

## CHAPTER 10: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES DURING SCHOOL REOPENING POST-COVID-19: A STRATEGIC APPROACH

Gokuladas V.K. , Baby Sam S.K. 

### Chapter Highlights

- School reopening procedures after the COVID-19 lockdown has been one of the challenging tasks for educational institutions across the world.
- Developing and implementing a strategic plan for the physical reopening of schools is the need of the hour.
- This study proposes a strategic model for the successful reopening of schools post-COVID-19-lockdown.
- The theoretical strategic model explained in this study takes into account various dimensions of school operation vis-à-vis the stakeholders in the system.
- This article explains the duties and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the educational system before, during, and after the reopening of schools post-lockdown.
- This study comprehensively covers each aspect of the educational institution that will require attention during the physical reopening of schools.

## Introduction

The current pandemic has its devastating spread across the nations despite considerable awareness programs among the people. It has been observed by Chandra, Fishman, & Melton (2020) the economy would come back to normal only if it overcomes three major constraints i.e., health care capacity, testing capacity, and certification capacity of each country or region. Carucci (2020) asserted that fear of getting sick was the major concern of people who could not return to work, followed by the usage of public transportation and childcare concerns. Amidst these concerns, it becomes all the more difficult for children to get back to school as they are considered as a vulnerable group as far as this pandemic is concerned. UNICEF (2020) identified that major concerns of parents while sending their wards to schools in the post-COVID-19 scenario would include the safety of their children, precautions to be adopted as preventive measures while sending them to school, ways to deal with the learning difficulties of children, and the challenges involved in getting children back to school mode. Even though teachers were quick in adapting to technology-assisted teaching, they felt the lack of spontaneous responses from students due to non-authentic interaction with them (Niemi & Kousa, 2020). Restricted interaction and lack of equipment & infrastructure also aggravated the pressing need for face-to-face learning by reopening the schools physically (Hebebcı, Bertiz, & Alan, 2020).

There have been instances in the recent past in various parts of the world wherein the governments reopened schools in an uncontrolled experimental manner in the wake of the reduced spread of this pandemic in those countries. Such efforts should have been carried out in close collaboration involving government machinery, schools, scientists, and hospitals (Chandra, Fishman, & Melton, 2020). Even though monitoring self-anxiety, improving patience & flexibility, managing expectations, etc., are the need of the hour to keep one rejuvenated at this juncture (Carucci, 2020), it also remains a matter of concern as to how such a mindset could be inculcated among children. American Academy of Pediatrics (2020) identified that factors such as physical distancing, personal hygiene, limiting classroom movements, cleansing & disinfecting, temperature testing, etc., could be vital to ensure that the schools remain safe for children. Even though there have been confirmations from different parts of the world that the younger generation has a reduced risk of infection and transmission (Science, 2020), the school reopening will remain as the greatest challenge unless the concerns of parents are appropriately addressed by the school management.

Therefore, it is imperative that a safe and secure plan for reopening the schools is put in place to ensure that the schooling system is back to normal in the most effective manner. This chapter is purported to bring out a theoretical view about various challenges that reopening of schools could pose to the school-authorities post-lockdown. This article also explains various dimensions of the school environment that could be addressed by different stakeholders in the system so as to ensure that that reopening of schools rolls out successfully.

### **Strategic Plan for Reopening of Schools**

The current scenario of the educational sector necessitates the schools to adopt a detailed plan of action before, during, and after reopening the school regardless of the financial or infrastructural facilities available at schools. Such efforts will not only ensure that the school meets the necessary norms stipulated by authorities for reopening but also instill a sense of confidence among the parent fraternity regarding the safety of their children. However, the fact that each school has its own uniqueness in terms of students' strength, facilities, staff strength, etc., further adds complexity to the process of formulating a common policy for all schools on the subject matter. The absence of unified plans at the national level further aggravates the confusion and uncertainty amongst schools regarding the strategies for physical reopening (ElSaheli-Elhage, 2021).

It has been observed that all processes related to reopening of schools need to be carried out in consultation and in association with all stakeholders because any omission of responsibility on the part of any of the stakeholders will be detrimental to the safety of our children (Couzin-Frankel, Vogel, & Weiland, 2020). Therefore, creating a highly collaborative environment of all stakeholders through transparent communication and effective awareness is imperative at the juncture of reopening the schools. With the support and efforts of all stakeholders in the system, it is hopeful of successfully reopening the schools at the appropriate time with adequate safety precautions. In line with the UNESCO's COVID-19 responses regarding education prepared by the International Institute of Educational Planning (2006) and through the input received from various schools, the following dimensions of the educational institution need to be provided with adequate attention while reopening the schools: a) Academics, b) Facilities, c) Financial measures d) Human Resources ,and e) Communication. All the above dimensions are to be fully adhered to by all stakeholders of the institution so as to ensure that no stone is unturned as far as the

safety of children and staff are concerned. The following stakeholders have an immense scope of contribution to the above cause: a) Students, b) Parents, c) School Management Committee (SMC), d) School Administration, and e) Teachers.

### Strategic Model for Reopening of Schools

In view of the above-mentioned discussion, a model has been developed and proposed in this article under the intricate nature of the relationship among different stakeholders vis-à-vis the dimensions as given in Figure 1. Each of the stakeholders will have their own role in ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment vis-à-vis each of the above-mentioned dimensions in the successful reopening of schools. The details of their roles and responsibilities are as provided in the succeeding tables.

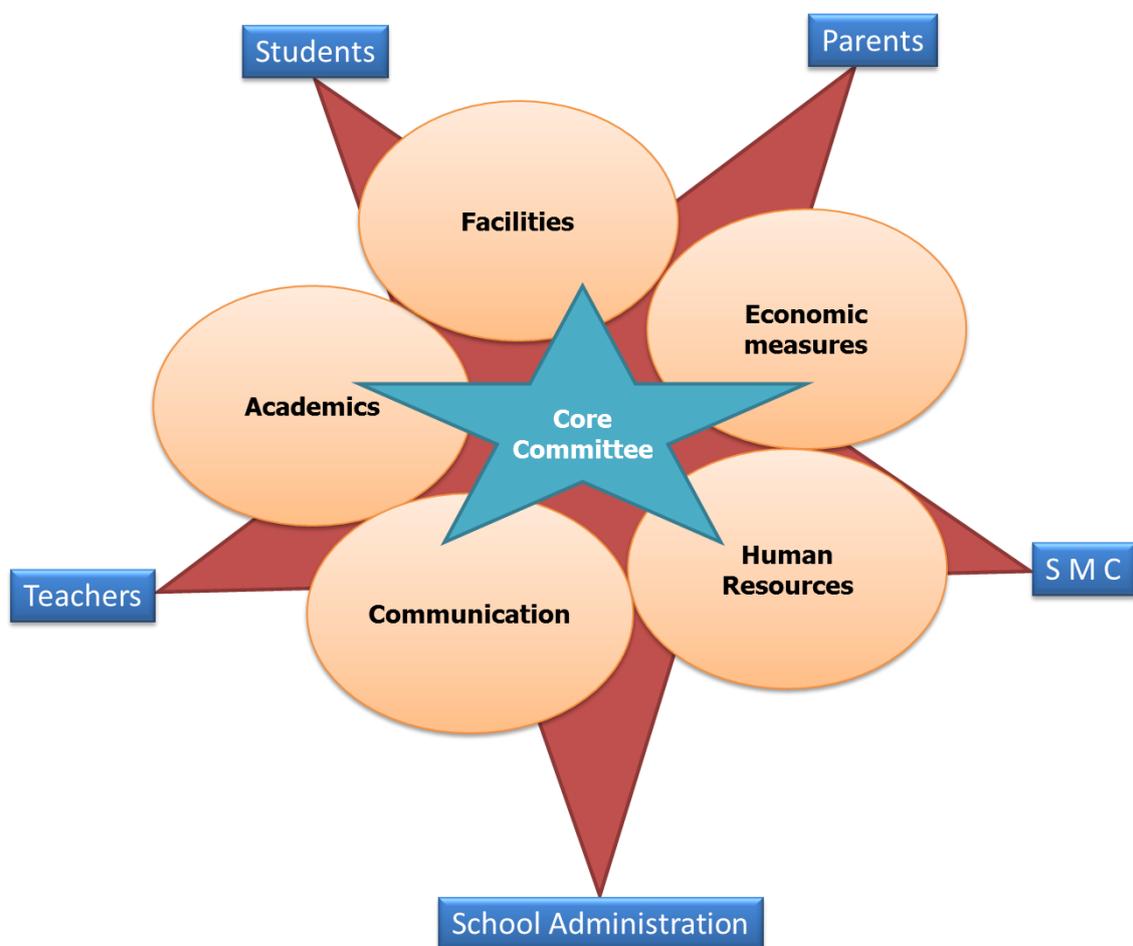


Figure 1. School Reopening Model

### Strategic Process of Reopening

In order to manage the whole affairs of day-to-day monitoring and guiding the entire process, a **Core Committee** will be constituted at each school. This committee will take stock of the post reopening situation on a daily basis, and brainstorm & decide on measures to identify & correct gaps in the process. The detailed functioning of the Core Committee is in give in Figure 2.

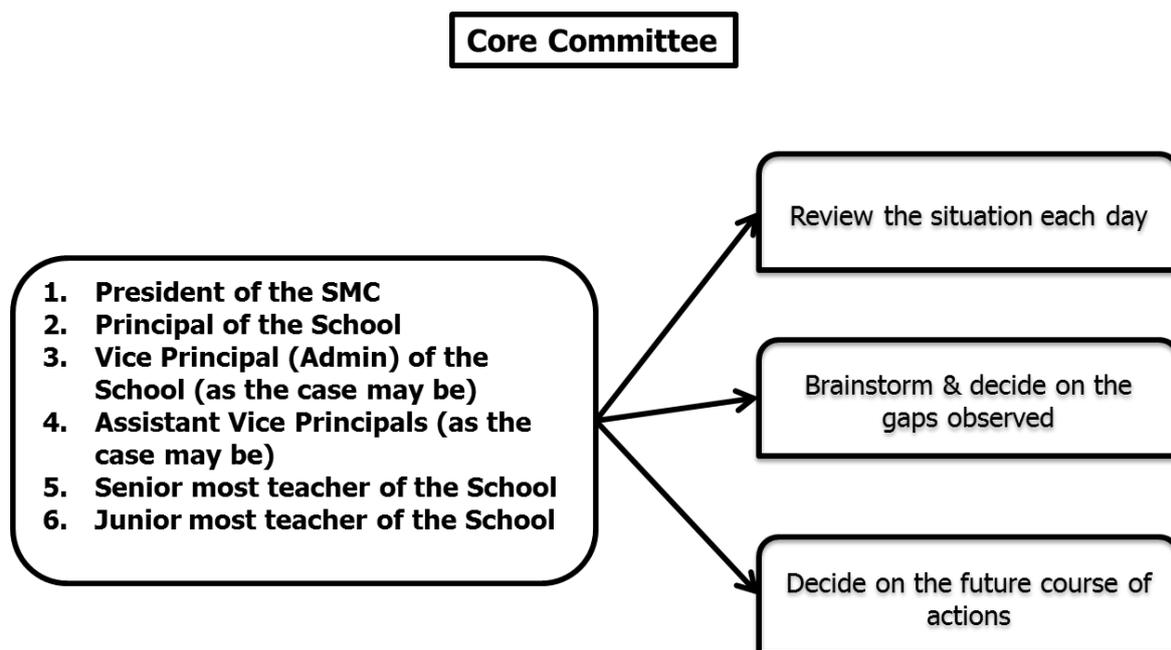


Figure 2. Core Committee Functions

As mentioned earlier, each of the stakeholders will execute their role to make sure that the reopening of the school ensures maximum safety and security to the children and staff. The major duties and responsibilities of these stakeholders are as follows.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of the School Management Committee*

School Management Committee has a pivotal leadership role to play at this point in time. Being part of the community who offer selfless service to the society, each SMC member should rise to the occasion at this juncture to ensure that students are returning to the schools with more confidence and enthusiasm. The SMC should spearhead the process of reopening the school by providing strategic direction and unconditional support to the school

administration. The following are the major but not limited functions that SMC would execute to ensure the safety and security of students and staff when school reopens.

### *Academics*

- Entrust the Academic Committee of the SMC to chalk out plans in close consultation with the School Administration for imparting education as per the guidelines of the authorities;
- Institutionalize a robust Learning Management System that would be handy in providing blended learning;
- Develop innovative methods of imparting education without any discrimination to any section of students for the want of facilities;
- Develop an orientation plan for teaching fraternity to instill the importance of the precautions to be adopted upon reopening;
- Encourage and motivate teaching fraternity with more autonomy to ensure that they execute their responsibility in the best possible manner;
- Assist the School Administration by providing guidance on the utilization of resources to manage the reduced number of students in each class.

### *Facilities*

- Ensure that the entire school campus is ready for the blended learning process by providing appropriate hardware and networking facilities;
- Ensure strict compliance with the instructions from authorities such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and local civil & police authorities regarding the safe operation of the school during post-lockdown;
- Ensure that necessary medical equipment and allied apparatuses are available at all times at the stipulated places to ensure the prevention of any unforeseen incident;
- Ensure that adequate support staff is available at the school to manage the hygiene in the entire premise;
- Ensure that only trained personnel are utilizing the facilities related to diagnosing the potential symptoms of COVID-19;

- Ensure that proper transportation hygiene is practiced by those who are handling school transport (if any).

### *Economic Measures*

- Short-term budgeting is the need of the hour so as to ensure that all immediate needs/requirements are meticulously achieved. Therefore, prepare a half-yearly budget for the entire schooling process;
- Put on hold all projects in the pipeline until the financial viability of the school is restored to a great extent;
- Cut short all expenditures on all accounts so as to ensure availability of adequate cash balance in the system;
- Defer all payments which are of not urgent nature by negotiating with respective vendors;
- Put on hold all functions that were planned as part of the school activities prior to the lockdown till financial viability is achieved;
- Put on hold all major purchases/renovation/refurbishing till adequate funds are made available to meet such expenses;
- Make efforts to collect outstanding fees that would ensure continuous cash flow into the system;
- Be considerate of those who are financially stricken during this time and allow more opportunities for them to support the system.

### *Human Resources*

- Treat all employees at par without any discrimination at this trying period;
- Treat all employees with respect and dignity as their high morale would immensely contribute to the creation of a safe learning environment;
- Provide support to the School Administration in utilizing Human Resources optimally so as to ensure that school affairs are run at the minimum cost;
- Have empathetic consideration towards each employee for their issues and try to resolve it in the most beneficial manner to the employee;

- Provide adequate training to all those staffs who are specifically allotted for the COVID-19 prevention program at school;
- Avoid frequent changing of manpower from their respective duties as it would not only necessitate frequent training programs for the incumbents but also disturb the established processes of handling the issues effectively.

### *Communication*

- Communicate regularly with parents, teachers, and students about the issues involved in the reopening of schools and seek their support in this direction;
- Use different channels of communication to inform parents, students, teachers, and staff about various measures adopted by SMC to reopen the school;
- Make every effort to convince parents as they are the stakeholders who might have the maximum concerns before sending their wards to the schools;
- Make appeals to various stakeholders, community leaders, and well-wishers to disseminate only accurate and duly verified information on the reopening process;
- Make every effort to correct misinformation by issuing corrective measures which will put any public fear or doubt to rest;
- Be considerate and empathetic in your communication with the rest of the stakeholders;
- Be transparent and be clear about what you wanted to convey to others;
- Develop the attitude to listen to the stakeholders' concerns and take a collective approach to resolve such issues.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of the School Administration*

There are various factors that potentially make the physical reopening of schools successful. One such factor is the readiness on the part of the School Administration. Nnebedum, Obuegbe, & Nwafor (2021) observed that Principals complied with the guidelines issued by the governmental agencies with respect to measures to be adopted while reopening of schools post-lockdown. School Administration is headed by the Principal and supported by other senior members of the teaching fraternity. It is this team of experienced professionals who are going to meticulously plan and execute the day-to-day functions of the school activities when the school reopens. Therefore, it would be of immense importance for the members of this

team to collaborate and sync with each other to ensure that respective teams at different levels in school are executing the reopening plan efficiently and effectively. The following are the guidelines but not limited that the School Administration would implement so as to ensure that the school reopening process is a successful one.

### *Academics*

- Ensure that they receive the revised syllabus for all sections of students;
- Ensure that the revised syllabus could be covered within the time left over during the current academic year;
- Make plans for blended learning as this process is going to be future pedagogy;
- Make sure that all teachers are adequately trained on the pedagogical approach to managing the blended learning process once the school is reopened;
- Provide adequate preparation time for the teachers to formulate and deliver their sessions;
- Bear in mind that teachers are the backbone of the schooling system and make every effort to ensure that they keep up high morale during these trying times;
- Plan effectively to ensure that synchronous and asynchronous learning avenues are available for both face-to-face (F2F) and online mode of teaching;
- Plan and allocate F2F and online mode in accordance with the facilities available at your school premises.

### *Facilities*

- Take into account the number of students, sections, and levels while planning varied timing for students of various levels to arrive at and depart from school after their classes;
- Ensure that adequate time gap is provided for the entry and exit of different categories of students to and from the school;
- Plan the timing for each such category of students in such a manner to ensure that there is no congestion of traffic at any point in time;
- Preferably, use different entry points for different category of students which are adjacent to respective classrooms;

- Make sure that each entry point is provided with adequate apparatus as stipulated for diagnosing COVID-19 symptoms and trained personnel are deployed to operate these devices;
- Ensure that strict compliance with adequate safety measures such as wearing a mask, using sanitizer, maintaining social distance, etc., are observed by all when they are in school premises;
- Ensure that entry/exit points are manned at all times;
- Ensure that hygiene facilities such as washrooms, toilets, bathrooms, etc., are sanitized at appropriate intervals and are provided with adequate hand washing facilities coupled with provisions of running water, soap, hand wash, disposable napkins, etc.;
- Keep all those places in the school which are prone to gatherings closed so as to ensure students' safety. This could include the cafeteria, indoor games area, etc.;
- Mark all facilities with appropriate signs/labels to ensure that users maintain a safe distance from each other;
- Provide safety and security posters at places to ensure that awareness becomes part of the lifestyle.

### *Economic Measures*

- Review the school's activity chart and put on hold all those functions/ activities that are not essential at this juncture;
- Take measures to ensure that usage of all stationery items in the school is minimized to the core;
- Since blended learning is going to be adopted, ensure that all learning materials are made available to the students electronically which also ensures saving stationaries;
- Take adequate measures to educate and train the employees regarding the reduction of wastages, be it electricity, water, or other related assets of the school so as to reduce operational expenditures;
- Plan the sessions in such a manner that would considerably reduce the usage of school resources;
- Follow up on the collection of outstanding fees so as to ensure uninterrupted cash flow into the system;
- Take adequate steps to motivate the parents not to default on the fees;

- Devise plans to ensure that the financial burden of parents is reduced such as installments in payment of fees, reduction of developmental fees, etc.

### *Human Resources*

- Maintain the morale of the staff at a high level so as to ensure that they execute their work effectively and efficiently;
- Take feedback from teachers and staff regarding their preference for various allied duties that they would be undertaking during this period and depute them as per their preference as far as possible;
- Train teachers to monitor and identify those children who are experiencing particular difficulties when they are back in school;
- Train the students to carry out peer-counseling those who are found psychologically affected during this pandemic;
- Train the students about class management with a reduced number of students as well as with social distancing discipline in the classroom;
- Draw out the procedure for letting the students go for bio-breaks;
- Chalk out a detailed handing / taking over plan to ensure that the students are monitored at all times by the teachers in the classroom;
- Make sure that standby provisions are implemented for all jobs in the school.

### *Communication*

- Communicate regularly with SMC, parents, teachers, and students about the precautionary measures adopted by the school for reopening so as to instill confidence in them;
- Communicate almost on a daily basis to all stakeholders through different means of communication to update them about the learning environment and its safety;
- Communicate with parents in a continuous manner to ensure that they remain supportive of the system;
- Convey to parents their role in ensuring the safety of their wards and pledge the unconditional support of the school administration to their initiatives in this direction;

- Make parents aware of misinformation and take corrective measures to clear any concern of parents that arose because of the misinformation;
- Train the teachers to maintain the utmost care while communicating with parents through the dissemination of factual information;
- Develop the skills of teachers to maintain good interpersonal relationships with parents so as to ensure that the latter gains confidence in the process adopted by the school;
- Listen patiently to the concerns of all other stakeholders and make every effort to ensure amicable solutions to their issues;
- Be open to constructive criticism by other stakeholders and take appropriate corrective actions to ensure that the system gets strengthened.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of Teachers*

Teachers are the backbone of the schooling system. The school learning environment flourishes only under the relentless efforts of the teaching fraternity. During this pandemic, it is the adaptability and the tenacity of teachers that proved to be the main factors behind the successful implementation of online learning. However, it is expected that the responsibilities of teachers are bound to multiply as they would be dealing with yet another changed learning environment especially when they need to rotate between F2F and online teaching. Following are some of the guidelines, but not limited for the teachers to practice when the school reopens.

### *Academics*

- Take stock of the stipulated portions of the syllabus completely to understand the target.
- Accept the reality that blending learning is going to be the future mode of learning wherein teachers become experts in both face-to-face and online mode of teaching.
- Prepare lesson-plans by identifying those sessions which are apt for face-to-face and online teaching separately.
- Be a self-learner for life-long with the necessary skills to adapt oneself to the dynamic learning environment.

- Develop abilities to create online communities effectively, become more students' centric, change from the role of Knowledge-Provider to Knowledge-Embedder, and quite often, from the sage on the stage to the sage on the screen.
- Prepare lesson-plans so as complete the stipulated syllabus within the time frame through F2F and technology-assisted teaching.
- Provide additional support to all those students who are struggling to achieve academic objectives because of the pandemic.
- Update and assimilate with technology-assisted learning so as to ensure that one remains accessible to students even beyond classrooms.

### *Facilities*

- Undergo training & development programs to effectively manage the classrooms with a lesser number of students while maintaining social distancing at all times.
- Always handover the charge to the incoming teacher with a necessary briefing before leaving the classroom after the session.
- Spend time to educate students aware of the safety precautions during this period.
- Utilize the technology to communicate with students effectively in order to support them.
- Understand and utilize the Learning Management System effectively so as to ensure that teaching & learning become more effective.

### *Economic Measures*

- Ensure that the school resources are utilized optimally so as to reduce wastage.
- Reduce dependence on stationery items by adopting technology-assisted teaching and learning.
- Update and develop knowledge and skills through online programs and webinars that could substantially reduce staff costs.
- Plan classroom sessions in such a manner that would reduce the operational cost considerably.
- Maintain good rapport with the parents so as to have an effective follow-up on fee collection.

### *Human Resources*

- Maintain high morale among students by appropriately identifying and addressing their needs.
- Encourage students to be more responsible for the actions that could in turn inculcate a sense of maturity in them.
- Provide more autonomy to students to support their creative nature.
- Move from a prescriptive method of teaching to an inductive approach in the classroom so as to ensure that students relate the concepts to respective practical applications.
- Treat students who look psychologically affected during this pandemic with lots of caution and care.
- Be sensitive to the current state of affairs and treat students and colleagues from an empathetic point of view.
- Wholeheartedly accept and execute the allied assignments provided by the school to ensure the safety and security of all stakeholders.
- Develop and implement specific activities in the classroom itself which could eventually result in students' psychomotor and social skills while maintaining hygiene and social distancing.

### *Communication*

- Be in regular touch with parents and students and address their concerns appropriately.
- Develop a healthy interpersonal relationship with the parents and students.
- Communicate all school-related activities effectively to the parent and students.
- Educate parents on the kind of support that the school would be expecting from them such as bringing and picking up children at the stipulated time, educating the children on social distancing & hygiene, follow-up on the observation of teachers on the behavior of their wards, etc.
- Brief the students from time to time regarding their behavior during these trying times and obtain their constructive feedback about their current experience in the classroom.
- Communicate with school administration regarding concerns/issues being experienced during the reopening.

- Follow both top-down and bottom-up approaches of communication so as to ensure that every stakeholder is aware of the activities and outcome of classroom sessions.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of Parents*

Yet another important stakeholder in the schooling system is the parent fraternity. Even though parents do not generally interfere with the affairs of the school, the current pandemic has created greater safety concerns in their minds. School reopening poses a greater challenge from their point of view unless such concerns are effectively tackled by the school administration while reopening the school. Therefore, taking parent fraternity into confidence is the foremost task of the school management & administration at the time of reopening the school. The following are major roles & responsibilities that the parent fraternity could execute during the time of reopening. These roles & responsibilities should be conveyed to them through various means of communication by respective SMC, School Administration, and teachers that are appropriate to their level of interaction with the parents from time to time. Such communication will in turn infuse confidence among parents about the learning environment in the school.

### *Academics*

- Provide adequate facilities for children to undergo academic activities both online and face-to-face.
- Provide mental support to children at this trying time since most of them are deprived of social interaction, an indispensable factor for personal growth.
- Ensure that the children are free from all other family engagements when the online sessions are being imparted.
- Keep close monitoring of online learning activities so as to keep track of children's academic objectives.
- Keep motivating children with positive vibes as there could be personal disturbances to them due to a lack of interaction with other members of society.
- Be in constant touch with the teacher to get updated on the academic progress of children.

- Be cooperative with the teachers and school administration since everyone is going through a tough time.

### *Facilities*

- Ensure that children are educated by parents on personal hygiene measures.
- Ensure that adequate protective measures such as wearing the mask, gloves, sanitization of hands, etc., are undertaken while sending children to the school.
- Make sure that children are instructed to consume their own food and water so as to combat the spread of this pandemic.
- Make sure that the conveyance through which children are sent to and brought back from school is safe and secure as far as the prevention measures for COVID-19 are concerned.
- Follow stipulated timing and designated place for dropping /picking up the children in case they are dropped at school by parents themselves.
- Educate children frequently about social distancing to be maintained while at school.
- Train children to follow the instructions of teachers and school administrators meticulously while at school.

### *Economic Measures*

- Be prompt in paying up the fees since school fees are the only revenue generation factor for the majority of the schools to operate.
- Discuss with school authorities for possible alternatives in case parents face financial difficulty during this period.

### *Human Resources*

- Be patient while with the teachers and school administration since everyone in the school is committed to ensuring the safety and security of the children.
- Be considerate to children since they are also equally undergoing emotional stress and are in need of support.

- Monitor and make professional counseling available to children in case of any emotional distress among them.
- Be in frequent conversations with children to ward off any misinformation about the current pandemic.
- Always try to provide children with authentic information to keep away from alarming rumors.

### *Communication*

- Be open in communication with children, teachers, and school administrators.
- Do not believe or circulate misinformation about school reopening.
- Clarify all doubts and concerns with the class teacher.

### *Roles & Responsibilities of Students*

The most important stakeholder for the successful reopening is the student fraternity. They are the people on ground zero to learn in a differently structured learning environment. As such, they are the category that would be under tremendous adaptation need to cope up with the inevitable changes. Ozkara and Cakir (2018), students preferred F2F communication as motivating even though they tended to have a positive attitude towards remote learning. Such a positive attitude is achieved through familiarity that in turn resulted in a progressive reduction of anxiety towards online learning (Unger & Meiran, 2020). Therefore, this category of stakeholders needs more attention from all corners so as to ensure maximum safety for their well-being while they are at school. Following are some of the guidelines which other stakeholders such as School Administrators, Teachers, and Parents need to continuously instill in the minds of students so as to roll out the successful reopening of schools.

### *Academics*

- Develop an attitude to adapt to the changing needs of learning.
- Be positive in approach towards studies so as to ensure that the academic goals are achieved.

- Approach concerned teachers in case of any difficulty in different modes of learning.
- Be a self-learner as this attitude will help to tide over many hurdles in the future.

### *Facilities*

- Educate the self to use the facilities in the school as per instructions.
- Take appropriate precautions while using lavatories and ensure that hygienic cleanliness through proper hand-wash and sanitization.
- At all times, strictly adhere to the new way of life at school so as to keep safe and healthy.

### *Economic Measures*

- Develop a positive attitude towards conservation of energy such as switching off lights and fans when not in use, report water leakages if any, etc.
- Reduce wastage of resources and develop an inclination towards reusing things that otherwise would have gone as wastage.

### *Human Resources*

- Be patient in the approach towards others as everyone else is also going through a tough time.
- Believe in the strength of unity and develop a positive attitude towards life.
- Listen and adhere to the instructions that ensure safety in the school.
- Treat friends with more compassion as everyone is in need of social and emotional support.
- Always bear in mind that safety at this juncture is one's own responsibility.

### *Communication*

- Openly communicate concerns with near and dear ones.
- Make it a point to talk to friends/teachers/parents about various concerns in case of any mental stress due to this pandemic situation.

- Check for negative signs such as difficulty in sleeping/eating, nightmares, being withdrawn or aggressive, stomach pain/headache without physical reason, decreased interest in playful activities, being sad for no reason, etc., and seek professional help.

## Conclusion

The above strategic approach has been proposed to ensure that each and every stakeholder in the educational system has equal responsibility and opportunity to contribute to the well-being of students. This accountability will not only prepare the system to proactively develop its own coping mechanisms but also strengthen the mindset of all stakeholders by instilling confidence in their minds about the schooling system. However, as mentioned earlier, this process could succeed only if all the stakeholders execute their own responsibilities towards the implementation of the proposed strategic plan. The model proposed in this study is strategic in nature because of the fact it brings the overall school environment under the purview of each and every stakeholder with a view to ensure their participation and confidence in the educational system. The adaptation of this model in the face of the current pandemic would instill a sense of acceptance of responsibility by respective stakeholders which will go a long way in ensuring that the educational institutions reiterate their commitment to the community.

It has also been observed from the professional experiences of authors in the community schooling system that this model leads the stakeholders to own the responsibility of the consequences of their own actions since the accountability is embedded across all dimensions of school management. The application of the proposed model in those schools with different organizational structures is feasible depending upon the uniqueness of each such hierarchy. It is felt imperative that there should be a form of collective responsibility among various stakeholders in order to successfully roll out the reopening process irrespective of the organizational structure of the institution. Let us all hope that everything will come back to the normal course of action through these consistent and dedicated efforts to ensure that our children remain safe wherever they are.

## References

- American Academy of Pediatrics (2020), *Return to School during COVID-19*, <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/Return-to-School-During-COVID-19.aspx> (Accessed on 20 June 2020).
- Carucci, R., (2020) How to Prepare Yourself for a Return to the Office, *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2020/07/how-to-prepare-yourself-for-a-return-to-the-office>, (Access on 20 June 2020).
- Chandra, A., Fishman, M., & Melton, D., (2020) A Detailed Plan for Getting Americans Back to Work, *Harvard Business Review*, <https://hbr.org/2020/04/a-detailed-plan-for-getting-americans-back-to-work> (Access on 20 June 2020).
- Couzin-Frankel, J., Vogel, G., & Weiland, M., (2020). *School openings across the globe suggest ways to keep coronavirus at bay, despite outbreaks*. <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2020/07/school-openings-across-globe-suggest-ways-keep-coronavirus-bay-despite-outbreaks> (accessed on 20 July 2020).
- ElSaheli-Elhage, R. (2021). Access to students and parents and levels of preparedness of educators during the COVID-19 emergency transition to e-learning. *International Journal on Studies in Education (IJonSE)*, 3(2), 61-69, Advance Online Publication.
- Hebebcı, M. T., Bertiz, Y., & Alan, S. (2020). Investigation of views of students and teachers on distance education practices during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 267-282.
- International Institute of Educational Planning (2006) Guidebook for planning education in emergencies and reconstruction, *UNESCO*, <http://www.iiep.unesco.org/en/guidebook-planning-education-emergencies-and-reconstruction-9933> (accessed on 20 May 2020).
- Niemi, H. M., & Kousa, P. (2020). A case study of students' and teachers' perceptions in a Finnish high school during the COVID pandemic. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 352-369.
- Nnebedum, C., Obuegbe, A. S., & Nwafor, H. E. (2021). Assessment of schools' reopening after COVID-19 closures. *International Journal on Studies in Education (IJonSE)*, 3(2), 86-91, Advance Online Publication.
- Ozkara, B & Cakir, H. (2018). Participation in online courses from the students' perspective. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 26(7), 924-942.

Unger, S., & Meiran, W. R. (2020). Student attitudes towards online education during the COVID-19 viral outbreak of 2020: Distance learning in a time of social distance. *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science (IJTES)*, 4(4), 256-266.

UNICEF (2020). What will a return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic look like?' *What parents need to know about school reopening in the age of coronavirus*. Available at <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/what-will-return-school-during-COVID-19-pandemic-look>. Access on 20 June 2020.

---

**Author Information**

---

**Gokuladas V.K.**

 [https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-5177-4351](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5177-4351)

Heading Operations of Board of Directors

Indian Schools

Oman

Contact e-mail:

*gokuladas@indianschoolsoman.com*

---

**Baby Sam S.K.**

 [https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-7984-9167](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7984-9167)

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Indian Schools

Oman

**Citation**

Gokuladas, V. K., & Baby Sam, S. K. (2020). Challenges and responsibilities during school reopening post- COVID-19: A strategic approach. In I. Sahin & M. Shelley (Eds.), *Educational practices during the COVID-19 viral outbreak: International perspectives* (pp. 199–220). ISTES Organization.