

1 – Reopening of School Facilities for In-Person Instruction

Poland Central School District is prioritizing efforts to return all students to in-person instruction in the safest, most equitable manner possible. Following guidance received from the New York State Department of Education that is based on recommendations from the United States Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics, we are implementing a layered approach to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in its school buildings; by combining these layers of protection the district has more flexibility depending on the situation which makes full-time, in-person learning during the COVID-19 pandemic possible and safe.

Based on the dynamic nature of local community transmission of the COVID-19 virus and local vaccination rates these efforts may change throughout the year. Transmission thresholds can be found here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html and the county's current rate can be found here: covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view.

Capacity

Poland Central School District will consider factors such as ability to maintain appropriate physical distance, personal protective equipment (PPE) availability, local medical capacity, and availability of safe transportation.

Full-time, in-person instruction in each of its buildings is a priority. The capacity level of the district's buildings was determined using the following factors:

- Appropriate physical distancing for everyone in the buildings
- PPE & Face Coverings availability
- Availability and capacity of transportation options
- Local hospital capacity

Each building in the district was canvassed to identify existing and potential additional instructional spaces to maintain room occupancy that meets physical distancing requirements.

Poland Central School District is making available PPE and face coverings to its Students, Faculty, and Staff. It is estimating the amount needed during in-person instruction using the NYS Education Department's "PPE Burn Rate Calculator". The calculator recommends one (1) disposable mask per week per Student.

Poland Central School District has maintained a direct line of communication with the local health department to monitor the capacity of local and regional hospitals.

Physical Distancing

Poland Central School District has developed a written protocol to ensure all persons in school buildings maintain appropriate social distancing keep social distance of at least three (3) feet whenever possible.

The guidelines for distancing, as of August 2021 are, in general, three (3) feet in all directions, but may be increased or decreased based on the availability of other strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The district also determined that according to the CDC a distance of six (6) feet in all directions is to be maintained as much as possible between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice (singing, etc.), playing a woodwind or brass instrument, or aerobic activity resulting in heavy breathing (gym classes, etc.). This distance may change throughout the school year based on various factors, including the level of community transmission and local vaccination rates.

The district will maximize the amount of space to greatest extent possible when individuals are eating in a school cafeteria and prohibit the sharing of food and beverages. Eating may be restricted to classrooms at times throughout the year based on various factors, including level of community transmission and local vaccination rates.

Gatherings in small spaces (elevators, supply rooms, faculty offices, conference rooms, etc.) shall be limited and all individuals in the space at the same time must wear acceptable face coverings.

PPE/Masks

[Poland Central School District](#) has a plan for ensuring that an appropriate supply of face coverings is available for its Students, Faculty, and Staff. The district is estimating the amount needed during in-person instruction using the NYS Education Department's "PPE Burn Rate Calculator". The calculator recommends one (1) disposable mask per week per Student.

Guidance from both the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics as recommended by the NYS Education Department states: *The wearing of face masks will be required at all times in all school buildings, in both classroom and non-classroom settings; except during meals and official mask breaks.* Based on the layered approach [Poland Central School District](#) is using: removal of masks may also be permitted based on other forms of mitigation, such as appropriate social distancing. Students who are unable to medically tolerate a mask, including students where such mask would impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a mask.

[Poland Central School District](#) will train all Students, Faculty, Staff, contractors, and vendors on how to adequately put on, take off, clean, and discard PPE.

Hygiene/Cleaning, and Disinfecting

[Poland Central School District](#) has developed a written protocol to instruct Staff and Students in appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene. This protocol will be reinforced with signage in various, conspicuous locations in its buildings.

Students and staff will be instructed on how to practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. The district will plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand

hygiene, especially when in common areas, at the start of school, after using the restroom, before/after eating, after recess, at the start and end of PE class, and before leaving school, etc.). Hand hygiene includes:

- Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds)
- Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (60% alcohol or greater) when soap and water are not available, and hands are not visibly dirty
- Providing hand sanitizer throughout common areas (e.g., entrances, cafeteria), near high touch surfaces, and use touch free dispensers when able
- Signage will be placed near hand sanitizer indicating visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water
- Students or staff who are unable to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers for health reasons will be permitted to wash their hands with soap and water

Additionally, since COVID-19 virus spreads from person to person in droplets produced by coughs and sneezes, Students and Staff will be instructed on how to practice good respiratory hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This includes:

- Instructing Students and Staff cover their mouths or noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and dispose of the tissue appropriately
- Providing a supply of tissues and trash cans nearby should be available in each room

If no tissue is available, Students and Staff will be instructed to use the inside of the elbow (or shirtsleeve) to cover the mouth or nose and to always perform hand hygiene after sneezing, coughing and handling dirty tissues or other soiled material.

Poland Central School District will ensure adherence to cleaning and disinfection recommendations from the CDC. Most surfaces and objects in school buildings will just need normal routine cleaning. Frequently touched surfaces and objects like light switches, doorknobs and hand railings will need to be cleaned once a day to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects.

If someone in the school building has tested positive for COVID-19 and been in the building within the last 24 hours, any spaces they were in will be cleaned and disinfected to further reduce the risk of germs in those spaces.

Students will not be present when disinfectants are in use and will not participate in cleaning and/or disinfection activities.

Extracurriculars

Poland Central School District has a number of protocols for the unique aspects of sports/extracurricular activities. Protocols will consider a variety of factors including:

- Number of Spectators
- Scheduling Times
- Social Distancing
- Personal Protective Equipment

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- Personal Hygiene
- Contact Tracing
- Positive Case Response/Return to Play
- Transportation

In order to maximize, full-time, in-person learning during the 2021-2022 school year, extracurriculars/sports may be cancelled or rescheduled or have additional restrictions around participation and attending events based on the changing dynamics of the COVID-19 Pandemic and local conditions, including level of community transmission and local vaccination rates.

If [Poland Central School District](#) is closed for in-person instruction during the school year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, school sponsored sports and extracurriculars will be suspended until in-person education is resumed.

Vulnerable Populations

Alternate plans will be created in consultation with school health personnel on how to meet the needs of a child at higher risk, while keeping social distancing which may include:

- Additional PPE for Staff caring for such students
- Decreased students in a classroom, limited movement of classes, and related services delivered to an individual, instead of group setting for therapies

Any modifications will be made with the intent to minimize the COVID-19 exposure risk for students, faculty, and staff.

Transportation

In order for full-time, in-person instruction to take place, no capacity limits will be implemented on [Poland Central School District](#) school buses. As a result, and in agreement with the CDC and APA guidance, all passengers and staff on school buses must be masked at all times. As much as possible, buses will be loaded from the back to the front and unloaded in reverse, and [Poland Central School District](#) intends to track seating on each bus to provide seating charts as necessary to the health department.

Food Service

[Poland Central School District](#) will continue to provide school breakfast and/or lunch to students who were previously receiving school meals.

For students on-site, [Poland Central School District](#) will provide meals implementing physical distancing between students that is presented as necessary and supported by the CDC. We anticipate guidance will be fluid and adjusted throughout the year if cases rise. What we do intend is that all students eating on-site do not need to wear masks when seated and eating.

[Poland Central School District](#) faculty and staff will stress the importance of proper hand hygiene before and after eating. Sharing of food will be prohibited. As [Poland Central School District](#) is able to utilize a common area to eat, the area will be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC and APA guidelines.

All food service activities in the school buildings will operate in accordance with the latest guidance.

Mental Health/Behavioral/Emotional Support Services and Programs

The mental health and well-being of the students, faculty, and staff of [Poland Central School District](#) are of the utmost importance, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic and as the district transitions back to full-time, in-person learning. In order to address those needs, [Poland Central School District](#) has the following resources available for its school community:

- Guidance Counselors (2 full-time employees)
- School Social Worker
- Catholic Charities Prevention Counselor

Communications

[Poland Central School District](#) will communicate the importance of adhering to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control, as well as applicable protocols to Students, Parents, Legal Guardians of Students, Staff, and potential visitors.

This information will be shared in variety of ways, including letters sent home, emails, social media posts, and through the use of the district's "all call" messenger system. [Poland Central School District](#) has also developed a COVID-19 Information website QUICKLINK for reopening. Some of the topics covered in the communications and on the website include:

- Face Covering and Social Distancing requirements
- Trainings the district has in place related to COVID-19
- Resources issued from the Health Department and State Education Department.

Specific messages related to potential changes to protocols/requirements will be sent as needed and added to the district's website.

Signage has been placed at the entrances to each of the district's buildings regarding COVID-19 and face covering requirements. The district has also placed posters in various, conspicuous locations in its buildings regarding; social distancing requirements, hand hygiene, face coverings, and COVID-19 symptoms.

[Poland Central School District](#) has designated the Superintendent as the district employee who will serve a COVID-19 Safety Coordinator with identified responsibilities that include:

- Continuous compliance with all activities reopening plans
- Reporting closings and or infection rates

The COVID-19 District Safety Coordinator is a district administrator. The COVID-19 Safety Coordinator will coordinate activities with the local Public Health Department and the Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego BOCES Safety Service to insure consistency across the region. The District Safety Coordinator will also serve as

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- The main point of contact upon identification of positive COVID-19 cases and responsible for subsequent communication (see section 2 “Monitoring”)
- Responsible for answering questions from Students, Faculty, Staff, and Parents/Legal Guardians regarding the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and plans implemented by the school.