

Education Systems' Response to COVID-19

Brief: August 7th, 2020

Recent developments and government decisions on school reopening paint a picture of continued uncertainty around the disruptions to schools and learning caused by the pandemic. Some countries (Germany, France, Australia, Uruguay) have returned children to school, however, many others remain closed. Many plan on launching the upcoming school year remotely (US-some districts, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, Lebanon). Kenya and Bolivia are cancelling the school year. Globally, over 1 billion children (about 2/3 of the world's learners) are still impacted by school closures.

Country school closures and reopenings (data as of August 6th)

	Africa	EAP	ECA	LAC and North America	MENA	SAR	Total
Closed or partly closed	29	11	20	41	19	8	128
Open or Open with limitations	19	14	30	2	2	0	67

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

1. **SCHOOLS REOPENING:** A number of countries have reopened schools, or have announced the return to classroom in the fall

- In **Europe**, the British [Government has published its safety plans](#) for England's (in-person) return to school in September - 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.
- **Uruguay**, having the lowest number of cases across the region, has been able to keep schools open and numbers down with stringent public health measures, this despite neighboring Brazil, with the second-highest number of cases in the world. This month, over 70% of secondary students are attending school in-person, under social distancing and hygiene protocols.
- **Egypt** has kept schools closed, but in July the Ministry of Education administered the national secondary school examinations in person, using social distancing measures.
- **In Africa**, [19 countries have now reopened schools](#), while 27, such as **Uganda**, and **Senegal**, have decided to keep them closed for now. **Burundi** and **Seychelles** have kept at least some schools open throughout the pandemic. **Niger** and **Burkina Faso** reopened schools after a sustained downward trend in cases. However, **Côte d'Ivoire** and **Ghana** chose to reopen despite rising cases.
- In **Singapore**, the Ministry of Education announced that [some lower risk extra-curricular activities can now resume](#) in secondary school, but must follow social distancing mandates. No activities are allowed yet for primary schools.
- **Thailand** [returned kids to school](#) in July under social distancing measures and after weeks of no local transmission.
- **Fiji** is seeing an increase of infections, but schools reopened gradually in July, with all schools now open.
- **Open schools remain an exception** around the world, despite these latest examples. This is in line with the COVID [school closure tracking tool](#) available through the World Bank. Globally, over 1 billion kids (about 2/3 of the world's learners) are still impacted by school closures.

Some countries are only reopening remotely or not at all

- **Mexico** announced that the new school year will start August 24th using [remote learning](#). The Secretary of Education [agreed with television corporations](#) to schedule educational content for 24 hours / seven days a week through six channels to cater to over 30 million students. As [94% of families have access to](#)

[TV](#) this guarantees that remote learning reaches almost all students, the 6% remaining can access to textbooks and guides in print and digital formats as well as radio lessons.

- In the [United States](#), several highly-populated cities and school districts have announced extension of remote (online) learning till the fall (Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, Washington DC, Massachusetts, New York, Maryland, Virginia. and others).
- [Kenya](#) announced that schools will reopen only in January 2021. [The pandemic exposed a digital divide](#) as poor and rural households didn't have access to radio, television, laptops, internet, or even electricity. The multi-platform strategy followed by the government left many children without any exposure to any educational experience, and given the length of the closure, the Ministry decided that student will start again the same grade next year. The Minister of Education announced that in addition to continuing remote learning activities, they will also [launch a community program](#) to pair teachers with students who don't have access to education.
- [Bolivia](#) announced that given the lack of access of most students to any educational service, the school year is closed for 2020 and classes will resume in February 2021.
- [Panama](#) started the school year remotely [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.
- [Lebanon's](#) Ministry of Education and Higher Education has alerted parents via its social media outlets that the start of the school year in September *may be* remote if the current rise in cases continues.
- [Puerto Rico](#) schools will reopen remotely in September. That decision will be revisited once again August 17th to determine if it's safe to modify the approach.
- [Liberia's](#) kindergarten to grade 5 students will stay home this fall, while older students will finish their academic year and take exams. The next [academic year starts end of December. Teaching includes Saturday and Sunday.](#)
- In [Zimbabwe](#), the school year has resumed, but [only through](#) online classes, with English lessons taught through TV and radio.

2. *SCHOOLS (RE)CLOSING: Some countries that had reopened schools have closed recently (for full list of countries that have reopened schools, see Annex 1)*

- [Australia](#) has closed schools in Sydney and in select districts around Victoria, where infections are on the rise.
- [Hong Kong](#) locked down and closed schools in January but reopened in May. On July 12th the Government closed schools again, one week ahead of the scheduled school year end due to an increase of local cases.
- [South Africa](#), due to the increase in COVID- 19 cases, the President of South Africa declared that [schools were closing again for four weeks](#), except for grade 12 which will have a one-week break.
- [Israel](#) reopened schools in May, allowing all students to return to the classroom. A heat wave in late May prompted the Government to ease the masks requirement and infections began to increase. The Government then asked schools to close for two weeks if they had confirmed cases. By mid-July, according to the Ministry of education, [2,026 students, teachers, and staff had contracted COVID-19, and 28,147 were in quarantine due to possible contagion. Schools are expected to reopen on September 1st with stricture restrictions. See also Politico article of July 29th analyzing which countries have opened and how.](#)

3. *MOVING TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR: ISSUES AROUND RETURNING TO SCHOOL*

Children

- Studies, such as that published by [Nature Medicine](#), conclude that young children may be less likely [to get sick](#) from COVID-19 and rarely [get very ill](#) if they do show symptoms, and they seem to be less likely to infect other people.

- A another study using contact tracing in [South Korea](#), published by the American Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on July 16th, found that [kids under the age of 10 spread the virus at about half the rate of adults](#), but that kids between 10 and 19 spread it at a similar rate as adults.
- These findings are similar to a smaller study carried out in [France](#), released in June that found [no evidence of transmission in schools](#).

Personal Protective Equipment (Masks)

- Some systems are mandating use of masks in classrooms (in [Germany](#), students wear them in hallways or bathrooms, while in [France](#), teachers are to use them when less than a meter away from students). Other Government are not mandating them ([England](#) announced that teachers will not be required to wear masks while in school, but the teachers union has advocated they be required for teacher safety).

Infrastructure, including air quality

- Air quality is the latest COVID-19 crisis issue for schools reopening. The average 15 year-old student in OECD countries has spent 7,538 hours inside [school buildings](#), where the lack of proper ventilation and stagnate air create opportunities for virus spreading. Recently, research has surfaced making the case that air quality should be a primary focus of a healthy building. These papers suggest that the circulation of fresh air, its filtration, and more space for students will make the schools safer and improve learning outcomes of students. New [spaces for learning](#) with larger circulation areas and more open spaces are considerations now moving into the front seat of the discussion in school designs. There is concern this will further exacerbate the gap between those who can improve and those who can't, given limited resources. See webinar announcement below.
- The sheer volume of students and teachers in school buildings and the high traffic situations brought on by student movement makes social distancing measures difficult to implement in some schools. [Denmark](#), [South Korea](#), and [Israel](#) provide [lessons to follow \(and avoid\) in safe reopening](#).

Teachers

- **Keeping teachers and school employees safe at work** has become a critical issue of debate. A Kaiser Family Foundation [analysis](#) released in July estimates that 1 in 4 American teachers have health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious illness if they were to contract COVID-19. Among the big questions remaining is how to address the shortage of teachers, should some get sick, or to ensure smaller class sizes. In the **UK**, the Scottish Government has allocated £50 million to [hiring new teachers and support staff](#) to address the gap. In countries including **Denmark**, **France**, and **Italy**, teachers' unions were actively involved in the school reopening discussions and the provision of universal healthcare in those countries alleviated some concerns.

4. GUIDANCE ON RETURNING TO SCHOOL

- The CDC has produced [a statement on reopening schools](#) and has launched the “[Plan, Prepare, and Respond](#)” guidelines targeting administrators, caregivers, and parents about safety in schooling. The statement largely advocates for returning children to school, particularly those of younger grades.
- **Younger children need in-person schooling** is the main point of a [new report](#) released by the U.S. National **Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine**, which argues that without in-person instruction, schools risk children falling behind academically and exacerbating educational inequities.
- The **New York Times** has developed an interactive guide describing [What Back to School Might Look Like in an Age of COVID-19](#), looking at bussing, entering and exiting the building, teaching, and carrying on with activities that would be in line with CDC guidelines.



Two recent surveys on the Impact of COVID19.

World Bank-UNESCO-UNICEF Survey¹ on Education Responses

- The pandemic affected school calendars in 70% of the 118 respondent countries, most of them Lower income countries (LICs).
- *Over 95% of countries surveyed deployed distance education during closures, using online, recorded, TV, radio, and paper lessons.*
- Of those offering distance learning, about half continued to assess students.
- 17% of respondent countries cancelled standard exams.
- For more details and data, follow this [link](#).

ILO-UNESCO-WBG Joint Survey on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Skills Development during the time of COVID-19

The results point to significant impact of COVID-19 closures on the TVET industry, and a likely rise in dropouts. In many countries, trainers lack the skills necessary for remote training, need time to prepare videos or online training, and have low access to internet. Additionally, the closure of businesses has prevented students from carrying out practical training, a critical aspect for TVET.

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Latest Relevant Resources

- **Oxford University** launched the Oxford [Supertracker](#), a global directory of over 100 [policy trackers](#) and [surveys](#) related to COVID-19 and a [Government Response Tracker](#) that measures the strictness of government lockdown measures to combat the spread of the virus.
- **Johns Hopkins University**, a leading source in the US for tracking COVID19 spread, has launched a [School Reopening Policy Tracker](#) for grades K-12. The tool includes links to school plans of all 50 states, as well as thirteen national guidance notes and resources for administrators, teachers, and parents.
- [Moving Exams Online: Five Points to Consider](#) (Blog: July 16, 2020)
- [COVID-19 and Education Systems in Tanzania: Brainstorming for a True Ed-Tech Disruption](#) (Blog: Jul 23, 2020)
- *A compilation of 40 blogs on Education written in the first 100 days of the pandemic can be found [here](#)*
- *Latest research, tools, blogs, etc. can be found at the [Bank Education – COVID-19 website](#)*

ANNEX 1 – Latest on COUNTRIES REOPENING SCHOOLS (received from teams)

AFRICA

- **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.
- **Botswana**. Standard 7, form 3, and form 5 returned by June 17, with additional classes gradually phasing in. Pre-primary schools will now begin 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**, students of examinations classes returned on June 1st, no date has been confirmed for rest of the year. The World Food Program is gradually restarting school [feeding activities](#) to benefit them. Universities have started to gradually reopen.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Ghana** is undergoing 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. By July 17th, a joint statement by pre-tertiary teacher unions (GNAT, NAGRAT, TEWU, and CCT) asked the government to [close down the schools](#) due to fear of schools cases and lack of measures to ensure safety of students and teachers.
- **Guinea**, schools [reopened](#) on June 29th, starting with exam classes.
- **Kenya**, announced on July 7th that schools will remain [closed until January](#) and that final year exams will be cancelled. Students of basic education in private and public schools will have to repeat the school year. The Ministry will continue to explore how to expand access of remote learning to all students. Colleges and universities may be able to reopen if they comply by government guidelines.
- **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. July 6th a lockdown was reinstated in the central region and schools had to [close again](#). They are now gradually reopening.
- **Niger**, public schools reopened by June 1st.
- **Sierra Leone**. School reopening Task Force established and working on different elements. Schools reopened July 1st for those sitting for [standard exams](#). A comprehensive set of guidelines that will aid with the reopening of the school are under development.
- **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.

- **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.
- **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, etc.

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.
- **Armenia**. Mass return of students to school is not planned until late August/early September. Pre- schools are open since May 18th, with [measures](#) such as temperature checks, shoes disinfection, and spending most of the school day outdoors.
- **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. Classes are split into two groups, with group 1 being in school Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and group 2 on Thursday and Friday; alternating the next week. Mandatory regular washing of hands, especially after entering the school and masks work outside the classroom (in corridors).
- **Belarus**, schools [reopened on a voluntary basis](#).
- **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.
- **Bulgaria**. Reopening 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](#).
- **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 [expected to start](#) 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. Children are asked to play in small groups. Teachers are asked to be especially vigilant and ensure that only limited number of students play together at the same time. Classes are divided into sub groups; children each have their own desks marooned two yards away from their nearest neighbor; teachers work with the same group throughout the day and do not switch; children play only with kids from their class and only in small groups; teachers don't gather in the staff room.
- 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. By June 11th, only 9.1% of children in England were back to classes. The government has announced a £1 billion fund to help students catch up. Of this, £650 million will be made available to principals for head teachers to provide tutoring sessions for small groups of primary and secondary students. The rest will be allocated to a national tutoring program aimed at the most disadvantages groups. In preparation for wide school reopening this 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.

- **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.
- **Finland**, [reopened](#) schools by mid-May.
- **France**. May 11th – staggered reentry starting with younger grades. By May 25th, all primary and secondary students are back in school. Parents have final say about whether they want to send their children or not. No punishment for not attending.
- **Germany**. Reopened May 6th. Recently, a [study](#) found low rates of infection among teachers and students in schools in the state of Saxony, which suggests schools might not play an important role in spreading the virus.
- **Greece**. Students [returned](#) May 4th, but are following guidelines, for example, stay at least two meters (6.56 feet) apart.
- **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.
- **Iceland**, by June 15th all schools were open, applying social distance and hygiene [measures](#).
- **Lithuania**, reopened schools for primary school students by [May 25th](#), other grades joined by early June.
- **Luxembourg**. Schools have [gradually been reopening](#) since May 4th, with students in their final year of secondary school returning first.
- **Netherlands**. Primary schools reopen on May 11th, and secondary schools on June 1st. Schools for secondary VET remain closed.
- **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.
- **Poland**, schools [reopened](#) by end of May.
- **Portugal**, schools [reopened](#) by mid-May.
- **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.
- **Slovak Republic**, schools and kindergartens [opened](#) by June 1st.
- **Slovenia**. Children in the first three grades of primary school, final years secondary school, and kindergartens returned to classrooms on [May 18th](#).
- **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 [a set of recommendations for schools to reopen](#) for all this fall (September 7th) which include 20 students per class, the use of masks when the distance of 1.5 meters cannot be sustained, and the prohibition of school meetings and assemblies.
- **Switzerland**. May 11th for younger grades. Older children from their 10th year, as well as university students, returned on June 8th.
- **Ukraine**, kindergartens [reopened](#) by late May.

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. The only exception is the Australian Capital Territory, where nine hub schools were set up for these children, and they are not reopening schools until next week and the following week (using a staggered approach). The State of Victoria had reopened for students in years 11 and 12 but as of July 28th has become a [hotspot for COVID-19](#) cases in Australia and 58 schools have had to re-close so far, causing school principals to ask to return to remote learning.

- **Brunei Darussalam.** Reopened schools [early June](#) for students who will take national examinations.
- **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 [re close schools](#) due to a new COVID-19 outbreak.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Mongolia.** Schools to reopen in the fall (September 20th).
- **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.
- **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. South Korea’s approach is under consideration by other countries looking to implement a nimble, actionable approach to reopening schools.
- **Singapore.** Schools fully reopened by [early June](#). Measures include temperature checks, use of masks, strict hygiene, among others,
- **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. As of end July, it remains one of the few COVID19-free countries.
- **Vietnam's** upper secondary schools and universities and colleges reopened in some provinces and then re-closed in compliance with the social distancing directive from the Prime Minister. 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.

Latin, Central and North America

- **Canada.** As of July 29th, all provinces had announced that most or all of their students will return to school in September. 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** announced that the new school year will start 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 [reopened](#) April 20th. Yet, [parents were reluctant to send the children back](#) and remote learning is ongoing for children who have not returned to classes. By July 9th, only [10% of students](#) were attending classes and the school year is deemed as lost.
- **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.
- **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. Several highly-populated [cities and school districts](#) have announced extension of remote (online) learning till the fall (Atlanta, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Nashville, New York, Philadelphia, San Diego, and others).
- **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. Students' return is optional, and children are split into smaller groups in each class, extended hours for learning are suspended, and everyone must wear face masks.

Middle East and North Africa

- In **Algeria**, schools remain closed for the summer holidays, with students in grade 12 expected to return shortly to review for exams taking place in October 2020.

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).

- **Egypt**, schools only reopened to administer [high school exams](#) in July. Students attended masked and gloved, and schools arranged for the exams to be taken respecting social distancing measures.
- **Israel**. Reopened in May for all grades with social distancing measures. In late May, Israel saw record-high temperatures, and authorities relaxed the mask restrictions for students. By mid-June, cases began increasing in schools and individual schools were asked to re-close. By mid-June [355 schools had to close again](#). By mid-July, according to the Ministry of education, [2,026 students, teachers, and staff had contracted COVID-19, and 28,147 were in quarantine due to possible contagion](#). The Public Health Director [resigned](#) claiming that schools and business opened too quickly against her warnings. [Schools are expected to reopen on September 1st with stricture restrictions](#).
- **Lebanon**. As of July 30th, Lebanon Ministry of Education and Higher Education was assessing the options in light of increased cases, preparing for potentially starting the new school year [remotely](#).
- In **Tunisia**, students in grade 12 returned to the classroom to study for standard exams.

South Asia

- **Pakistan**, by early July during an inter-provincial education ministers' conference headed by the Federal Minister of Education it was agreed that schools across the country will [reopen](#) on the first week of September. On July 20th, the All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association(APPSCA) formulated a petition to reopen schools from August 15th, but the Islamabad High Court disposed of it declaring it was up to the government to formulate a policy on the matter.