

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)



## Monitoring and Evaluating Covid-19 Mitigation Strategies in K-12 Schools: Interview Guide

Updated Nov. 13, 2020

[Print](#)

### Tools for K-12 schools

#### **Monitoring and Evaluating Mitigation Strategies in K-12 Schools**

Understand the impact of COVID-19 mitigation strategies. Includes example questions, indicators, and data sources

#### **Checklist: Monitoring and evaluation for K-12 schools**


Steps to develop a useful and feasible monitoring and evaluation plan

#### **Interview guide**

Understand individual perceptions and experiences with mitigation strategies in K-12 schools

#### **Focus group guide**

Learn about perceptions and experiences with mitigation strategies from small groups

This [interview guide](#)  is meant to be adaptable for your local context. This tool is meant to help the interviewer obtain more in-depth information about perceptions and experiences of mitigation strategies used to reduce the spread of COVID-19 when schools are in in-person learning mode. The tool is intended for government professionals in public health or education, school district administrators, and administrators of K-12 schools who are interested in conducting their own data collection. It may also be adapted to other settings. Local Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines should be explored and implemented as required prior to conducting interview activities/or data collection activities. Potential interviewees could include school or school district administrators, school faculty and staff, school-age children, or parents or guardians of school-age children. Interviews can be conducted by phone, virtually, or in person (ensuring appropriate COVID-19 prevention strategies are in place).

# Selecting Interview Questions

Depending on your needs and local context, you should select the questions provided in this interview guide that are most relevant to the questions you have identified and the in-depth information you are seeking from participants about their perceptions and experiences of mitigation strategies.

- The tool can be adapted for these different audiences. For example, parents may not be aware of all prevention strategies implemented in their child's school so the interviewer would want to adapt this question accordingly.
- The specificity of the interview guide will depend on the purpose of the interview, the sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race and ethnicity, education level, and income) of the interviewees, and type of interview.
- Not all the interview questions are relevant for all potential interviewees. The questions might be developed or modified for different audiences and presented in separate formats.

You can add, remove, or change the interview questions below to align with the purpose of the interview and your evaluation questions, and to fit within the time allotted to conduct the interview.

## Introduction and Welcome

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this **[telephone, virtual, or in-person]** interview. My name is **[your name]**. I am an **[insert role]** at **[organization or agency name]**. The purpose of this interview is to help us get feedback on the prevention strategies your school implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Prevention strategies are actions that people and communities, such as, K-12 schools, can take to reduce the spread the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19. Some examples of these prevention strategies for COVID-19 are handwashing, physical distancing (you may have heard of social distancing) and wearing a mask.

Your experience and opinions are very important to us. We are especially interested in learning about the prevention strategies implemented at **[your school district or school name]**, the factors that helped or didn't help your school in implementing these strategies, and how these prevention strategies may have impacted student's health (including social, behavioral, and mental) and academic achievement at your school.

The interview should take no more than **[X minutes]**. An interview is a guided conversation where the interviewer asks specific questions and actively listens to the interviewee. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Just be honest. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable with. **[Notetaker's name]** is here to take notes and keep track of time. We would like to record this interview. The recording will not be heard by anyone outside of this project. The interview is being recorded so that we can fully capture your experience and opinions.

Before we get started, I want to let you know that the information that we learn today will be compiled with other interviews into a final report. The report will include a summary of your comments and some recommendations. It may be shared with the Superintendent,

other district leaders, or public health professionals. What you say is confidential, and your name or the name of others will not be used in any reporting. This interview is anonymous and confidential. "Anonymous" means that we will not be using your name and you will not be identified in our report. If, during the interview, you mention other people, we will not use their names and they will not be identified in our report either. "Confidential" means that what we say in this room should not be repeated outside of this room. The tape this interview is recorded on will be kept safely in a locked facility until it is transcribed word for word, and then it will be destroyed. May we have your permission to record this interview?

*(Note to interviewer: Please obtain a yes from participant before proceeding. If participant declines permission to record but is willing to participate, the session will not be recorded; however, notes will be taken. Reassure the participant that the notes will not include their name or any other information to reveal their identity.)*

Thank you. What questions do you have before we begin?

## (Instruction for notetaker: begin taking notes on the interview as the interviewer asks the following questions)

I would like to give you a few minutes to think about your experiences with changes that were made in **[your school district, school, or classroom]** to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We'll talk about these as 'prevention strategies' *(Note to interviewer: consider offering a brief overview of [mitigation strategies](#) that can help participants better understand the mitigation strategies that may be discussed and the implementation of such prevention strategies.)*

## Implementation of Prevention

1. What prevention strategies were implemented in **[your school district, school, or classroom]** to reduce or prevent the spread of COVID-19? *(Notes to interviewer: prompt if don't hear anything about the following categories: masks, physical/social distancing, keeping students in a group throughout the day (cohorts or pods), screening for symptoms at home or in school, changes to meal service, washing hands or using hand sanitizer, changes to extracurricular activities including sports)*
  - a. How were the prevention strategies implemented in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?
  - b. When were the prevention strategies implemented in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?
2. In your opinion, how well did **[students, teachers, staff]** follow or practice these prevention strategies?
  - a. In your opinion, what strategies were the easiest for **[students, teachers, or staff]** to implement?
    - i. What made them easy?
  - b. In your opinion, what strategies were the hardest for **[students, teachers, or staff]** to implement?
    - i. What made them hard?

3. What are your school plans for when a **[student, teacher, or staff]** has been diagnosed by a doctor with COVID-19 or suspected to have COVID-19?
  - a. Is there a designated area where students, teachers, or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 are asked to wait until they can go home?
  - b. Is there a number of days **[students, teachers, or staff]** with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are asked to stay home from school? (*Note to Interviewer: Ask the interviewee to answer the best they can.*)
  - c. To the best of your knowledge, does the **[school district or school]** try to notify people who came into contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
4. How did the **[school district or school]** communicate prevention strategies to **[students, parents, teachers, and staff]**?
  - a. What were the messages the **[school district or school]** communicated to **[students, parents, teachers, and staff]**?
  - b. In your opinion, were these messages helpful in communicating prevention strategies?
    - i. What was it about these messages that made them helpful?
    - ii. What was it about these messages that made them not helpful?
5. What else can be done to help prevent COVID-19 in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?

Next, I would like to hear about things that may have helped or hindered your ability to implement the prevention strategies in **[your school district, school, or classroom]** to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

## Facilitators and Barriers

1. What did you find to be helpful when implementing the prevention strategies in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?
2. What were the challenges that **[you or your school]** encountered when implementing the prevention strategies in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?
  - a. What may have led to these challenges?
  - b. Were these challenges resolved? If so, how? If not, what prevented these challenges from being resolved?
  - c. What would have helped prevent the challenges?
3. What trainings or resources were provided to help **[students, teachers, or staff]** implement the prevention strategies to reduce spread of COVID-19? (*Notes to interviewer: This could include technology, excused absences, etc.*)
  - a. What resources provided by **[school district or school]** were most helpful?
  - b. What resources provided by the **[school district or school]** were not helpful?
  - c. What is missing that may have been helpful for successful implementation?
4. How did the **[school district]** support the implementation of the prevention strategies?
5. What changes have been made to the prevention strategies since the start of the school year?
  - a. To the best of your knowledge, what factors contributed to **[your school**

**district or school]** decisions to reduce or expand COVID-19 prevention strategies over **[time period; e.g., fall 2020]**?

6. How well do you think **[your school district, school, or classroom]** did in working to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19?
7. What do you think **[your school district, school, or classroom]** could have done differently to reduce or prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Next, I would like to hear your opinions about the impact of the prevention strategies on **[student, teachers, and staff]** health (social, behavioral, and mental) and academic achievements.

## Outcomes

1. How would you describe any impact the prevention strategies have had on reducing the spread of COVID-19 in your **[school district or school]** among **[students, families, teachers, or staff members]**?
  - a. How many **[students, teachers, or staff]** have been diagnosed by a medical professional with COVID-19 in **[specify time period, e.g., fall 2020]**? (*Note to Interviewer: Ask the interviewee to answer the best they can.*)
  - b. How many **[students, teachers, or staff]** believed they had COVID-19, but did not get a COVID-19 test? (*Note to Interviewer: Ask the interviewee to answer the best they can.*)
  - c. During the school year, were there any increases of COVID-19 among **[students, teachers, or staff]** who knew each other? (*Note to Interviewer: Ask the interviewee to answer the best they can*)
  - d. How many days was the school shut down **[specify time period, e.g., spring or fall 2020]** because of COVID-19? (*Note to Interviewer: Ask the interviewee to answer the best they can.*)
2. What differences did you observe in academic outcomes among students? (*Notes to interviewer: This could include student grades, level of engagement in class, comprehension of the material, and other similar outcomes.*)
  - a. How do you think fall 2020 academic outcomes compare with fall 2019 at the **[school or classroom level]**?
3. How would you describe any impact the prevention strategies have had on social health outcomes (e.g., treating others with respect or developing and maintaining friendships with peers) among **[students, teachers, or staff members]**?
4. How would you describe any impact the prevention strategies have had on behavioral health outcomes (e.g., bullying, fighting, or defiance of practicing prevention strategies) among **[students, teachers, or staff members]**?
5. How would you describe any impact the prevention strategies have had on mental health outcomes (e.g., anxiety, sadness, frustration, or anger) among **[students, teachers, or staff members]**?
6. How have the prevention strategies affected different populations or groups?

Lastly, I have a few more questions for you about future implementation of prevention strategies.

# Recommendations

1. What are your overall suggestions for improving the implementation of prevention strategies in **[your school district, school, or classroom]**?
2. What advice would you give to **[teachers or other schools]**?
3. Do you have any other thoughts or comments you would like to share?

## Closing

Thank you so much for sharing this useful information with us. Today, we have learned **[summarize interview information]**. I would like to remind you that any information you provided is anonymous and confidential. If you have any questions or concerns about today's interview, please contact me at **[provide contact information]**.

Last Updated Nov. 13, 2020

Content source: [National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\), Division of Viral Diseases](#)