

PENN HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

260 Aster Street

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15235

August 17, 2022

2022-2023 Start-of-School-Year Health and Safety Plan

The Penn Hills School District recognizes our role as a public school to provide a Free and Appropriate Education for all students who live within our borders. While operations continue to be impacted by COVID-19, Penn Hills School District remains committed to maintaining onsite learning options for interested K-12 families and offering a safe learning environment for our students and a safe working environment for our employees.

Penn Hills School District will continue to offer five (5) days onsite instruction for all K-12 students as of the first day of school on Monday, August 29, 2022. We will continue to honor the commitment made to those families who are not yet prepared to start transitioning back their students to onsite learning, and fully remote instruction will be made available through our Penn Hills Cyber Academy, which will continue to implement an asynchronous learning model that incorporates Edgenuity web-based software. As a supplement to fully remote learning, drop-in centers will remain accessible for the 22/23 school year at both Linton Middle School and Penn Hills High School. Appointments for drop-in center support will continue to be scheduled through our Penn Hills Cyber Academy Coordinator. Penn Hills School District will also continue its expansion of synchronous learning options for interested students. Designated classrooms have been enhanced over the summer to support active, real-time engagement between traditional classrooms operating onsite and those students studying at home via our synchronous learning option.

As part of standard operating practices, Penn Hills School District will continue to follow COVID-19 mitigation strategies that were proven effective in the Penn Hills School District during this ongoing pandemic. Our planned strategies are in compliance with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations. We will continue to adjust strategies and protocols in response to updated guidance received from CDC, PA Department of Health, and Allegheny County Health Department. As of Monday, August 29, 2022:

- Masks will remain optional for all students, staff, and visitors until further notice. *Ski-style masks are not appropriate for wear during the school day and/or at school-sponsored events.

PHSD will maintain a supply of traditional masks that will be available to students, staff, and visitors, as requested.

- Workstations for both students and staff will maintain a reasonable physical separation that may be extended according to individual preference, including but not limited to classrooms and employee break areas.
- Regular handwashing breaks will continue to be offered, and students/staff will have easy access to hand sanitizer.
- We will continue transitioning back to pre-pandemic cleaning protocols; however, touch surfaces may be cleaned throughout the building and throughout the school day, when deemed appropriate and in response to updated health information received.
- School Nurses will continue to sequester any student who is reported to have signs of illness. Temperatures will be taken at the discretion of Health Room staff, and parents/guardians will be contacted immediately for any/all students who register a temperature over 100.4 degrees and/or for any/all students who are manifesting any of the known symptoms of COVID-19. Immediate pick-up is expected by the family.
- Students are permitted use of personal water bottles as alternatives to water fountains.
- We will follow Allegheny County Health Department directives for family notification in the event of a potential COVID-19 exposure during district-provided transport to/from school and/or while students are onsite.
- Linton Middle School pool may be used as part of instructional programming. Continued pool use for instructional purposes will be based on regular review of local conditions and updated guidance from local, state, and/or federal health agencies.
- **Building/field usage requests submitted by groups that do not have a majority Penn Hills resident membership will not be considered at this time.**
- **There will be limited access during the school day for visitors, volunteers, etc. Parents/guardians needing access to their students prior to dismissal should attempt to call individual school offices in advance of their arrival.**
- District-approved volunteers will be invited to help support various school-sponsored activities, as needed and at the discretion of the Building Principal.
- Student Teachers and Interns enrolled in district-approved programs will be given access during the school day; however, their sponsoring agency must provide proof of vaccination in advance of their acceptance as a Penn Hills School District Student Teacher or Intern. While onsite, Student Teachers and Interns must follow all established safety protocols.

We continue to accept that our families know their students best, and we appreciate how our Penn Hills School District families continue to work collaboratively with us to maintain a safe learning and work environment. We trust that our families will continue to:

1. Perform daily wellness checks of their students who are scheduled to report to school that day and that families will keep at home any child who is feeling ill and/or who appears to be displaying any of the known symptoms of COVID-19, including but not limited to: a temperature over 100.4 degrees, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, congestion, chills, new lack of smell or taste, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or headache. (Staff is expected to assess their personal health as well and before reporting for duty onsite.)
2. Families are advised to contact a building-level School Nurse or Principal to discuss medical conditions that may require accommodations. (Staff is expected to follow this same expectation.)
3. Report any/all potential exposures to COVID-19 to a building-level School Nurse and will follow all next steps as directed by the Allegheny County Health Department. (Staff is expected to follow this same expectation and without hesitation.)
4. PLEASE REMEMBER that school closure and/or isolation/quarantine may not be directed in all cases.
5. If contacted by a building-level School Nurse or School Administrator regarding potential health concerns, report immediately to pick-up your child and/or arrange for a trusted adult to do so if you are not immediately available.
6. Penn Hills School District will continue to work collaboratively with families to provide make-up work for students kept home as a precaution, along with those who are ill and/or assigned to quarantine.

Overview of School Programming Anticipated as of August 29, 2022

- Penn Hills School District will continue to loan a District-owned device to support all K-12 students enrolled. Onsite student reliance on technology will be increased on school days that are shifted to remote learning only based on weather, COVID-related conditions, other. Legal guardians will be required to acknowledge in writing their legal and financial responsibility for safe return of District devices. **Penn Hills School District will collect a fee of \$10 per student device from individual families to help cover, in part, device insurance for the 22/23 school year.** This fee is less than half of actual District cost. Families who are able to pay the full cost of their student's device insurance are encouraged to do so:

- Lenovo Chromebook \$21
- Dell Chromebook \$23
- Apple iPad \$26
- Microsoft Surface Go \$51

A reasonable family contribution for device insurance is necessary to ensure the District is able to maintain device inventory throughout the school year for all K-12 students. District property that is not returned at the end of the school year or that appears to have been poorly cared for may result in legal action against the legal guardian, if replacement costs are not paid.

- Lockers (grades 6-12) and cubbies (grades K-5) will be available for student use, and traditional book bags and back packs will be permitted K-12. All packages, bags, containers, etc. remain subject to manual inspection.
- The District will continue to offer access to temperature check stations, masks, hand sanitizer, and disposable gloves for all employees. Health Room staff will remain available to check student temperatures as deemed appropriate or as requested by the parent/guardian.
- The physical school environment will include reasonable physical separation between and among student and staff workspaces. Window panels in classroom doors will remain clear and free of obstructions that may block the view of staff attempting to verify attendance and/or the safety and well-being of those inside.
- Breakfast and Lunch distribution will occur daily in each of our three (3) schools. School cafeteria space may be modified to ensure safe physical distancing, and cafeteria space may not be filled to capacity, if local positive case numbers warrant. Should adjustments be necessary, meal times may be staggered based on grade level, along with access to in-cafeteria dining. If warranted, students in grades K-8 may be required to select meal options upon arrival at school, and a mixed model of meal delivery may be combined with student pick-up at the discretion of the Building Principal and cafeteria management staff.
- Students may continue to bring their lunch from home; however, no group treats (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) may be brought into any of the schools until further notice.
- Classrooms will remain mostly self-contained for grades K, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7. Students in grade 4 will exercise limited movement during class change, and students in grades 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 will change classes according to a traditional school model.
- Directional signage will remain posted to help reduce student gatherings in hallways and physical contact during change of class. Some school stairwells may continue to be designated as “up only” and “down only” to help maintain physical distance.

- Numbers of students allowed to enter restrooms at the same time may be managed by district staff to help avoid overcrowding. No student will be denied use of the restroom; however, alternate locations may be assigned in order to manage safe distancing in school restrooms.
- K-12 music classes (including individual, class, and group) are expected to be fully reinstated in 22-23. Largescale performances will be considered and approved based on local conditions near the time of the planned event. Teachers/sponsors are encouraged to consider virtual performances as an option in their planning should local conditions prevent the facilitation of a larger, onsite performance or event.
- Opportunities for physical activity and movement via Physical Education class and/or Recess will continue to occur under very close supervision. Outdoor activities will be facilitated as weather permits, and any/all shared equipment will be sanitized regularly.
- Teachers, staff, and students will also have access to appropriate wipes should they want to sanitize their workspace and/or shared school equipment prior to use.
- K-12 students who qualify for specially designed instruction will continue to have curriculum and instructional practices modified as per individual IEP Team recommendations, with oversight provided by individual Penn Hills School District Case Managers.
- Social and emotional support will be offered via:
 - School Counselors and Home School Visitors/Social Workers for all enrolled students, onsite, remote, or synchronous.
 - Student Assistance Programming (SAP) services available in all schools
 - Safe2Say refreshers will be offered to students in grades 6-12 at the start of the new school year.
 - A New Directions Room will be fully operational at both Linton Middle School and Penn Hills High School, and a Mathilda Theiss program option/Cool Zone will be available at Penn Hills Elementary, along with the HIVE for students who need more support.
- Safety drills will be facilitated as required by Pennsylvania Department of Education, including but not limited to fire drills, lockdowns, bus evacuations, weather drills, etc.
- Clubs and activities will continue onsite meetings and related, as long as deemed safe based on local conditions, including Penn Hills School District athletics and activities.
- **Any student who refuses to comply with the Penn Hills School District Code of Conduct and/or directives based on health and safety considerations may be subject to disciplinary action. Full adherence to the Code of Conduct and health and safety guidelines/directives is expected when students are traveling on District-provided vehicles, when attending District-sponsored events, and when on District property.**

- PSAT, ACT, and SAT will continue to be hosted onsite at PHHS, as long as deemed safe as per local conditions. Smaller testing room assignments may be encouraged should local conditions warrant.
- Westmoreland Private Industry Council (PIC) is expected to host PreK programming onsite at Penn Hills High School again in 22-23. PIC staff, families and students, along with programming, must be compliant with all Penn Hills School District COVID-mitigation guidelines enacted, should local case numbers rise to a level that warrants immediate changes, including but not limited to masks, physical distancing, class size reduction, modified meal distribution, etc.
- YMCA will continue to contract with interested Penn Hills Elementary to facilitate onsite before- and after-school childcare services. YMCA staff and programming must be compliant with all Penn Hills School District COVID-mitigation guidelines in place.

COVID-19 Updates

Known case numbers by building and PHSD affiliate category will continue to be posted at least monthly via our District website: www.phsd.k12.pa.us. We continue to encourage all stakeholders to review these reports regularly. Postings may be updated more frequently when/if case numbers show evidence of significant increase.

Ongoing Review:

- The Penn Hills School District Pandemic Review Committee has the availability to meet as deemed necessary and in response to local COVID-19 numbers throughout the school year. It is anticipated that Dr. Robert Crossey (PHSD Physician) will continue to provide consultation to the committee's membership, which is expected to include designees from the following departments and employee groups:
 - Solicitor's Office
 - Chief Recovery Officer/PDE Liaison
 - Assistant Superintendent/Special Education Department
 - Human Resources Department
 - Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
 - Technology Department
 - PHSD Transportation Operations
 - Business Office
 - Plant Services
 - Athletics and Activities Department

- Building Principals (3)
- Food Service Operations (3)
- American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees Plant Services and Food Services Divisions
- Confidential Secretaries
- Penn Hills Education Association (that includes School Nurses) (4)
- Penn Hills Education Support Association (2)

Penn Hills School District Administration will continue its consultation with Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD). In consultation with ACHD officials, District students, employees, and other affiliates may be directed to quarantine, instructional practices may be temporarily converted to remote-only operations, use of rooms/areas may be halted until appropriate sanitization is completed, and scheduled activities may be canceled and/or rescheduled based on local COVID-19 conditions. Penn Hills School District appreciates stakeholder support received during this pandemic, and we believe it is this exceptional level of support that has allowed us to preserve onsite learning options for our students and safe working conditions for our staff.