
Pittsford Schools

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)/Reopening of Schools Frequently Asked Questions for Families *rev. August 3, 2020*

The below question and answer document serves to address questions and concerns regarding issues related to COVID-19 and the reopening of schools. The District's plan as related to COVID-19 is based on NYS Guidance that outlines the mandatory steps schools must take in response to COVID-19. PCSD will monitor and adjust the plan in response to changes in guidance from NYS as they occur.

Please remember, this is a temporary situation, and while school and life as we know it is has changed, we will get through this together.

NOTE: This document will be updated regularly. The most recent version of this Q&A can always be found on the PCSD COVID-19 sub website at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19INFORMATION>

What is the plan for instruction?

There are three potential scenarios. The plans continue to be refined, but here is the link to more detail: [Temporary Learning Models](#)

- 1) Remote learning – students attend classes online only
- 2) Hybrid model – combination of in-school and remote learning
- 3) Full opening – students attend school full time

It is strongly recommended that you take the time to read through each of the Temporary Learning Model documents, as many of your questions are likely to be addressed in the description of each model.

What is the general roadmap for instruction?

Teams of teachers have been working together since late last spring to identify and plan for the learning gaps that can be expected as a result of last year's emergency COVID-remote instruction. Curriculum will be adjusted, as necessary, to allow for additional time to fill those gaps while still providing students with an engaging and rigorous experience with their current grade level curriculum. Using information gathered from the use of frequent, informal pre-assessments, teachers will be able to target areas needing additional whole group, small group, or individual remediation. Formative feedback strategies will be used, as always, to assist students in making progress towards their learning targets. Students will continue to receive a report card that will reflect their continued progress towards meeting grade level standards and expectations.

Are the start and end times changing for schools?

With the exception of Wednesdays, which will be an early dismissal day for grades K-5, we are planning for the start and end times for schools to remain the same for the 2020-21 school year as they were for the 2019-20 school year. Accommodations will need to be made to schedules as we anticipate an extended period of time will need to be allocated for student drop off and pick up each day in order to allow for appropriate social distancing and the increased number of parents who will be driving their children to and from school each day.

Last year’s remote learning was a challenge when there were different platforms used by different teachers for the same child. What is the plan for utilizing a common platform for each student?

This year, the district has transitioned to a small set of common technology platforms. The approved platforms will be used by all teachers for both in-school and any remote learning experiences. The approved platforms are:

Seesaw for Schools (grades K-3)

Microsoft Office Teams (grades 4-12)

Zoom for video conferencing/synchronous remote learning (grades K-12)

Students will be engaged in using these tools as part of the ongoing instructional program right at the start of the school year. The district will also provide support and training for parents in the use of these tools in order to assist parents in supporting their child(ren) at home.

Why is it possible for elementary students to return 5 days and not middle and high school?

While it would have been our sincere hope to be able to have all students return for in-person instruction, five days per week, we were constrained by both space and staffing needs from making this happen. For example, bringing all middle school students back to school five days per week would have required the hiring of an additional 16 staff members to guarantee adequate supervision of students in all settings throughout the day. Financially, this was not feasible.

Will specials still be offered at the elementary level?

A modified schedule of special area instruction will be developed once we have a clear sense of the numbers of students who will be attending in-school instruction, and therefore how we need to deploy our staff to provide adequate support and supervision to all students throughout the day.

Will electives still be offered at the secondary level?

Students participating in our hybrid model will follow their typical schedule, inclusive of elective offerings. Students who choose to learn remotely, rather than in our hybrid model, may have a reduced selection of elective offerings in which they are able to participate depending on staff availability.

Why can’t we know, now, which electives will be offered to students who choose to learn remotely? It seems like that is important information for informing our choice.

As we think about the breadth of our electives program at our high schools, including the AP courses, it is difficult – at this time – to know exactly which electives we will be able to offer as part of our remote learning option. One of our biggest challenges will be our ability to match up students who are learning remotely with teachers who are available to teach remotely. Once we know which students are choosing the remote option, we will begin the process of assigning staff, to the best of our ability, to those students and the courses they are taking. Each course needs to be taught by an appropriately certified teacher, which may limit the options for those who choose the remote learning option.

Singing and playing wind instruments poses a high risk to students and teachers; we often read and hear what kind of measures will be taken for sports, but nothing has been shared/released regarding music programs; is there any plan, or such programs will just put on hold until a vaccine will be found?

As a district, we highly value music education for our students. The concerns regarding the spread of the virus in situations involving singing and the playing of wind instruments will require us to make appropriate, temporary, adjustments to our choral and band instruction. We will work closely with the members of our music department, relying on guidance from the Department of Health, CDC, and the state and national professional music education associations to determine a plan to safely meet the needs of our students.

Will students change for physical education classes?

No, students will not change for physical education classes at any grade level, while we are operating with our Temporary Learning Models. On days when students have physical education class, they should come prepared in comfortable clothing and appropriate footwear. Physical education classes, in general, will need to be significantly modified given the restrictions regarding strenuous aerobic activities in school.

I have one child in middle school and one in high school? Can I be guaranteed they will be in school the same days? Can I choose the days?

Using our hybrid model, secondary students (grades 6-12) from the same family will be in school on the same day. Families will not have the ability to choose the days of in-school attendance for their children. That decision will be made by the district, and will be based on either an alphabetic split or a geographic split. Our transportation department is currently working through the models to determine the most efficient routing, given social distancing guidelines on buses.

If we make the decision to keep kids at home and the situation improves, do we have the option to return to school this year?

At this time, for our planning purposes, we are requesting parents make a choice that they will commit to for the duration of the first semester (through January 29, 2021).

Will the cohort of kids opting for remote learning be separate from those who are in school? Or will at remote learners be lumped in with those in school?

Students opting for full time remote learning will be in a separate cohort, working with different teachers, than those learning in the hybrid model at school. As our planning group worked through our multiple scenarios, it was determined that it is not feasible to have teachers simultaneously plan for, and be responsible for, students in both the hybrid and full time remote environments.

At the elementary level, what will the time students are not with their classroom teachers actually look like?

Classroom teachers will be working very closely with the other staff members, whether they are certified teachers or paraprofessionals, who will be working with students when they are not directly working with their classroom teacher. Some of that time will be utilized for special area instruction, delivered by art, music, physical education, 4/5 science, and library teachers. At other times, students will be engaged in learning activities that have been planned by their classroom teacher to be carried out by the other adult in the room. This may include independent reading, writing, or math practice. It may involve students working with educational apps on computers or tablets.

Students may be using this time to be engaged in center-based activities such as math games, word work, and journal writing, similar to what students would be doing throughout the day in a typical elementary classroom.

Will some state requirements be waived for this year, such as required number of gym classes?

The state has indicated that school districts will have some flexibility in the delivery of physical education classes, the allowance for a blend of hands-on and virtual science laboratory experiences, as well as the ability of schools to use a combination of in-person, synchronous, and asynchronous learning experiences to count towards both attendance and our required minutes of instruction.

What school will look like for special education students?

The district will provide in-person and remote programs and services as closely aligned to individual IEP requirements as is safely possible. For details, please refer to the [Special Education Assurances](#) posted on our website. As always, if you have specific questions about your child's program, please reach out to your child's service coordinator, or contact our Special Education office at 267-1014.

My middle school/high school student has an IEP - will they receive in-person instruction for 2 days per week or 4 days per week?

If your student is enrolled in one of the following special education programs, they will receive 4 days of in-person instruction (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday) and 1 day of remote instruction (Wednesday):

- CRMS 8:1:1
- BRMS 12:1:1 or 12:1(3:1)
- MHS 12:1:1 or 12:1(3:1)

If your student is **not** enrolled in one of the programs listed above, and is in grades 6-12, they will follow the same hybrid model as their general education peers (2 days per week of in-person instruction and 3 days per week of remote instruction). However, students with IEPs will be closely monitored and additional in-person instruction may be offered based on student need as space allows, given social distancing requirements. Please let your service coordinator, building principal, student services teacher and/or the District special education office know if you have concerns as your student transitions to the hybrid model.

Will remote learning this fall look different than it did in the spring?

Yes. The expectations for remote learning this fall will be very different than what we were able to provide in the spring. Whether your child chooses the remote option in the fall, is participating in the hybrid model grades 6-12, or we have to revert to everyone in remote learning, students will be expected to follow a schedule and participate in learning experiences for each class every day. There will be daily attendance requirements, assessments, and grading requirements. For more information regarding the expectations, please refer to the Remote Learning Plan described here: [Temporary Learning Models](#)

If we choose the remote option for our child, will a Pittsford teacher be delivering their instruction?

We will make every effort to match up students who opt for remote learning with Pittsford teachers teaching remotely. If necessary, we may explore options to work cooperatively with other Monroe County districts to best meet the needs of students learning remotely.

If we opt for remote learning for our child, will they have access to materials from school such as workbooks, textbooks, and novels?

Yes. We will be able to work with families to arrange the delivery of resources that would be necessary for remote learning such as textbooks, workbooks, and novels for English classes to the degree that those materials are available and being utilized by the instructors responsible for remote learning.

Will my child be grouped with their friends if we choose fulltime remote learning?

Groupings for remote learning classes will be determined based on enrollment. Depending on numbers, we may have one or several remote groupings at each grade level. If enrollment dictates multiple groups at a particular grade level, every effort will be made to group students from the same school together.

How will the district support parents with remote learning this year?

The district will make available parent training resources regarding our established common technology platforms which are *Seesaw for Schools* (grades K-3), *Microsoft Office Teams* (grades 4-12), and *Zoom* for synchronous learning/videoconferencing (grades K-12). Both print and short video tutorials will be made available to parents on the Technology page of our website.

Elementary students will be given a “Home Learning Kit” that will include simple materials for students to use, with their teacher, during any remote learning. Materials in the kit will include items such as a ruler, dice, a deck of cards, beans or counting cubes, a small white board and white board marker, etc. These kits are being assembled before the start of the school year and will be given to each child to take and keep at home. Teachers, knowing that each child has ready access to these materials, will be able to build learning experiences that make direct use of those materials.

We will also continue to partner with the PTSA on strategies to support parents with remote learning.

What is being done to insure all students have access to a computer and internet?

The district will continue to work to provide families with access to technology resources. Given that our secondary hybrid model requires daily, consistent, access to technology, a survey is being sent out to families of all secondary students on Monday, August 3rd, regarding home access to computers and internet. The results of this survey will help us to determine who we will need to loan a device to as well as the number of additional devices the district will need to purchase immediately in order to provide equitable access for all learners.

What will a typical day look like?

At the **elementary level**, students will arrive at school and report to their designated learning space. Students from one “homeroom” may be reporting to two different spaces, depending on the configuration in each building. In order to accommodate all students being in the building a variety of spaces beyond typical classrooms, will be utilized. These spaces may include rooms that are typically reserved for art, music, and science instruction, libraries, computer labs, gymnasiums,

auditoriums, and/or cafeterias. All available staff members are being deployed to assist classroom teachers in supervising and supporting learning throughout the day. Classroom teachers will continue to be responsible for planning and implementing instruction for all of their students; however students will spend time working under the supervision of an adult (another teacher or a paraprofessional) other than their classroom teacher. A modified schedule of special area instruction (art, music, physical education, library, and 4/5 science) will be provided to students on a rotating basis. Students will most likely need to eat lunch in their learning space. Frequent mask breaks need to be built into the day, including opportunities to take students outside for learning experiences, as well as for daily recess.

At the **middle level**, on the days that students report to school, they will arrive at school and go directly to their designated homeroom. Students will stay with their cohort much of the day. English, math, and social studies teachers will come to the students; students will travel for some science instruction when it is necessary to access lab equipment. Students will also travel for World Language and special area instruction. Students will eat lunch in their assigned learning space. Frequent mask breaks will be built into the day. There will be no extracurricular clubs or activities taking place after school.

At the **high schools**, on the days that students report to school, they will arrive at school and go directly to their homeroom or first period class. Students will follow their typical schedule. Desks in each classroom will be spread out to allow for social distancing to take place. Campus will be closed; all students will be assigned to study halls rather than given a “free period” and students will not be allowed to leave campus for lunch. Additional spaces, beyond the Commons, will be set up in order to provide for appropriate social distancing during lunch periods. Frequent mask breaks will be built into the day. There will be no extracurricular clubs or activities taking place after school.

In an effort to reduce close contact, middle school and high school students will not use lockers. They will keep their belongings with them throughout the day.

On the days that **middle and high school** students are learning from home in the hybrid model, they will be expected to follow their typical schedule and will be required to check in with their teachers each period for attendance purposes, at a minimum, before progressing with their home-based assignments.

In the hybrid model, what does at home learning look like?

On the days when students are learning from home, students will be expected to follow their typical daily schedule. Their teacher will have prepared them for the work they are to be doing while at home, and students will be responsible for checking in with their teachers on a daily basis via Zoom or Teams. There will be an expectation for daily attendance and engagement in learning, with feedback and structure provided by the teacher.

Will teachers be live streaming from their classes for students who are learning from home? If not, why not?

While teachers may check in briefly at the start of each period with students learning at home, via Zoom, they will not be livestreaming their instruction for full periods for the students learning at home. Our planning committee discussed this option, but determined that it would not provide a quality learning experience to either the in-person and at-home students, as the teacher’s attention would need to be split between the group of students in class and those in the “Zoom classroom”. Instead, teachers will adjust their instruction, prioritizing work that needs to be done face-to-face for

the in-person days and planning for purposeful, engaging work to be done remotely on the home learning days.

How will social distancing be maintained in hallways?

Students will be required to wear masks when in the hallways and will be asked to maintain distancing to the extent possible. At the secondary level, congestion in the hallways will be significantly reduced by virtue of having only half of the student body present at one time. Travel between classes will be reduced at the middle schools, further reducing hallway congestion at that level. The elimination of the use of lockers at the secondary buildings will also, we believe, help to reduce congestion and small group gatherings in the hallways.

Why are pods and cohorts important?

- They reduce the number of people you come into contact with
- They allow for better contact tracing should someone become ill

Both the CDC guidelines and the NYSED guidance document indicate that facemasks aren't required if we can maintain 6 feet of social distancing. Why, then, is Pittsford requiring students and staff to wear masks all day if we are also putting social distancing measures in place?

At the recommendation of the County Health Department, the best way to mitigate risk of exposure to the virus in school is to wear masks, even when we have social distancing measures in place. Given the realities of a school environment, it will be difficult to guarantee a minimum of six feet of social distancing at all times, despite our best efforts. Students at all grade levels will be provided with ample "mask breaks" throughout the day. Students, of course, will be able to remove their masks when eating lunch or snacks where they will be properly socially distanced.

Will the school district provide PPE for students and staff?

Yes, the district will make general Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available for all students and staff. Students and staff are welcome to wear their own masks from home, but additional supplies will be available at every building in the event someone needs one. In addition, hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms, offices, and other spaces where students and staff may be present. Health office staff will be provided with additional PPE necessary for their protection to prevent the spread of illness.

Are cloth facemasks acceptable face coverings?

Per the NYSDOH Guidance, acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana) and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose.

How will you enforce proper masking policy (covering the nose as well)?

All staff will be trained, as the start of the school year, regarding proper use of all PPE including the proper wearing of masks. At the elementary level, our school nurse teachers are preparing resources that teachers can use to help teach our youngest students about the use of masks and why they are important to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. Teachers will be expected to continue to positively reinforce and model the use of proper mask wearing throughout the day.

Are parents required to ensure that their child or children do not show symptoms of COVID-19 or a fever before boarding a bus each day?

School districts are required to have a protocol in place to perform temperature and health

screenings for COVID symptoms. A daily screening protocol by the parent/guardian prior to school will be forthcoming.

What are the protocols for staff member daily health screenings?

Staff members are required to fill out the daily health screening survey before coming to work.

Do students and staff have to maintain a 6-foot distance from others at all times?

Schools must maintain protocols and procedures for students and staff to ensure appropriate social distancing to protect against the transmission of the COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities, including the responsibility to configure spaces so individuals can maintain social distancing. These specifics are forthcoming.

My child doesn't feel well but has a test in one class. Can they come to school for one period to take the exam?

No, if students feel sick, they need to stay home and accommodations will be made to make up the test.

Can a family choose not to send their child(ren) to school if they are concerned about COVID-19?

Families have the option of choosing remote learning for their children. However, once a model of instruction is chosen, parents will need to commit to that model for one full semester.

Elementary families can choose from the District's K-5 in-person model or a fully remote learning model. Secondary families can choose the District's hybrid model or a fully remote learning model.

Parents also retain the right to choose to homeschool their child(ren). Information about homeschooling requirements are available from our Student Services Office at this link:

<https://www.pittsfordschools.org/Page/20376>

What steps are schools taking for cleaning and disinfection? Cleaning and disinfection throughout the school buildings and buses is ongoing. Custodians have verified each classroom is equipped with a cleaner for wiping down surfaces, and additional cleaning products have been stocked.

How is Re Juv Nal ®, the hospital-grade cleaner, being used in the schools?

Use of this product is limited to times when students are not in the classroom and is kept out of reach of children. These are the procedures for using Re Juv Nal:

- 1) For general contact surfaces (desks, countertops, etc.):
 - a. Spray a mist of cleaner 6-8 inches from surface.
 - b. Wait 10 minutes for the product to dry.
 - c. Wipe any liquid that hasn't dried before students touch surface.

- 2) For surfaces where food is consumed:
 - a. Spray a mist of cleaner 6-8" from surface
 - b. Wait 10 minutes for the product to dry.
 - c. Wipe any liquid that hasn't dried before students touch surface.
 - d. Wipe with wet paper towel to rinse surface.

What do I do if I need home learning technical support?

If your child needs help accessing their PCSD email or you need assistance with an application you

are trying to access from home, you can get help from the Pittsford Schools Technology Department by filling out the form found here: www.pittsfordschools.org/TechHelpForm.

Where will students be eating lunch?

Lunchtime will necessarily look different as it will not be possible to accommodate all students in the cafeteria in the same way, on the same schedule, as previously. Students will need to be socially distanced for lunch, with a minimum of six feet of distance in all directions between all students. In many cases, this will require schools to use spaces beyond their cafeterias to accommodate students for lunch. At the elementary level, many students will eat lunch in their designated learning space as the cafeteria will be in use all day as an auxiliary learning space.

What steps will the PCSD be taking to safeguard drivers against becoming infected from student contact in the buses?

Drivers will also wear masks at all times. They will frequently wipe down common touch surfaces with CDC approved nonflammable products with more extensive cleaning/disinfect between AM/PM runs.

If we volunteer to drive our children to school in one direction, can they still get transportation the other way? And if there is a day that they cannot be driven, can they still ride the bus upon request?

Unfortunately, it is highly unlikely this will be permitted. With bus capacity at $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ or normal capacity, we cannot afford to lose a seat to an occasional rider. Two students could make the difference of requiring an additional out and back, extending school bell times, student ride times, etc., and it's not fair to the other students on the bus to vary these times daily to accommodate those who want occasional service.

Will there be an adult on each bus to supervise the children and make sure that their masks stay on since they will be in such close quarters?

It is unlikely that we would have the additional personnel available, or space available on the buses, to assign an extra adult to each bus for the purposes of monitoring that children are wearing their masks. Students will be required to be wearing a mask when they get on the bus each day. Helping students understand the importance of wearing their mask at all times is a shared responsibility of bus drivers, other school personnel, and parents/guardians.

What can I do to help prevent illness?

The same steps you take to reduce the spread of flu or other respiratory illnesses are key tools for reducing the spread of coronavirus.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (the length of the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end, twice). If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or a tissue (then throw the tissue in the trash).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What am I supposed to do if I think my child is sick? It is the recommendation of the Health Department that instead of going to a medical facility, you call your healthcare provider first and explain your child's symptoms. They will give you direction.

Telemedical Programs have also been set up in the Rochester area so people with COVID-19 medical concerns can speak with healthcare providers using a secure web-based video conferencing tool.

- To schedule an appointment through Rochester Regional Health (<https://www.rochesterregional.org/services/telemedicine>), call (315) 359-2820
- For patients of Strong Health or the University of Rochester Medical Center (<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/community-health/patient-care/for-patients/telehealth.aspx>), call (585) 530-2050
- Rochester Regional Health has a special telehealth Care Now service for people with COVID-19 who are recovering at home. Eligible patients will be set up with Care Now after they're diagnosed. (<https://www.carenow.com/>).

Do I need to quarantine myself? Unless you have been instructed by a health official to be quarantined, there is no need to self-quarantine.

Stay informed. Information is changing frequently.

Parents can stay up to date on the most recent COVID-19 developments through the local, state and federal health agencies.

- Monroe County Health Department's website includes information about COVID-19 at this link: <https://www2.monroecounty.gov/health-coronavirus>
- New York State has established a Novel Coronavirus Hotline at (888) 364-3065 and an informational website at this link: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>
- The CDC posts regular updates here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- For information about talking to children about COVID-19 (coronavirus), please reference this parent resource from the National Association of School Psychologists and the National Association of School Nurses: [NASP Resource: Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#)
- Links to all of these resources can also be found on the PCSD COVID-19 website at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19INFORMATION>.

Visit PCSD's COVID-19 Website for Regular Updates to Home Learning Resources and Links to Community and Health/Mental Health Resources

Regular outreach from your child(ren)'s teacher(s) regarding home learning, new material and resources are posted regularly on the District's COVID-19 Home Learning Resources webpage: <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/domain/2072>.

Additionally, updated COVID-19 information and community resources are posted on an ongoing basis at <https://www.pittsfordschools.org/COVID-19INFORMATION>. Families can find resources related to information about COVID-19, telemedicine, food banks, free WiFi, social/emotional wellbeing/coping strategies, and materials translated into Chinese and Spanish.

NYS Office of Mental Health Free Emotional Support Line: 1-844-863-9314

The Emotional Support Line provides free and confidential support, helping callers experiencing increased anxiety due to the COVID-19 emergency. The Help Line is staffed by mental health professionals, who have received training in crisis counseling.