



**BLUEREFUGE**  
SECURING OUR FUTURE

# Return to School

## Creating a Safe, Healthy Physical & Mental Learning Environment

### 3 Steps to Preparing campuses for students, teachers, and administrators

Managing a school environment in a post-Covid world may mean permanent changes to ensure a safe and healthy atmosphere. Together with internal and industry experts in building safety and mental health services, Blue Refuge has developed a three-prong holistic approach to creating an environment where students and faculty feel safe both physically and emotionally.

The Blue Refuge end-to-end approach includes these steps:

#### 1 - CLEANLINESS

Provide additional layers of cleaning for the safest learning environment possible

#### 2 - MENTAL HEALTH

Support students and staff with mental health programs

#### 3 - AWARENESS

Build community awareness and outreach





**STEP 1**

**Clean and Safe Learning Environments**

Traditional chemical cleaning alone can no longer be counted on to protect student health and safety, as it does not target pathogens in the air, or sufficiently disinfect many surfaces, like books, posters, dry erase markers, decorations, and keyboards.

For decades, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI), has been used in hospitals and laboratories to combat harmful pathogens and provide the cleanest and safest environment possible. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has published research indicating that UVGI has a **99.9% antimicrobial efficacy rate** for all tested viruses, including MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV.

**Adding UVGI Cleaning to Traditional Methods**

Today, UVGI is being added to traditional cleaning process in schools to provide the following benefits:

- A scientifically proven increase in sanitation of spaces.
- May increase average daily attendance during flu, strep, and cold season due to a reduction in germicidal transmission.
- Peace of mind for parents, students, and staff.

**UVGI Options:**

**Portable UVGI Kits**

Air and surface disinfection of a campus on a periodic basis. Treats most any space with a 20-30 minute application using handheld and pedestal UV light sources and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

**Upper-Air**

Constant treatment of the air in a space above seven feet with permanently mounted UVGI fixtures on the walls. This method targets air-borne pathogens as close to the source as possible. Sizing and quantity of units is based on square feet of rooms.

**In-Duct**

Constant treatment of air in the HVAC system through installation of UVGI units in the ductwork. This method targets air-borne pathogens as they are pulled through the return air of the HVAC system. Sizing is based on volume of air and size of ductwork. Requires on-site inspection for design/ engineering purposes.

						Permanent		Effectiveness	Longevity
	Surfaces	Air	Constant	Periodic	Mobile	In-Room	Hidden		
Portable	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓✓✓	✓
Upper-Air		✓	✓			✓		✓✓✓	✓✓✓
In-Duct		✓	✓				✓	✓✓	✓✓✓

\*Note: UV light sources are harmful to humans and animals without proper PPE.

## Customized training program elements include:

### Providing a Safe Work Environment for Staff

#### Possible Challenges

1. Staff feeling vulnerable and concerned about their safety or the safety of their family if they carry something home.
2. A lack of staff unity and divergent opinions and experiences on the shutdowns that can lead to a breakdown of teamwork and trust.
3. Discord regarding returning, steps taken, and processes moving forward.
4. Impacts of dramatic life changes in a short period of time due to family members experiencing loss of employment, health issues, or other serious trauma.



#### Staff Reset Program

1. **Clarity in Viewpoint:** Focus on facts, with clear and effective communication about steps that have been taken to add layers of protection.
2. **Compassion and Care:** Emphasis on Staff Wellness, and physical and emotional support. Provision of forums for discussion and airing of concerns.
3. **Teamwork:** Clear establishment of priorities with a focus on unity, planning, resourcing, and support.

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### Providing a Safe Work Environment for Students

#### Possible Challenges

1. New or increased cases of physical and emotional abuse, or other forms of trauma.
2. Students carrying situational stressors into the school: parental unemployment, depression, substance abuse, etc.
3. Students that were behind academically could find themselves even further behind, leading to hopelessness or apathy.
4. Change in routine could lead to struggle reacclimating.



#### Addressing Student's Return

1. **Goals for Leadership and Support:** Preparation for what to expect, classroom guidelines, and the roles of teachers in leading and supporting students.
2. **Healthy Interactions:** Resources for recognition of signs of distress, understanding proper response, guidelines for therapeutic interactions, and referral processes.
3. **Culture:** Develop a solidarity of culture and consistent connections among students, staff and administration.



#### STEP 2

### Provide a Healthy Mental Outlook for Returning

The recent pandemic has created health concerns beyond the virus itself. Isolation during quarantine, job loss or income changes, evolving work demands, and increased exposure to challenging home environments can take a toll.

Dramatic changes in a short timeframe can lead to an increase in conditions such as fear, anxiety, and depression. Your staff and students are not immune to these problems, and left unaddressed, they could lead to **potential long-term behavioral and cultural side effects when schools are reopened.**

To help you reacclimate students and staff as they return to school, Blue Refuge will create a customized training program based on your availability and chosen audience to help address the potential challenges and prepare for a successful launch.



### STEP 3

## Build Community Awareness and Outreach

Administrators, teachers, parents, and students are not the only ones thinking about a return to school. Surrounding communities need to know how school campuses will protect their students, plus all that live in the area. It is critical to support your health and safety measures with a comprehensive communications strategy that aligns the entire community on the efforts you take to impact student and staff health and safety. Blue Refuge provides a strategic approach to keep everyone apprised of your re-opening strategy.

### A strategic approach to re-opening that keeps everyone apprised:



#### Staff communications

Development of internal newsletters and messaging to align staff on their role, safety measures, and the efforts made to ensure their safety.



#### Student engagement

On-site signage and messaging reinforcing personal hygiene practices, awareness around health and safety measures, and mental health support.



#### Community and family outreach

Press relations, social media campaigns, and website content regarding school measures around protocol and compliance.

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### On the Journey Together

The pandemic has had a global impact and it certainly impacts everyone in your school districts, whether it's teachers, parents, students, or neighbors. This three-prong approach can help you provide a safe clean learning environment and ensure the best approach for everyone's mental wellbeing while engaging the community.

These programs are highly customizable for your school needs and we can work with you to build a positive return to school and a new normal for education.

**Contact us at [info@bluerefuge.com](mailto:info@bluerefuge.com)** to begin planning a safe, healthy and comprehensive plan for return to your campuses.