

Education Systems' Response to COVID-19

Brief: November 18th, 2020

- Globally, 693 million children (approximately 40% of the global student population) are still impacted by school closures in 67 countries. Only in ECA schools are operating in all countries. In all other regions status vary widely across and within countries. Some [countries](#) in Europe (France, Ireland, Germany) are re-imposing lockdowns, but, this time, keeping schools open. Some districts in the US are closing school buildings again and return to virtual learning.
- Hybrid learning has become the new normal over the months of pandemic as education systems need to implement flexible protocols that allow for reopening and closing schools as required.

COVID related school closures

	Africa	EAP	ECA	LAC and North America	MENA	SAR	Total
Closed, partly closed, and seasonally closed	24	10	0	20	8	6	67
Open, open with limitations	24	15	50	22	13	2	127

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



LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON SCHOOL OPENINGS (OR RE-CLOSINGS)

- **In Rwanda, schools reopen for the first time since March, ending a seven month hiatus.** Primary Five and Six, Secondary Three, Five and Six students and level three, four and five students of TVET resumed second term studies in November, while students of all levels in TTC started their second term studies, according to the Rwandan ministry of education's calendar issued in October.
- **Schools throughout Cambodia reopened November 2nd for the first time since March, but with class sizes and hours limited by coronavirus precautions.** Education Minister Hang Chuon Naron said a second closing would be considered if any students became infected while attending classes.
- **In Sri Lanka, school authorities have extended holidays for an additional two weeks as cases of COVID-19 surge.** [Schools had been scheduled to reopen Nov. 9](#), but the government announced Tuesday that classes would not resume until Nov. 23.
- **Parents in Jordan protested the re-closing of schools,** asking the Government to give them the choice between remote and in-person, particularly for younger learners
- **COVID-19 surges across Europe with some countries responding by keeping schools open so far.** In Italy, cases are on the rise, however [elementary and middle schools remain open](#). In England, people non-essential workers are required to stay home unless their workplaces, such as factories or construction sites, need them; [however schools remain open](#). In Northern Ireland, [schools have reopened](#) with extra safety measures even as cases continue to rise. Greece imposed a lockdown on its second largest city, Thessaloniki, and the neighboring northern province of Serres. [Primary and junior high schools remain open](#), but the final grades of high school and universities will be taught online.

- **In the United States, policies vary by state and by district** . Public school systems are open but with different combinations of in-person and online classes. In New York City, schools buildings have been order to close and move to all-remote instruction if test positivity rate reaches 3% over a seven-day rolling average. In response to this rule, [New York City’s entire public school system has been ordered to shut down on Nov 19th](#).
- **In the United States, assessments were carried out in September across many school systems and bleak results are emerging. The achievement gap among students in the District of Columbia widened** as the number of students reaching early literacy benchmarks has declined since schools shut down in March, according to [data released by D.C. Public Schools](#). Similar results are found in [Dallas](#), where half of students have learning losses in math and nearly a third in reading. These results also highlighted the vast disparities between black and Hispanic students. President-elect Biden has issued a [five-step plan](#) to reopen schools which includes calls for Congress to approve an emergency fund and a concerted effort to build quality remote and hybrid learning strategies.
- **Justin Trudeau announced the creation of a US\$91.5 million fund to support education during COVID-19 for indigenous communities**. This will allow the First Nations, Inuit and Metis Nation communities to [hire additional staff and to provide training](#) for early learning and childcare facility staff.
- **The Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland announced the “Right to learn” program to increase equity in basic education and early childhood education, allocating US\$354.9 million over two years**. It will focus on narrowing and preventing learning gaps due to the socioeconomic background, immigrant background or gender of students. Additionally, it aims to increase participation in early learning programs, increase early language learning and promote overall wellbeing of students.
- **With the aim of investing in human capital, focusing on technical and vocational education in African nations, the AfDB and the AU are releasing and African Education Fund of nearly \$300 million**. It will be a “unique” [Africa-initiated, continental level education fund](#) designed, led and managed by Africans, that will finance training in post-secondary education including TVET, STEM, and innovation skills,



RESEARCH AND LATEST FINDINGS

- **Brookings published a report about the impact of COVID-19 on our youngest learners**. The impact of the pandemic and the subsequent closures of preschools and childcare centers have affected families around the world.
- **The OECD published a report, "Teachers’ training and use of information and communications technology in the face of the COVID-19 crisis"**. The report explores the results of TALIS 2018 and offers useful information to illuminate why some teachers are more likely to let students use ICT for projects and to explore the factors behind whether teachers take up professional development activities that include ICT skills for teaching.
- **A recently published study aimed at analyzing how school closures affect low and high achieving students** found that students on average reduced their daily learning time of 7.4 hours by about half, the reduction was significantly larger for low-achievers (4.1 hours) than for high-achievers (3.7 hours). The study was conducted in Germany.
- **A study evaluating the effects of school closures based on standardized tests** in the last year of primary school in Flemish schools in Belgium was [recently released](#). The study found students of the 2020 cohort experienced significant learning losses in all tested subjects, with a decrease in school averages of mathematics scores of 0.19 standard deviations and Dutch scores of 0.29 standard deviations as compared to the previous cohort.
- **The Netherlands, which experience a relatively short lockdown (8 weeks) and has a high degree of technological preparedness, tests before and after lockdown reveal a learning loss of about 3 percentile**

points or 0.08 standard deviations. Losses are up to [55% larger among students from less-educated homes](#). The average learning loss is equivalent to a fifth of a school year, nearly exactly the same period that schools remained closed. These results imply that students made little or no progress whilst learning from home, and suggest much larger losses in countries less prepared for remote learning.

- [How to transform your learning environments for COVID-19](#) looks at the various measures that need to be considered when transforming physical classroom spaces into safe learning environments for students.
- [A study in Australia reveals that the education systems is failing up to one in three children and young people](#). The [paper](#) also shows gaps in a wide range of critical skills and capabilities from school entry, with Indigenous children, children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and children in very remote areas at least twice as likely as their peers to have a developmental vulnerability.



RESOURCES

Reports and Surveys

- [UNICEF released a report detailing the effects of COVID-19 on the education of girls in countries across East Asia and Pacific region](#). The report proposes considerations for national stakeholders and policy makers in their school reopening efforts and beyond.
- [Save our Future, a global coalition supported by hundreds of organizations worldwide](#), released a [white paper](#) that aims to develop a common narrative around the impact of COVID-19 on education and key actions required.
- [UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank](#) have released a report analyzing the main findings from two rounds of a Survey on National Education Responses to COVID-19 School Closures (see above).
- [Using the COVID Airborne Transmission Estimator developed by the University of Colorado, El Pais newspaper has estimated different scenarios of aerosol transmission. Their findings highlight the importance of adequate ventilation in schools during the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Their simulations show that if two hours are spent in the classroom with an infected teacher, **without taking any measures** such as proper ventilation and PPE to counter the number of aerosols, there is the risk that up to 12 students could become infected. If everyone is wearing a mask the number of possible infected reduces to five, and if the room has proper ventilation and the class ends after one hour the risk drops even further.
- [The World Bank, UNESCO, and UNICEF](#) released a report [“What Have We Learnt; Findings of a Survey of Ministries of Education on National Responses to COVID”](#). The report aggregates the first two rounds of data collection of the survey (between May-October 2020) administered to government officials from ministries of education of 149 countries. Some of the [topics analyzed](#) include the different modalities of remote learning offered across income groups, criteria for reopening schools, support to students and teachers, and perceptions of remote learning effectiveness [effectiveness](#). A Webinar on the subject was also held on November 4th. A recording of the presentation and discussion is available [here](#). The Survey will run on a regular basis to ensure that the latest impacts and responses are captured. A third wave of data collection will be announced shortly.
- In an [event](#) on October 28th, the [World Bank, the UK government, and Building Evidence in Education Global Group](#) presented a new multidisciplinary [Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel](#) of leading education experts and launched its first [“Smart Buys” report](#) that identifies cost-effective ways to improve global learning. The report sets out the best investments to improve the quality and take-up of education in developing countries, and those which do not necessarily represent good value for money.

World Bank Resources

- [Learning Poverty: Measures and Simulations, a World Bank paper](#). In a post-COVID-19 scenario of no remediation and low mitigation effectiveness for the effects of school closures, the simulations show that

learning poverty increases from 53 to 63 percent. Most of this increase seems to occur in lower-middle-income and upper-middle-income countries, especially in East Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, and South Asia.

- **Progress continues to be made on the GPE funded “Continuous and Accelerated Learning in response to COVID-19 program”**, which is a \$25 million collaboration between the World Bank, UNESCO and UNICEF. This [brief](#) details the various updates on each subcomponent of the project.
- **World Bank EdTech Podcast: [Adapting to Student and Teacher Needs during COVID-19](#)**: A conversation with the OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. Other EdTech publications, such as guidance notes, knowledge packs on remote learning, radio, TV, mobiles, and ecosystems, can be found [here](#). Additionally, the World Bank - in partnership with [Harvard Global Education Innovation Initiative](#), [HundrED](#), and the [OECD Directorate for Education and Skills](#) - has produced over 30 [continuity stories](#) and a [series of webinars](#) presenting notes of how countries are supporting learning through high- and low-tech solutions during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **World Bank Country tool for [simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19](#)** school closures on schooling and learning outcomes

World Bank Blogs

- Much ado about nothing? The next generation of human capital investments, skills and labor in Turkey and beyond. ([English](#))
- Tackling the impacts of Covid-19 is imperative to Ethiopia’s journey to prosperity. ([English](#))
- Learning for All: Beyond an Average Score ([English](#))
- How to improve human capital? The need for cost-effective education investments. ([English](#))
- To rebuild our education systems, we must focus first on leadership ([English](#))
- Committing to learning for every child, despite conflict and crisis. ([English/Spanish/French](#))
- Strengthening the fight against Pakistan’s learning crisis. ([English](#))
- Unleashing human capital potential is key to Bangladesh’s post COVID-19 resilience ([English](#))
- Egypt: #BacktoSchool brings a new test of “blending learning” ([English](#))
- Accelerating Foundational Literacy and Numeracy through Focus, Measurement, Support and Accountability ([English](#))

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

AFRICA

- **Angola**, [schools reopened](#) as of Oct 5th. University students and those in the Grades 6th, 9th, 12th and 13th who will have to comply strictly with the measures imposed by the health authorities of the country, will resume classes. This phased re-entry will allow for students from Grades 7th, 8th, 10th and 11th, all of them also from 2nd cycle of high school to re-enter school by Oct 19th, while primary and 1st cycle start on October 26th.
- **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. Students will return to classes after the vacation period by September 28th.
- **Botswana**. Standard 7, form 3, and form 5 returned by June 17th, with additional classes gradually phasing in. Pre-primary schools began by 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**, [schools and universities re-opened](#) as of Oct 1st. The Ministry of Education is planning to pick up where they left off by teaching the previous year's curriculum up until mid-November, before getting underway with new content.
- **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. Students returned to school by September 7 after the vacations period.
- **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. According to Communication Minister Rene Emmanuel Sadi, [higher education institutions will also open](#) in the country on October 15.
- **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. Students returned to classes by September 14, after the vacations period.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**. School have [reopened in the country](#). The resumption of schools was initially scheduled for Aug. 3, but it was postponed due to “technical and administrative reasons,” according to Willy Bakonga, the education minister.
- **Ethiopia**. The government is preparing to [reopen schools](#) by 10th of November. The [Ministry of Education has issued guidelines](#) to limit number of students per classroom
- **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. After a period of vacation, the government authorized the [opening of schools from September 1st](#) with a capacity of 50% students per class.
- **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. After a period of vacations exam classes have [reopened on Oct 5th](#).
- **Guinea**, schools [reopened](#) on June 29th, starting with exam classes. Currently students are on vacation.

- **Kenya**, authorities have reversed their policies and have [moved ahead with school reopening](#). Students in grades four, eight and 12 have returned to classes on Oct 12th.
- **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. On July 6th a lockdown was reinstated in the central region and schools had to [close again](#). They are now gradually reopening in some [regions](#). After vacation, schools are partially reopened as of September 1st for examinations classes.
- **Malawi**. Many schools in Malawi have [reopened to prepare students](#) for their final national examinations of the year. More grades [returned](#) to classes on October 12th.
- **Mozambique** started to [gradually reopen by the end of August](#), with total of 627 secondary schools and 19 teacher training institutes selected for the first phase of reopening, bringing back to school about [82,000 pupils](#), of which 24,000 girls. However only one in four of these schools had access to the basic services required for adequate hygiene practices.
- **Namibia**: [Schools in most parts of the country](#) reopened on 7th September after months of closure. Classes are being held maintaining social distancing rules.
- **Nigeria**: Schools [reopened in Nigeria after six months](#) of being closed. Nigeria's Ministry of Education says despite measures put in place to help students cope with the suspension of classes, poorer students have been more affected because of their inability to afford remote learning.
- **Niger**, students [went back to school](#) by October 15th.
- **Rwanda**: Many [Universities in Rwanda reopened](#) after seven months of closure. The reopening of schools in Rwanda followed an assessment done in September by the Education Ministry in partnership with the Higher Education Council which inspected 29 universities and other higher education institutions to ascertain their readiness. [The reopening of secondary and primary schools](#) has started for students in some grades who [resumed classes](#) on November 2nd, the rest will follow by November 23rd.
- **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 returned to classes by September 15th for preprimary and by October 15th 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.
- **South Sudan** The government [has initiated plans to reopen schools](#) in October. The reopening will happen in phases. Phase 1 includes the candidate classes, Primary 8 and Senior 4, and will start the first week of October 2020. Phase 2 includes all schools and grades and will coincide with the start of the academic year in February 2021.
- **Sudan** has [postponed reopening of schools](#) till November 22nd.
- **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. Schools reopened after the August break by September 1st.

- **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, compressing the curriculum, etc.
- **Zimbabwe**. Examination classes (grade7, form 4, upper sixth) [returned to classes on September 28th](#), followed in October 26 by next year's examination classes -- Grade 6, Form 3 and Lower Sixth or Form 5. Classes will be smaller (with no more than 30 students per classroom) and social distancing rules.

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 [returned 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 [returned 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 reopened for the new school year by September 7 introducing a [traffic light system](#) to properly react if an increase in cases occurs.
- **Belarus**, schools reopened by September 1st.
- **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**. Reopened 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 reopened 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 started 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 started by August 10.
- **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](#), students returned to school with a blended system by September 1st.
- **Finland**, [reopened](#) schools by mid-May. After vacations, students returned to classes by August 13.
- **France**. After the summer break, students returned 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. By 10 August

schools reopened. 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 are required to wear masks when [schools reopen for the new school year](#) by September 7th. The start of the school year was delayed and students [returned by September 14](#).
- **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](#) started by September 1st.
- **Iceland,** by June 15th all schools were open, applying social distance and hygiene [measures](#). Schools reopened by late August after the vacations period.
- **Italy.** Children returned to classes by 14 September with students seated 1m apart and class sizes becoming smaller.
- **Kazakhstan.** Schools have started to reopen by September 1st
- **Kosovo:** [Schools reopened](#) September 14th
- **Lithuania,** reopened schools for primary school students by [May 25th](#), other grades joined by early June. After summer break, schools reopened by September 1st.
- **Luxembourg.** Schools have [gradually been reopening](#) since May 4th, with students in their final year of secondary school returning first. After summer break students returned by September 15.
- **Netherlands.** Students returned to schools after the summer break by August 17 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. Students returned to classes by August 17th.
- **Poland,** schools [reopened](#) by the end of May, then closed for summer and reopened 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 reopened after the break by September 14th.
- **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](#) which started on September 14th.
- **Russian Federation,** schools [reopened](#) as of September 1 after summer holidays.
- **Slovak Republic,** schools and kindergartens [opened](#) by June 1st. Schools reopened by September 2nd.
- **Slovenia.** Children in the first three grades of primary school, final years secondary school, and kindergartens returned to classrooms on [May 18th](#). After the summer break, students returned by September 1st.
- **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. By September 8, there has been a partial return to classes.
- **Switzerland.** May 11th for younger grades. Older children from their 10th year, as well as university students, returned on June 8th. Students returned to classes after the summer break on August 17th.
- **Ukraine,** kindergartens [reopened](#) by late May. Schools reopened on September 1st with the three modalities of operation: green are open with general hygiene and distancing precautions, yellow is

when the incidence in the area is high thus some activities in schools are limited (physical training, etc.), red is when cases are in the school and all the school goes on distance learning for 2 weeks.

- **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 on 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** followed in September. There are [separate guidelines](#) for each.
- **Uzbekistan.** A quarter of schools re-open [September 14th](#). The remaining schools are set to open doors for students in the next two weeks (by October 1st). More than 2300 schools re-opened. There are about 10 thousand general education schools, 6.2 million students, and over 486 thousand teachers in Uzbekistan. Most schools are expected to restore traditional education (offline) by October 1st. At the same time, the decision to open the schools will be made on a case by case basis, based on the epidemiological situation in the region, rate of confirmed cases in teachers, readiness of the health care system, and local council's decision. Starting from September 14th, TV lessons are broadcasted for schoolchildren in all subjects. Only parents can determine the format of education for their children, i.e. online vs. traditional. The school administration is prohibited from involving students in the traditional format of education or putting pressure on parents.

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 and extended by July 27th.
- **Cambodia:** [The second phase of reopening the schools](#) allows only for grade nine and grade 12 students to attend school, and each classroom must adhere to strict health measures.
- **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 [reclose schools](#) due to a new COVID-19 outbreak. Schools are open by September 14th, after the vacations period.
- **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. After vacations, students returned to classes by August 24th.
- **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. After the break schools opened by September 1st.
- **Mongolia.** Schools have reopened by September 1st.
- **Myanmar:** Over [50 percent of high schools](#) in Myanmar have opened. Myanmar's academic year usually starts in June, but this year's term was delayed due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in the country.
- **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. Students returned to classes by late August after the break.
- **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.
- **Singapore.** Schools fully reopened by [early June](#). Measures include temperature checks, use of masks, strict hygiene, among others
- **Thailand:** [Schools reopen in Thailand](#) with precautions in place to guard against the coronavirus, ranging from temperature checks to installing makeshift cubicles for social distancing in classrooms.
- **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.
- **Vietnam.** 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. After vacations, students returned to classes by September 1st.

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).

Latin, Central and North America

- **Anguilla.** By late May the Ministry and Department of Education informed that classes restarted with some limitations.
- **Antigua and Barbuda.** [Schools reopened](#) on September 7th. According to a press release from the MoE, teachers returned on August 31st and then students followed the week after.
- **Argentina.** Three provinces have reopened schools in August, San Juan, Formosa and Catamarca, on a voluntary basis and under a strict sanitary protocol.
- **Bahamas.** [Starting October 5th](#), the MOE conducted a week of orientation throughout The Bahamas to familiarize all students and educators with how to access all facets of the new educational virtual paradigm. The orientation will be face-to-face, in a staggered fashion, convenient and accessible for all students.
- **Canada.** As of July 29th, all provinces had announced that most or all of their students will return to school in September. By September 8th there has been a partial return to classes. 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 began for schools located in rural areas with limited means of communication, internet connectivity, and zero COVID-19 infections. 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](#). .
- **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. After vacations, students returned to classes by September 1st.

Middle East and North Africa

- In **Algeria**, schools remain closed for the summer holidays. [Schools opened in October 21st](#) for primary education students, and will open in November for middle and high school students. In many establishments, pupils will only attend class every other day, or even only half a day to avoid overcrowded classrooms.
- **Egypt**. Egypt's Ministry of Education [announced a new precautionary plan](#) to combat the coronavirus, two weeks before the beginning of the school year, including measures and guidelines to be followed in educational institutions
- **Oman**. The country is set to [reopen schools in November](#) and is going to adopt a blended learning curriculum.
- **Yemen**. The school year for primary education [started in October in southern Yemen](#) following months of school closures, according to UNICEF. Schools are reopening with strict safety measures including social distancing, hand washing stations and regular sanitization.

South Asia

- **Afghanistan** private schools [were allowed to commence](#) all classes. However, the public sector schools were only allowed to resume classes for 11th and 12th-grade students.
- **Bhutan** students of grades IX, X, XI and XII across the country are now [back to school](#)
- **Pakistan**, has [reopened private and public schools for 6-8 standards](#) under strict regulations requiring social distancing and the use of masks. Primary schools nationwide [reopened](#) by September 30th.
- **India**. The [reopening of schools from October 15th](#) is applicable for every state but the Central government has asked state governments to take a final decision regarding school reopening. This has left several states eyeing a later date to reopen schools. A few states resumed classes from September 21, as advised by the Centre earlier.
- **Nepal**. [Slow start of schools across the country that are reopening](#). Some of the local bodies around Kathmandu have given permission to reopen schools as long as they follow health protocols.
- **Sri Lanka**. After months of closure, [UNICEF reports](#) that schools in Sri Lanka are reopening again.