

Assistant Commissioner
Office of School Governance, Policy, and Religious and Independent Schools
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August 26, 2020

TO: District Superintendents, School Building Leaders, Nonpublic School Leaders, Charter School Leaders

From: Christina Coughlin, Assistant Commissioner

Re: COVID 19 Reopening Guidance – Facilities Clarifications

The attached five Questions & Answers are intended to provide clarification to the Facilities Mandatory Requirements outlined on pages 46 thru 54 of the [NYSED School Reopening Guidance](#).

The attached Q & A's also respond to the [Office of Facilities Planning's \(OFP\) August 5, 2020 COVID FAQ](#) document.

In response to concerns NYSED received from district administrators related to the requirements set for facilities found in the two documents noted above we have revised the guidance as indicated in the five points listed in the document.

The five changes/clarifications are as follows:

1. Architects' Stamps : We clarified that there is no requirement for a design professional to certify and sign and seal the submitted floor plan.
2. Technical Assistance: School administrators are encouraged to call the Office of Facilities

closers to be left open - to improve ventilation and reduce contact with door handles to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are grateful for the thoughtful feedback we received from the field on these issues. Navigating this new environment, while continue to address continuing risks, is challenging for all of us. The collegial process was followed by extensive internal review. It has resulted in these new requirements and clarifications. We believe they will aid the districts in finalizing their reopening plans and help to facilitate the mitigation of the effects of COVID-19.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Office of Facilities Planning at 518-474-3906.

1. Is an architect's stamp necessary for Repurposing Plans? 2

2. Technical Assistance: District Administrators are encouraged to call the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP) 518 474 3906, with any questions regarding changes to facilities including but not limited to: alterations, new buildings, leased modular and tents, leased spaces, repurposing space, sneeze guards, mechanical, electrical & plumbing equipment and COVID-19 submission requirements.
3. Sneeze Guards: The guidance Titled, "Light Transmitting Plastic Sneeze Guards or Separators," dated July 28, 2020, is posted on the OFP website. We are continuing discussions with the Department of State's Division of Building Standards & Codes (DOS) about possible changes to the document. Until the DOS has directed SED to revise our Guidance the requirements found therein still apply.
4. FAQ No.11 (Revised)
Where do we take measurements from to establish social distancing; for example in the layout of furniture/equipment/etc. ?

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