

Bathroom Protocol

In-Person Learning Resources for Parents and Caregivers at Chicago Public Schools — A Resource Created by Healthy Schools Campaign for Parents and Caregivers in Chicago Public Schools

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Bathroom Protocol

Schools can do everything possible to limit the use of separated pods to one classroom, but the need to use public and shared bathrooms will always be there. Issues with ventilation and touch surfaces in restrooms could make bathrooms a point of transmission for COVID-19. Schools will need to address this with updated bathroom protocols.

What Experts Say

Best practices for bathroom protocol from public health experts include:

- Transmission risk in bathrooms may be minimized by handwashing and installing touchless faucets, soap dispensers, towel dispensers, and doors.
- It may be appropriate for an adult to be present to assist with or monitor handwashing in the bathroom, particularly for small children.
- Students may wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after they return to their classroom in a location where their teacher can monitor hand hygiene.
- Bathroom exhaust fans should run continuously, and bathroom doors should be closed at all times, even when not in use.
- Long-range airborne transmission risk in bathrooms may be further minimized by installing toilet lids, keeping lids closed when not in use, and encouraging students to close the lids before flushing.
- To enforce physical and group distancing and to minimize crowding, it may be useful to close bathrooms during transition periods and promote bathroom breaks during class time instead, to assign classrooms to use specific bathrooms or to stagger the timing of scheduled bathroom breaks by class.

What CPS Says

Pods will be assigned to designated bathrooms and will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Schools must remind students to wash their hands thoroughly and often and use hand sanitizer any time they return to their classroom. In restrooms, every other handwashing station will be closed to accommodate physical distancing.

Parents and Caregivers Should Know

It may be worth asking more about the process for supervising bathroom usage and getting more information about ventilation considerations in regards to bathrooms. Some questions to ask your building leaders include:

- Who will be in charge of monitoring bathroom usage and ensuring students will be limited to designated bathrooms?
- Will students be provided a bathroom use schedule to ensure they are not in a bathroom with students outside of their pod?
- How frequently will the bathroom be clean and disinfected throughout the day?
- How many people will be allowed in a bathroom at one time?
- Who will be supervising handwashing for younger students before and after bathroom use?
- Will handwashing stations be moved outside the bathroom to limit time spent inside the bathroom?
- Will the building be providing additional ventilation in bathrooms?
- Will students be allowed hall passes to go to the bathroom?

The best practices in this document are based on guidelines provided by the Harvard [T.H. Chan School of Public Health](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).