

TEACHING WITH COVID-19: GUIDELINES FOR FAMILY STUDIES TEACHERS

With one school year of the pandemic behind us and a new school year upon us, many are left wondering: “What is my classroom going to look like this year?”; “Do we continue to practice the same safety procedures as last year or can we go back to how we used to do things?” While every school board may have different protocols regarding their back-to-school plan, one thing is for certain - all teachers and students need to practice masking, physical distancing, and thorough cleaning and disinfecting of shared tools, equipment, and surfaces during instruction in order to stop the spread of the coronavirus.

Family Studies courses are unique in that students are expected to participate in hands-on practical learning that typically requires either collaborative group work and/or the sharing of tools, equipment, and surfaces. This guideline is intended to help Family Studies teachers plan for their hands-on classroom activities such as food labs, fashion labs, and the RealCare Baby Think It Over experience, while taking into consideration the health and safety of students and teachers.

*Disclaimer: Many school boards have released or will be releasing their own updated **COVID -19 School Re-Opening Operating Procedures (OP)** that will address how to handle activities involving lab work and student-shared tools and equipment. **This document acts only as a guideline**, after much consultation with various stakeholders, and **DOES NOT supersede Board-specific documents**. To ensure you are following the correct safety procedures, it is highly recommended that you refer to your respective Board’s OP.

According to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation’s (OSSTF/FEESO) [A Safe Return for All: OSSTF/FEESO’s Framework for Reopening Schools in 2020-2021](#) (2020, p.8), the following facilities guidelines are recommended:

- There should be no sharing of materials in the classroom.
- Hands-on work, science lab work, food lab work, and work in technology classes should be limited or not permitted without appropriate consideration of sanitizing equipment in between usage by students.
- Resources such as textbooks, Chromebooks/iPads, and other instructional materials need to be disinfected regularly.

These recommendations suggest that *as long the proper precautions are taken, students can continue to participate in hands-on activities in Family Studies courses.*

Chart 1.1 below outlines more detailed suggestions to help teachers plan in-class hands-on activities while prioritizing the health and safety of students and teachers.

Chart 1.1: Suggestions for Family Studies Hands-On Classroom Activities

Course(s)	Area Considerations	Recommended Considerations
<p>HIF1/2O</p> <p>HFN1/2O</p> <p>HFC3E/M</p> <p>HFA4U/C</p> <p>HFL4E</p> <p>HIP4O</p>	<p>Food Prep, Purchasing, Distribution, and Cleaning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough hand-washing procedures are enforced before and after food handling, including after sneezing/coughing or going to the washroom. • Cooking stations should be separated at least 6 feet apart to ensure physical distancing. • To facilitate larger class sizes; students may work in pairs or very small groups, depending on the number of kitchens/size of the room/class size. • Each student/pair/group can be provided with a basic toolkit to use for labs to avoid sharing equipment. • If strict mask mandates are enforced, students should not share and/or eat food while in class (as this requires removing their mask). If not strictly enforced, students will eat individually, physically distanced from other students. • Create and enforce strict protocols to ensure physical distancing when using shared equipment and appliances, such as staggering lab start times. • If food preparation equipment is shared, ensure they are sanitized thoroughly in between use. • Use dishwashers, whenever possible, to clean and sanitize after each food lab. • Thoroughly sanitize the kitchen after usage, including appliances, countertops, fridge/appliance handles, hand tools, and aprons, using Board-approved cleaners. • Students should not be going into refrigerators or pantries to collect ingredients. • Teachers can choose to provide portioned ingredients for each student/pair/group.
<p>HIF1/2O</p> <p>HNL2O</p> <p>HNC3C</p> <p>HNB4M</p> <p>HIP4O</p>	<p>Clothing Preparation and Equipment Cleaning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough hand-washing procedures are enforced before and after food handling, including after sneezing/coughing or going to the washroom. • To facilitate larger class sizes; students may work in pairs or very small groups, depending on the number of machines/size of the room/class size. • Sewing machines and other equipment should be placed at appropriate physically distanced stations, at least 6 feet apart. • Teachers can assign students/pairs/groups to specific sewing machines. • To reduce the sharing of materials between students, it is recommended that each student be provided a sewing kit of basic hand tools for their individual use (e.g. scissors, pins, needles, threads, etc.). • Sewing machines, irons, and sergers may be shared but should be cleaned after each individual use, using Board-approved cleaners. • It is suggested that teachers utilize large spaces, such as the library or cafeteria, while laying out and cutting patterns, to allow for physical distancing.
<p>HPW3C</p> <p>HPC3O</p>	<p>RealCare Baby, Think It Over Simulation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are responsible for removing and washing all infant simulator’s clothing prior to handing it back in to their teacher. If schools have washers and dryers at school that can be used, teachers can wash the infant simulator’s clothing using those appliances. Teachers should not take the clothing home to wash. • Clean infant simulators appropriately by using rubbing alcohol or disinfectant wipes containing an alcohol concentration of 60% or greater and gently wipe down the infant simulator and accessories. Let the infant simulator and accessories air dry for at least 30 minutes. Do not use bleach to disinfect. • All infant simulators should be stored and left untouched for at least 72 hours before being reassigned to another student, if possible.

**When using cleaners and sanitizing solutions, be sure to check with your admin/caretaking staff and use Board-approved cleaners.*

Assessment, Evaluation, and Equity Considerations for Hands-on Activities

In the province of Ontario, individual school boards will have their own specific expectations regarding the continuation of food and fashion labs during the pandemic. Regardless of the differences, there are many ways to encourage hands-on learning while still practicing physical distancing to ensure proper health and safety. Moreover, some boards are offering hybrid model options (simultaneous in-class and remote), which presents a unique challenge when assessing and evaluating student hands-on work. Whichever is applicable to you as the course teacher, **it is imperative that you follow the expectations set by your school board.**

Page 39 of the [Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools](#) document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010), states that:

Evidence of student achievement for evaluation is collected over time from three different sources – observations, conversations, and student products. Using multiple sources of evidence increases the reliability and validity of the evaluation of student learning.

“Student products” may be in the form of tests or exams and/or assignments for evaluation. Assignments for evaluation may include rich performance tasks, demonstrations, projects, and/or essays. To ensure equity for all students, assignments for evaluation and tests or exams are to be completed, whenever possible, under the supervision of a teacher. Assignments for evaluation must not include ongoing homework that students do in order to consolidate their knowledge and skills or to prepare for the next class. Assignments for evaluation may involve group projects as long as each student’s work within the group project is evaluated independently and assigned an individual mark, as opposed to a common group mark.

The evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of the teacher and must not include the judgement of the student or of the student’s peers.

Teachers must find appropriate and creative ways to assess and evaluate their students’ hands-on work fairly and equitably, whether it be in the classroom in the presence of the teacher or at home. Teachers must keep in mind

that evidence of student achievement for evaluation is *not* limited to just student products – observations and conversations must be considered as evidence of student learning. On page 34 of the [Growing Success](#) document (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010), it is made clear that teachers can gather information about student learning by:

- designing tasks that provide students with a variety of ways to demonstrate their learning;
- observing students as they perform tasks;
- posing questions to help students make their thinking explicit;
- engineering classroom and small-group conversations that encourage students to articulate what they are thinking and further develop their thinking.

Thus, when planning assessment and instruction, it is highly encouraged that teachers, in collaboration with students, co-construct the success criteria that will accurately assess student learning and skills related to hands-on learning activities beyond just a final student product. This may include, but is not limited to: assessing process work, student reflection, verbal communication of steps to complete a project, and visual depictions of work completed.

Also consider that requiring students to purchase ingredients or fabrics to do labs at home can create undue hardships and equity concerns. For more recommendations on assessing labs from home, please read [Covid-19 Update: Labs at Home](#).

Other Helpful Resources

Frequency of Food Labs

Teachers may need to readjust the frequency or duration of labs to meet with physical distancing guidelines. To help plan for a reduced number of food labs, teachers may refer to the [Food and Nutrition Curriculum Lab Expectations - Teaching Resource](#), available in the members-only section of the [OFSHEEA](#) website. This document outlines all of the curriculum expectations surrounding food preparation and handling for each foods course. The curriculum expectations highlighted in this document make specific reference to which foods must be prepared to meet the required curriculum in each individual course. By having students complete these specific labs, the teacher is able to support student learning while assessing the remaining expectations.

Safety Guidelines in Family Studies Classrooms

The Ontario Family Studies Social Sciences and Humanities Leadership Council (OFS₃HLC) has developed resources outlining health and safety expectations for Family Studies classrooms. Although created prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, they provide an excellent overview of precautions Family Studies teachers can implement in the classroom. These lab safety documents are available for free on the [OFSHEEA](#) website.

Specific advice regarding safe food handling and food preparation for food labs can also be found on the [Dietitians of Canada](#) website.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces

To help stop the spread of viruses and bacteria, we encourage teachers and school communities to follow the advice issued by the [Government of Canada](#), [Public Health Ontario](#), and local public health officials.

The following resources may be helpful for in-class use or for in-lab instructions. They are available in a variety of languages. The following links are to the English versions only.

[Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings – Public Health Ontario](#)
[How to Wash Your Hands / How to Use Hand Sanitizer – Public Health Ontario](#)

RealCare Baby, Think It Over

For teachers using RealCare babies, Realityworks has published specific guidelines on how to safely [clean and disinfect the Baby](#) on their website.

Appliance Care (for Fashion classes)

For teachers teaching clothing and fashion classes, Brother has published specific guidelines on how to safely [clean and disinfect](#) appliances in the fashion classroom.

OSSTF Resource for Classroom Teaching

This is a [form](#) that OSSTF put together for assessing the safety of your classroom as it pertains to general masking, PPE, distancing and other safety plan guidelines, and guides you bringing unsafe items to your supervisor.