



# GETTING BACK TO SCHOOL SAFELY

Our Ministry's Plan for  
a Safe Return to  
the Classroom

OCTOBER 2021



# OUR REALITIES



## COVID-19 IS NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

Scientists say the rapidly evolving coronavirus will be circulating among the world's population for some time. One other thing that scientists agree upon is that in the battle against the virus that has killed more than 2 million people, is the importance of the COVID-19 vaccinations.



## VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE.

Our country is blessed to have access to enough vaccines for all our population, 12 years and older. Vaccines are safe and effective against hospitalisations and deaths associated with COVID-19.



## PRECIOUS TIME IS BEING LOST.

Our students have been out of the classroom for over 18 months. We do not yet know the extent of the academic implications from this time.



## OUR STUDENTS ARE BEING DISENGAGED.

Our dropout rate is higher than ever, especially for our young men. Some of them may never return to school.



## CONSEQUENCES ARE BEING FELT.

Our psycho-social well-being as a nation has suffered. The rise in crime and domestic violence mirrors the decline in the mental health of people of all ages.



## WE CAN GO BACK SAFELY!

Our schools have made the necessary modifications to their campuses and their schedules to accommodate hybrid learning.

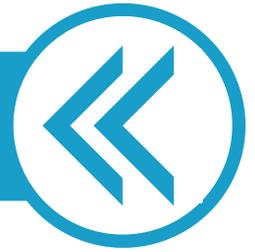


## WE CAN BUILD BACK BETTER!

Belize has all we need as a country to promote healthy lifestyles and eating habits. Our schools can be the best place to support our students and their families in this.



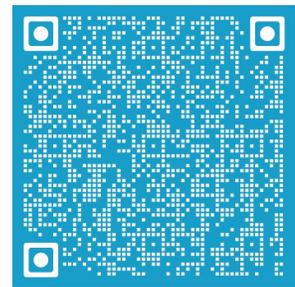
# THE PROCESS OF RETURN



Starting October 4, schools who are given the Green Light Status can have students and teachers return to the classroom for hybrid learning. Green Light application forms are live starting on September 30, 2021.

In preparation for October 4, if your school would like to open for hybrid learning, you must:

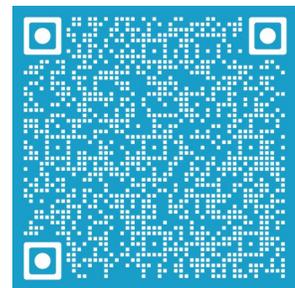
- 1 Complete and submit the form titled "Green Light Status for Return to Onsite Learning."
- 2 Allow up to 24 hours for your official response from the MoECST.



Click or Scan the QR above to access the "Green Light Status for the Return to Onsite Learning" Form.

When you have been given the Green Light, your school will be expected to:

- 1 Follow the Guidelines for School Operations for the 2021-2022 Academic Year
- 2 Inform MoECST and MoHW of any suspected COVID-19 cases using the form titled "School Report: COVID-19 Cases".



Click or Scan the QR above to access the "School Report: COVID-19 Cases" Form

# GREEN LIGHT CERTIFICATION



Green Light Status will be given to schools based on the following criteria:

**1**

Geographic location of the school and the level of contagion in that area

**2**

Teacher vaccination status for the school

**3**

Student vaccination status for the school (considering only students who are eligible for the vaccine)

**4**

Physical readiness of the school campus to accommodate students

**5**

Community context of the school and the need for a return to the classroom.

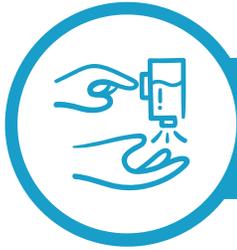
# PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOL BUS OPERATORS



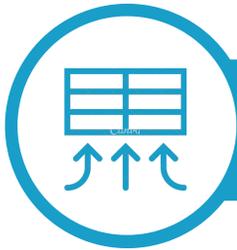
All school bus contractors must ensure the following:



A thorough sanitization of the bus's exterior and interior (front & rear doors, windows, seats, steering wheel) must be carried out daily, after each pickup and drop off.



Buses must always be equipped with hand sanitizers and disinfectant sprays.



All windows must be functional to allow for proper ventilation.

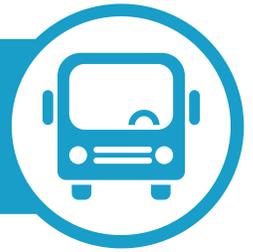


Students and teachers must have their hands sanitized and must wear a face mask before boarding the bus.



Bus drivers and conductors must always wear face masks and must ensure that students and teachers do the same while seated on the bus.

# PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOL BUS OPERATORS



continued

All school bus contractors must ensure the following:



Seating on the bus must be in accordance with the mandatory six-foot physical distancing protocol.



If a bus driver and/or bus conductor is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, the District Education Centre (DEC) should be informed immediately and arrangements should be made for a replacement driver and/or conductor.



If a child and/or teacher is exhibiting flu-like symptoms, the principal of his/her school should be notified immediately.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)



## **Who should fill out the Green Light Status Form?**

Any school who is prepared to begin to have students and teachers return for hybrid learning should complete and submit the form.



## **What is meant by hybrid learning?**

Students have access to face-to-face instruction but on shifts. On-site instruction is supplemented using either a learning management platform and a video-conferencing tool or text/print-based learning resources, or a combination of these.



## **Is it okay for a school to stay fully online or in distance learning mode right now?**

Yes. Schools can decide to continue fully with distance learning at this time.



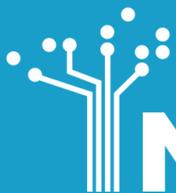
## **Can an unvaccinated student between the ages of 12 - 17 return to school?**

Yes. No student will be turned away from school. Parents and legal guardians are, however, encouraged to have their children vaccinated. Vaccines are safe, effective and they reduce the risk of severe illness associated with the COVID-19 virus.



## **Are uniforms and books mandatory for students to return?**

No. The important thing is to begin to let students transition back into the classroom. Students should not be required to have uniforms or books in order to return.



**MoECST**