of July. This has raised alarm among many parents who's states have announced a physical start of the 2020-21 school year.
- **Reopening schools too early could spread COVID-19 even faster** – especially in the developing world, according [to a study by the World Economic Forum](#)

United Kingdom -Examinations in a Time of COVID- Faulty Algorithms have unfairly disadvantaged some, benefited others and questioned faith in the system

England, Wales, and Scotland used the Office of Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) to standardize student results after it was deemed that teachers' assessments may have been too subjective. However, [the Government has had to publicly apologize for the Ofqual algorithm that left disadvantaged students downgraded](#), while private school pupils' results were boosted. Some students saw their university acceptance impacted and parents have questions the value of exams in this era.

released in mid-August. The WEC points out that gains in fighting could be reversed, namely because the different set of circumstances present in low- income countries, for example extended families that include elderly and children in the same household and difficulties in enforcing social distancing in schools.

- The Council on Foreign Relations offers collective insight on [“How Countries are Reopening Schools During the Pandemic”](#). A [Politico article analyzes which countries have opened and how](#). Additionally, the [COVID school closure tool](#) available through the World Bank has been tracking the status of schools.
- In **Kenya**, where schools will not reopen till January 2021, the Ministry of Education posted a 43 page [‘Guidelines on Health and Safety Protocols for Reopening of Basic Institutions amid Covid-19 Pandemic’](#), spelling out measures heads should put in place before they are issued with certificates that allow a school to reopen. However, news media reports indicate that [very few are aware of these guidelines](#) and are in support, concerned that they are too expensive to implement.

Addressing The Ongoing Issue Of Exams

- Final year high school students in Victoria, **Australia** will be individually assessed for [educational disadvantages produced by the pandemic](#). The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is introducing this measure to ensure the pandemic does not hinder opportunities in future education.

Growing scarce

- Schooling under the pandemic is proving to be expensive. Physical classrooms must be small and safe. And sometimes parents still do not send their students out of fear.
- In Hong Kong, more than [40% of kindergartens](#) are at risk of closing due to lack of funds.



Latest Relevant Resources

- Latest Blogs
 - [Launching a new academic year under the cloud of COVID-19](#)
 - [The importance of monitoring the impact of COVI-19 on young children and their families](#)
 - [COVID-19 and the education systems in Tanzania](#)
- World Bank_UNESCO_UNICEF **survey on education responses** is now available on the Oxford Super Tracker as well as this [link](#).
- [Webinar on Reopening of Schools](#): Highlights from Discussion of August 27, 2020
 - Co-hosted by World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF on the reopening of schools. Shows latest evidence of reopening of schools around the world, how governments are dealing with the learning losses , and highlights cases of Denmark and Vietnam.

ANNEX 1 –UZBEKISTAN IS REOPENING SCHOOLS CAUTIOUSLY

Uzbekistan authorities this week opted to reopen schools, under critical measures

- While all schools will open on September 14, several small schools in areas where the coronavirus has not spread will open on September 7th as a test of the safety measures that have been put in place. These measures include: staggering of students; checking of temperatures, students will not move across classrooms and stay on one class; rooms to be ventilated during breaks; and classrooms will be disinfected between the shifts. These rules will be explained to students upon start of school. As much as possible, classes may be conducted in the open air.
- [Three scenarios](#), announced in July are all still being pursued fully : the resumption of studies in a traditional format, fully online, and a hybrid format. Based on poll results of July (where 70% of parents said they would send their kids to schools and 30% said they are concerned), the GoU has made a decision to offer a hybrid format and give parents the right to choose. Parents’ decision to switch from traditional to online (and vice versa) will be easy and reversible.
- The Ministry encourages parents to actively participate in pre-school surveys, to express their opinions, and assist in decision-making. Another survey was recently disseminated.
- With calculation from surveys that 70 percent of students choose to study online, Ministry of Education is confident they can maintain acceptable student per classroom ratio.
- Protocol for closing has also been announced: If the virus is detected in 3 students of the same class, only this class will be quarantined, and classes will continue online.
- Teacher wages will not be affected and will be paid on time. The Ministry has also assured teachers joining the public teaching force (transferring from private schools) they can accommodate them. Ministry did note that the scenario is a surprise. “Usually we would observe the opposite, teachers leaving public schools to work in private schools.”
- Around 20 thousand teachers, 4 percent, are in a risk group (ages 55 and up). As a safety precaution, the Government has announced that this year all school teachers will receive flu shots.

Rationale presented by Minister of Education, Mr. Shermatov on hybrid and online options.

“By law, general secondary education is mandatory. If we select 100 percent traditional format, we will have to require 100 percent attendance, which doesn’t suit current situation with the pandemic. This would also mean, that based on the poll the Ministry conducted in July, parents of about 4 million students are against the traditional format. Same with the families who chose online, about 2 million parents would send their kids to the school. This is the reason we opt for a hybrid format and are allowing parents to make decision that’s right for them and their family situations.”

ANNEX 2 – Latest on COUNTRIES REOPENING SCHOOLS (received from teams)

AFRICA

- **Angola**, schools reopened by August 3rd but only for administrative purposes with 50% of staff and no students.
- **Benin**, as of early July, schools except for nurseries are open. Classrooms have social distancing rules set up – for example, the benches have been set out to observe the one-meter rule. Launched mass testing for teachers as a way to reassure parents that school will be a safe environment – masks were compulsory, but during reopening, a large number of students turned up without masks due to costs.
- **Botswana**. Standard 7, form 3, and form 5 returned by June 17, with additional classes gradually phasing in. Pre-primary schools will now begin August 4th. Private schools have been making their own reopening decisions. Some [preventive measures](#) include checking body temperatures, regular disinfection, and wearing of masks.
- **Burkina Faso**, students of examinations classes returned on June 1st, no date has been confirmed for rest of the year. The World Food Program is gradually restarting school [feeding activities](#) to benefit them. Universities have started to gradually reopen.
- **Burundi**, schools continued to operate through the pandemic. President Pierre Nkurunziza is [thought to be](#) the first head of state to die due to side effects of COVID-19.
- **Cameroon**, schools and universities reopened by June 1st. Some of the [measures](#) taken include: schools will be disinfected three times a week, schools without access to running water will be provided with it, making hand sanitizers and hand washing buckets available, having no more than 24 students per classroom, and only one student seated per bench instead of the usual four.
- **Cote d'Ivoire**. Primary, secondary, and universities reopened as of May 25th. [Measures](#) include washing hands before and after classes. Classes are equipped with hand sanitizer gel.
- **Equatorial Guinea**. The Government decided on June 15th to ease emergency measures in force since March. This includes the [reopening of schools](#) for exams as long as they can comply with protective measures such as the use of masks, social distancing, hand washing practices, among others.
- **Ghana** implemented a phased, selective reopening: June 15th - Final year tertiary students returned to classes; June 22nd - Final year senior secondary reopened; June 29th - Final year junior high school reopened; all other students will be home till further notice. By July 17th, a joint statement by pre-tertiary teacher unions (GNAT, NAGRAT, TEWU, and CCT) asked the government to [close down the schools](#) due to fear of schools cases and lack of measures to ensure safety of students and teachers.
- **Guinea**, schools [reopened](#) on June 29th, starting with exam classes.
- **Kenya**, announced on July 7th that schools will remain [closed until January](#) and that final year exams will be cancelled. Students of basic education in private and public schools will have to repeat the school year. The Ministry will continue to explore how to expand access of remote learning to all students. Colleges and universities may be able to reopen if they comply by government guidelines.
- **Liberia**. Schools reopened June 22nd for [last year of senior secondary](#) students who are expected to sit exams this year.
- **Madagascar** has reopened schools for [some grades](#) (final year of high school, grade three, and grade seven). Attendance of pupils appears to be low. July 6th a lockdown was reinstated in the central region and schools had to [close again](#). They are now gradually reopening in some [regions](#).
- **Niger**, public schools reopened by June 1st.
- **Sierra Leone**. School reopening Task Force established and working on different elements. Schools reopened July 1st for those sitting for [standard exams](#). A set of guidelines has been prepared and students will return to classes by 15 September for preprimary and by 15 October for primary schools, JSS and SSS. The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education of Sierra Leone also announced that they will support accelerated learning activities using the new basic curriculum and that Radio Teaching program will be expanded.

- **South Africa** delayed planned [reopening of schools](#) after a spike in infections, but then reopened June 8th using a phased reopening. Despite the number of COVID-19 cases growing sharply, by July 6, grades 6 and 11 returned to classes as part of the second stage of reopening. Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases the president of South Africa declared that [schools were closing](#) for four weeks, except for grade 12 which will have a one week break. By late August [children returned to schools](#) after the precautionary break, teachers unions expressed their concern on being underprepared to ensure safety.
- **Tanzania** [reopened schools](#) on June 22nd, with kindergartens, primary, and secondary schools resuming activities, with many parents concerned about the safety of learning environment in the context of increased infection cases.
- **Togo**, by June 15th final year pupils of primary and junior high schools; second and third-year students of senior high schools [returned to classes](#).
- **Zambia**. Students of examination classes [returned to school](#) by June 1st. Ministry of General Education has released guidelines on measures for safe school reopening as well as responsibilities of teachers/staff/administrators: smaller class size to the extent possible, observing physical distancing measures, having staff and students wearing masks, and maintaining a stock of masks to support vulnerable learners, etc.

Eastern and Central Europe

- **Albania**, schools [reopened by May 18th](#) for students in the last year of upper secondary. School reopening is under strict hygiene and social distance measures. Despite an increase in cases students will [return to schools](#) by September 14 for the new school year.
- **Armenia**. Pre- schools are open since May 18th, with [measures](#) such as temperature checks, shoes disinfection, and spending most of the school day outdoors. Students will [return to classes](#) by September 15th.
- **Austria**. Began returning students May 4th, with Grade 12 students who came back to school to prepare for final exam ("Matura") two weeks later; (ii) May 18th: School reopened for primary schools, lower secondary, and special needs schools; (iii) June 3rd: School opening for upper secondary and TVET schools. Schools will open for the new school year by September introducing a [traffic light system](#) to properly react if an increase in cases occurs.
- **Belarus**, schools [reopened on a voluntary basis](#).
- **Belgium**. From May 18th, selected grades of [primary and secondary schools restarted classes](#) under strict social distancing rules. Some [measures](#) taken include students and teachers wearing masks, washing hands when entering schools. All schools will reopen for the [new school year](#) starting on September 1st.
- **Bulgaria**. Reopening in the fall – September 14th.
- **Croatia**. Classes resumed in May and students are currently on summer holiday. The Ministry conducted a survey of teachers and parents on effectiveness of remote learning, indicating the results will be used to improve on the remote learning to be offered in the start of the school year. Results of the survey have been released and are highlighted [here](#). School will reopen by September 7.
- **Cyprus**, high school students started to [return to schools](#) by May 11th and the school year finished by late June. The next academic year is [expected to start](#) by September 1st.
- **Denmark**. Staggered its reopening starting back in April, being one of the first countries to return kids to the classroom, under strict social distancing guidance. The new school year is starting in late August.
- **Estonia**, May 15th: schools and educational institutions [resumed](#) in-person learning for up to 10 students per contact group. Tallinn public schools will limit contact groups to a maximum of five students. The government's coronavirus scientific council [supports the reopening of schools](#) by September 1st.
- **Finland**, [reopened](#) schools by mid-May.
- **France**. After the summer break, students will return to classes by September 1st with the use of masks being compulsory indoors for staff and students over the age of 11.

- **Germany.** Reopened May 6th. The school year starts at different times in the 16 states, yet they all agreed in July that children will return to schools once the summer holidays are over. The new package of measures designed by late August due to an increase in infections supports the [safe reopening of schools](#) for the new academic year.
- **Greece.** Students [returned](#) May 4th, but are following guidelines, for example, stay at least two meters (6.56 feet) apart. Students and teachers will be required to wear masks when [schools reopen for the new school year](#) by September 7.
- **Hungary,** Schools will keep up digital education methods for the remainder of the term, but are allowed to [organize consultations for individual students or small groups](#) from June 2nd. The [new school year](#) will start by September 1st.
- **Iceland,** by June 15th all schools were open, applying social distance and hygiene [measures](#).
- **Italy.** Children will return to classes by 14 September with students seated 1m apart and class sizes becoming smaller.
- **Lithuania,** reopened schools for primary school students by [May 25th](#), other grades joined by early June.
- **Luxembourg.** Schools have [gradually been reopening](#) since May 4th, with students in their final year of secondary school returning first.
- **Netherlands.** Students will return to schools after the summer break but they [may be exempted](#) if they or if someone they live with falls into a high risk category.
- **Norway.** Kindergartens were opened on April 20th and its primary schools on April 27th, starting with grade 1-4. Universities, colleges and vocational schools reopened from April 27th for some students and employees. All students were returned to school before the summer holidays.
- **Poland,** schools [reopened](#) by end of May, then closed for summer and will reopen by September 1st with adjusted regulations including allowing principals the [to suspend classes](#) (by groups of for the whole school) if outbreaks of COVID were to occur in schools.
- **Portugal,** schools [reopened](#) by mid-May and are scheduled to open after the break by September 10
- **Romania.** By June 2nd schools [reopened](#) for learners in the last year of lower and upper secondary school to help prepare students for the national exams. The Ministry of Health has prepared sanitary guidelines for the [new school year](#) scheduled to start by September 14th.
- **Slovak Republic,** schools and kindergartens [opened](#) by June 1st. Schools are scheduled to reopen by September.
- **Slovenia.** Children in the first three grades of primary school, final years secondary school, and kindergartens returned to classrooms on [May 18th](#).
- **Spain.** On May 25th a phased reopening restarted and only last year students of secondary and post-secondary in territories under phase 2 and 3 of reopening resumed classes. The Ministry of Education has prepared [guidelines](#) for students to returned to schools by September, measures will be adapted depending on the situation in each of Spain's 17 autonomous regions. The [Madrid Region](#) has yet to announced plans for reopening schools with two weeks to go before the scheduled reopening,
- **Switzerland.** May 11th for younger grades. Older children from their 10th year, as well as university students, returned on June 8th.
- **Ukraine,** kindergartens [reopened](#) by late May.
- **United Kingdom.** In **England,** secondary schools were allowed to reopen for years 10 and 12 since June 10th. Some nursery, pre-school, and reception year 1 and 6 started to go back by early June. In preparation for wide school reopening this September, the [British Government has published its safety plans](#) for England's (in-person) return to school - built on the principle of keeping classes or whole year groups apart in separate "bubbles" and the deployment of a [track, trace, and test program](#) being developed to limit the risk of transmission. In **Scotland,** schools have already reopened as well as some schools in **Northern Ireland.** **England** and **Wales** will follow in September. There are [separate guidelines](#) for each.
- **Uzbekistan,** is planning to reopen schools from [September 14](#).

East Asia and the Pacific

- **Australia.** States have the authority to follow up different guidelines or protocols given that the education system is administered at state level. Throughout the pandemic, schools in most states have remained open to children of essential workers and vulnerable children. Between May (New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia) and June (Tasmania, South Australia, Northern Territory, and ACT) most students [across states](#) returned to school. An exception is the [state of Victoria](#) where students returned to remote and flexible learning by August 5th, although schools and early childhood education centers are only open for vulnerable children and children of permitted workers.
- **Brunei Darussalam.** Reopened schools [early June](#) for students who will take national examinations.
- **China.** Dates of reopening varied based on the date of last reported case of COVID in the province. Practice social distancing whenever possible with examples including (i) allowing students from certain grades, e.g. the graduating classes, to register earlier than others to avoid peak traffic and avoiding large scale gathering by canceling parent days, campus events, and large-scale teacher training (ii) managing the access of vendors, service providers, and visitors to campus. Seats have plastic dividers to ensure students are safely distanced from each other. Re-adjusting school calendar to make up for lost face-to-face instruction time. Routinely carry out simple health screening, monitor instances of high-risk symptoms and health related absence, and provide daily updates to local authorities. China also developed a contingency plan if/when an active case of COVID is found in classroom. Beijing had to [re close schools](#) due to a new COVID-19 outbreak.
- **Fiji,** early childhood centers, primary and secondary schools [reopened](#) by July 6th.
- **Indonesia.** On June 16 the Education and Culture Ministry announced plans for [a phased reopening of schools](#) located in low risk areas or “green zones”. By July 20th students started to [return to classes](#) in “green zones” of the archipelago in accordance with local protocols.
- **Japan.** Dates of reopening vary but started in mid-April. Classrooms are ventilated and students are not allowed to gather in clusters. Washing of hands regularly throughout the day, especially before lunch. Checking of temperatures regularly. If an infection is confirmed, the infected individual and those who were in close contact are to be suspended, according to the guidelines. Temporary closure of classes or the entire school is also recommended.
- **Lao PDR.** Schools have [partially opened](#) for Grade 5, Grade 9 and Grade 12 as the government lifted the lockdown during mid-May. Opening the schools for Grade 1-4, 6-8 and 10-11 started on early June.
- **Mongolia.** Schools to reopen in the fall (September 20th).
- **Papua New Guinea** schools began gradually reopening in late April. The Department of Education provided [specific instructions](#) for schools, teachers, and all education authorities to take in prevention of COVID-19. Parents can keep their children home if they wish to do so, yet they must inform schools so that children can continue their remote learning. Some of the prevention measures include mandatory facemasks for students and teachers and hand sanitizers or hand basins with soaps for hand washing in every recess break. However, [implementation of measures appears challenging](#), with lack of masks in some areas and abundance in others. Some parents have resorted to sew masks themselves.
- **New Zealand,** schools [reopened](#) by mid-May and have not reported closures since.
- **South Korea.** After delays, began the school year in April online, then moved to in-person learning, beginning with high school seniors, followed by middle school seniors, juniors, and elementary schools by May 20th. Since then, some schools and districts have re-closed or gone on lockdown after increase in confirmed cases. This has helped curb the rise of transmissions. By August 25th, schools and kindergartens in Seoul have [closed](#) due to increase in cases and approximately 200 staff and students infected over the past two weeks.
- **Singapore.** Schools fully reopened by [early June](#). Measures include temperature checks, use of masks, strict hygiene, among others,
- **Tonga.** After reopening, schools [closed by end of June](#) to test how students, teachers, and parents cope with at-home learning. The remote learning [school trial](#) included using radio, TV, and internet.

- **Tuvalu** Schools reopened on April 27th. The country closed its borders early and implemented tight measures. As of end July, it remains one of the few COVID19-free countries.
- **Vietnam's** upper secondary schools and universities and colleges reopened in some provinces and then re-closed in compliance with the social distancing directive from the Prime Minister. By mid-May, Vietnam had fully reopened all schools. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) developed a list of 16 priority responses for the basic education sector, and has sought support from development partners on implementation.¹ These priorities relate to, for example, (1) the safe operation of schools to reduce virus transmission, including the availability of hygiene materials and part-time in-person classes for crowded classrooms; (2) bridging the learning gap related to school closures, including stronger distance education provision, curriculum streamlining, teacher training, and promoting awareness for parents, students, and others; and (3) protecting the most vulnerable, including raising caregivers' awareness on child nutrition needs, psychological support, and distance education materials in ethnic minority languages.

Latin, Central and North America

- **Anguilla.** By late May the Ministry and Department of Education informed that classes restarted with some limitations.
- **Argentina.** Three provinces have reopened schools in August, San Juan, Formosa and Catamarca, on a voluntary basis and under a strict sanitary protocol.
- **Canada.** As of July 29th, all provinces had announced that most or all of their students will return to school in September. In provinces such as British Columbia and Quebec, students will be divided into “learning groups” which will be the group students can interact with, which the government says will reduce the risk of transmission among students, while improving contact tracing in the event of an outbreak. Additional resources have also been allocated at provincial level to help schools prepare for the upcoming school year, which will go towards increased cleaning expenses, hand-washing stations and additional supplies for students and teachers. For a summary of the back-to-school plans by province, click [here](#).
- **Mexico** the new school year started this August 24th [using remote learning](#) (television and radio) until the pandemic allows for students to return to school. The Secretary of Education has made agreements with television corporations so that they schedule the emission of educational content for 24 hours and seven days a week through six channels. For those who can't access televised content, radio content as well as textbook distribution will be put in place.
- **Nicaragua.** Schools and public universities started classes by April 20th after the regular holidays. The Government has allowed private schools to close. Attendance is low-medium in urban areas and higher in rural areas.
- **Panama** has started the school year this [July 20th](#) with an adapted curriculum to focus on essential learning and using distance learning to reach children in all grades, as well as children with disabilities. There is no known date for face to face learning to start.
- **Peru,** by July 1st [in-person teaching](#) at primary and secondary schools was planned for schools located in rural areas with limited means of communication, internet connectivity, and zero COVID-19 infections. Plan was postponed and no in person schooling is allowed. In regions where there is limited access to internet, [TV lessons are being prioritized](#) to reach more students.
- **The United States.** On July 23rd, the Center for Disease, Control and Prevention issued a statement on school reopening and relevant guidelines. It also released the [“Plan, Prepare, and Respond”](#) guidelines targeting administrators, caregivers, and parents about safety in schooling. States and school districts are opening online, in-person, or in a blended way, a state by state list on the status of reopening can be found [here](#).

¹ This information was extracted from the *Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on learning and skill formation in Vietnam*, prepared by the World Bank's Education Global Practice team for Vietnam. The larger document summarizes the Government's comprehensive Education Response to COVID19 and can be requested from the team (contact Dilip Parajuli (Sr. Education Economist) at dparajuli@worldbank.org).

- **Uruguay** began the return to classes in some rural areas by late April and moved in phases. By June 29th. Uruguay reached a [full reopening](#) of schools with 256 thousand students coming back to classes in Montevideo. Some of the [main characteristics](#) of the gradual reopening so far are mandatory testing of school staff and teachers, blended learning, allowing teachers and staff who are at high risk (over 65 years old or with pre-existing conditions) to remain home. Students' return is optional, and children are split into smaller groups in each class, extended hours for learning are suspended, and everyone must wear face masks.

Middle East and North Africa

- In **Algeria**, schools remain closed for the summer holidays, with students in grade 12 expected to return shortly to review for exams taking place in October 2020.
- **Lebanon**. [Schools will likely reopen in late September](#) according to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. A hybrid model will be adopted though details are not yet known. For information on additional countries, see main text Section 1. *Countries Reopening Schools*.

South Asia

- **Pakistan**, by late August authorities are considering to reopen schools by phases starting on September 15th they will make the final decision on [September 7](#)