**TITLE 6 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**CHAPTER 12 PUBLIC SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**PART 15 COVID-19 SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

**6.12.15.1 ISSUING AGENCY:** Public Education Department hereinafter referred to as the department.

[6.12.15.1 NMAC – N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.2 SCOPE:** The provisions of this regulation apply to all public schools in New Mexico.

[6.12.15.2 NMAC - N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** Sections 9-24-8, 12-10-10, 22-2-1, and 22-2-2 NMSA 1978.

[6.12.15.3 NMAC - N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.4 DURATION:** Permanent.

[6.12.15.4 NMAC - N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.5 EFFECTIVE DATE:** October 13, 2021, unless a later date is cited at the end of a section.

[6.12.15.5 NMAC - N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.6 OBJECTIVE:** This rule establishes the requirements for the operation of public schools during the pandemic.

[6.12.15.6 NMAC – N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.7 DEFINITIONS:** **[RESERVED]**

**6.12.15.8 REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOLS:**

**A.** All public schools and local school districts shall:

**(1)** follow all public health orders and executive orders and department guidance for the operation of schools, school sponsored activities, and school premises, including school transportation;

**(2)** participate in surveillance testing programs detailed in department guidance;

**(3)** adhere to social distancing requirements;

**(4)** require all persons in school buildings, vehicles, and at indoor school events to wear face coverings per department guidance and current statewide public health orders;

**(5)** cooperate immediately and fully with department officials, environment department officials, fire marshals, state police, and other officials conducting site visits and investigating COVID-safe practices; and

**(6)** to the extent possible, implement practices to promote social emotional learning, support high quality teaching and learning, and effectively communicate with tribal communities and families.

**B. COVID-19 safe practices.** All local school districts and public schools shall report all confirmed cases of COVID-19 in students, staff, contractors and volunteers who were infectious while on campus to the department; shall report all staff cases, regardless of whether the employees were on campus while infectious, to the environment department; and shall perform all COVID-19 safe practices described or referenced in department guidance, such as:

**(1)** working with school administrators, school nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms;

**(2)** closing off and limiting access to areas potentially affected by COVID-19 exposure and, if possible, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting;

**(3)** requiring school nurses and other healthcare providers to use centers for disease control and prevention (CDC) recommended standard precautions when caring for sick people, including:

**(a)** engaging in frequent hand hygiene;

**(b)** using personal protective equipment when there is an expectation of possible exposure to infectious individuals or materials;

**(c)** following respiratory hygiene and coughing etiquette;

**(d)** ensuring appropriate patient placement in quarantine or isolation;

**(e)** ensuring the proper handling and disinfection of patient care equipment and instruments; and

**(f)** ensuring healthcare provider safety, including proper handling and disposal of needles and other sharps.

**(4)** requiring school nurses and other healthcare workers to use CDC recommended transmission-based precautions when caring for sick people, including:

**(a)** establishing procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick home or to a healthcare facility;

**(b)** closing for 24 hours parts of school buildings if used by a COVID-19 infected person then clean and disinfect before re-opening affected areas;

**(c)** advising sick staff members and children not to return until they have met department criteria to discontinue home isolation; and

**(d)** informing those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow department guidance.

**C. Transportation.** School districts and schools shall follow department guidance, which requires students to sit in spaced and assigned seating while being transported to and from schools, limits the number of students who may be seated together on a bus seat, and sets forth detailed requirements and suggestions for COVID-19 safe practices for the transportation of students.

**D.** **Staffing.** All school districts and schools shall follow public health orders, executive orders and department guidance as updated from time to time and shall train staff in local and state rules regarding health and safety procedures, such as appropriate use of personal protective equipment and procedures for when school personnel or students exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.

**E. Tribal sovereignty.** School districts and schools shall honor tribal sovereignty and abide by applicable tribal public health orders, tribal executive orders, and tribal council resolutions.

[6.12.15.8 NMAC – N, 10/13/2021]

**6.12.15.9 [RESERVED]**

**6.12.15.10 [RESERVED]**

**6.12.15.11 [RESERVED]**

**6.12.15.12 [RESERVED]**

**HISTORY OF 6.12.15 NMAC: [RESERVED]**