

PASCACK VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

REOPENING PLAN

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## Pascack Valley Regional 2021-2022 Reopening Operational Plan

(Updated: November 15, 2021)

(Updated March 7, 2022)

(Updated August 29, 2022)

(Updated December 12, 2022)

(Updated March 27, 2023) Text in **RED** denotes changes since last update.

### **Introduction**

The Pascack Valley Regional High School District's (PVRHSD) Operations Plan describes the district's reopening goals and health and safety protocols for the 2022-23 school year based on recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) outlined in The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year as well as recent mandates and recommendations from the CDC, Governor Murphy our Health Departments and our school physician. Updates have been included from the most recent guidance and regulations from the State of New Jersey, effective **March 27, 2023**

### **Full-Day Full-Time Instruction**

The state of NJ and the NJ Department of Education has mandated that every NJ Public school district will reopen schools to in-person instruction for all students for the 2022-23 school year, returning to pre-Covid normal school days that will include lunch and that will address the needs of all students.

### **Goals**

- Provide a reopening plan and strategy to address students' developmental and learning needs while preserving the safety of all students and staff and adhering to behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19; and,
- Plans are guided by the provision of the New Jersey Department of Education as well as recommendation from the NJ Department of Health and are informed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention guidance.

Therefore, all PVRHSD schools will be open for full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for the 2022-2023 school year.

The PVRHSD will follow health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-12 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and the Health Departments and our school physician. PVRHSD will collaborate with the Health Department, School Physician, and our District Mental Health Professionals to determine local guidelines while considering the risks of the physical/mental health needs of the students and staff. As per the Road Forward, we anticipate potential updates to the guidance as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) became available.

At this time:

- We are planning for full-day, five-day a week in-person instruction, with normal pre-Covid school hours;
- All students will be back for full-time, in-person instruction for the 2022-2023 school year;
- Parents will not be able to opt children out of in-person instruction as allowed for the 2020-2021 school year;
- Per Governor Murphy's mandate, effective March 7, 2022 the wearing of masks by students, staff, and visitors will be optional.
- The district will have schools open full-time for the 2022-23 school year.

### **COVID Only Related Remote Instruction**

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, schools must be in session for 180 days to receive state aid. The statute requires that school facilities be provided for at least 180 days during the school year. Section (b) notes that where a district is required to close the schools of the district for more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, days of virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction will count towards the district's 180-day requirement. NJDOH guidance, The Road Forward, notes that if a school is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the District:

- Will provide remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible; and,
- In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.2.

CALI and Variant Surveillance Reports, along with municipal vaccination coverage data, are used in combination with local data to determine specific guidelines for our school Communities.

## **1. General Health & Safety Guidelines**

### **1.1 Vaccination**

Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy. The CDC, NJDOH, and NJDOE encourages all individuals aged five years and older to get vaccinated. According to the CDC, vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, can reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19, and are effective against variants of the virus that causes

COVID-19, including the new variants. While vaccinations are not mandatory, they are an effective means to help prevent outbreaks within the school community. Learn more about the COVID-19 vaccination by consulting your healthcare provider.

Governor Murphy's Executive Order 253 requires vaccinations of all district employees and contractors. Effective August 15, 2022, Governor Murphy rescinded the testing requirement for those individuals who cannot or prefer not to get vaccinated.

For children 5 through 17 years of age, a primary series consists of 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. For persons 18 and older, a primary series consists of:

- A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or
- A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine)

The CDC recommends that people remain up to date with their vaccines, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised and booster doses at regular time points. For the purpose of this document, "up to date" with vaccination means being fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 AND having received all recommended additional doses, including booster doses when eligible. "Fully vaccinated" means being at least two weeks past completion of a primary vaccination series. If schools are unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals should be considered not up to date.

To assist with contact tracing, copies of vaccination records may be requested updated via the Genesis parent portal.

## **1.2 Communication**

School officials maintain consistent communication with our Department of Education, Health Departments and our School Physician to determine appropriate local guidelines and protocols, share information and resources on COVID-19 transmission, and to establish procedures for response to COVID-19 illness in school settings. These CALI and Variant Surveillance Reports, along with municipal vaccination coverage data, are used in combination with local data to determine specific guidelines for the PVRHSD community.

## **1.3 Masks**

As of March 7, 2022, the state mandate requiring in school universal masking expired and individual school districts and school boards will be able to make the determination as to whether universal masking is appropriate for their schools. In making this decision, the Pascack Valley Regional High School District has consulted with the LHD and school district medical personnel, as recommended. In addition to school district policies, individuals (including parents/guardians) need to make masking decisions based on their specific situation (e.g., if they or their family members are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19). Effective March 7, 2022, masking will be optional for students, staff, and visitors to

the Pascack Valley Regional High School District. Any staff, student, or visitor who wishes to wear a mask for any reason in any location is welcomed and encouraged to do so. The district pledges full support for everyone to make their own choices regarding masking.

Exceptions:

The District will require mask wearing in the following circumstances:

- *During periods of elevated community transmission*, as indicated by a region or county designation of “red” (very high) on the Covid-19 Activity Level Index (CALI).
- *During an active local outbreak* as determined by the local health department(s)
- *After returning from isolation or quarantine*. Staff, students, or visitors who are in the school building during days 6-10 of isolation or quarantine should continue to mask. Use of a KN-95, KN-94, or N-95 mask is highly encouraged.
- *If a close contact of an individual tests positive but the individual is asymptomatic*. Exposed individuals should wear a mask in school for 10 days.
- *In the nurses’ office*. All staff, students, and visitors who enter the nurse’s office should wear a mask while in the nurse's office at the nurses’ discretion. Students, staff, or visitors who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms must wear a mask until they leave the premises.

Learn more about the proper choice, use, and removal of masks on the CDC website.

Generally, it is recommended that masks completely cover your nose and mouth, fit snugly against the sides of your face, and don’t have gaps. KN-95 or N-95 masks are strongly recommended. Fabric masks, gaiters, and masks with vents are no longer considered to be as effective and should not be worn in school.

#### 1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing (*eliminated as of Summer 2022*)

~~The District will continue to adhere to the latest NJDOE/NJDOH guidelines (The Road Forward, June 2021). “Consider maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent practical while offering full time, in person learning to all students.” Students will return to schools in non-cohorted formats. All instructional and non-instructional spaces will be configured to maintain physical distance to the maximum extent practicable while considering best instructional practices and the risk/benefit for the physical, mental, and social-emotional health of students and staff.~~

#### 1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Fully functional hand sanitizer stations are located at all public entrances in each building and at regular distances in the hallways and in each classroom and office.

We have prepared and will maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol): in each classroom (for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer); at entrances and exits of buildings; near lunchrooms and toilets. Hand hygiene opportunities will be provided during the school day. Students will be reminded to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:

1. Upon arrival to school and before leaving school;
2. Before and after eating;

3. After using the bathroom;
4. After blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing; and,
5. When hands are visibly soiled.

If washing with soap and water is not possible, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer/wipes. Signs will be posted to help educate and remind people to use protective equipment when applicable, social distance and follow good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

### **1.6 Meals**

Prompton will be fully staffed and ready to serve students. Using the app to pre-order will increase efficiency in getting lunch. Students are welcome to bring their own lunch.

Lunch

- Lunch will operate as normal as possible. Students will be encouraged to spread out and use the outdoors during good weather.
- Open campus will be available for seniors.
- Students will be able to use the cafeteria, outdoors, and other spaces the administration has opened.
- Students will have the ability to pre-order and pre-pay for lunch

### **1.7 Transportation**

Bus companies will provide transportation to eligible students and follow normal school schedules. Masks may be optionally worn by all students before entering the bus. When weather permits, bus windows will be opened.

### **1.8. Visitors & Deliveries**

Food delivery and other non-essential deliveries will not be allowed during school hours. School administration will make arrangements outside the building for items that need to be dropped off.

## **2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow**

School officials will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. The custodians will disinfect all rooms every night. Adequate ventilation shall be ensured in indoor facilities, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Filters must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer's recommendations. When weather allows, windows should be opened to the most reasonable extent possible to allow for greater air circulation when air conditioning is not in use, unless doing so poses a safety or health risk.

### **2.1 Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment**

Classroom materials, physical education supplies, and art supplies etc. will be used in accordance with pre-pandemic practices. Proper hand washing practices will be encouraged, and shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected.

## **2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection**

All spaces will be cleaned daily by the custodial department using the following three-step process:

1. Remove soil, giving attention to high touch surfaces,
2. Use hospital grade disinfectant on hard surfaces, and
3. Clean rooms with an approved cleaner and/or disinfectant.

Appropriate cleaning will be completed before, during, and after lunch. While school is in session, all custodial staff will have access to disinfectant and a cleaning solutions. There will be dedicated custodians that will disinfect high touch areas. This will be used to continuously wipe down all high touch areas, e.g. doorknobs and push bars, water fountains, hand railings, elevator buttons, and horizontal surfaces.

## **2.3 Improving Airflow**

All room unit-ventilators and rooftop units are operable and in good repair. Units are maintained, and filters are changed per manufacturer's specifications. All windows are operable with opening restrictions for student and personnel safety. Air conditioner units and filters are maintained per manufacturer's specifications.

## **3. Contact Tracing Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

### Contact Tracing

Per the CDC, close contact in a classroom setting, for students, is defined as being within 3 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion. The district will utilize its discretion and the professional opinion of the district health care team to make the determination of the need for contact tracing and resulting quarantine in conjunction with current official guidance and local community spread.

Working in partnership with parents, it is essential for parents to communicate with the school nurse if your child has been identified as a close contact outside of school. PVRHSD school nurses are trained contact tracers, and they work closely with the Health Department, and the School Physician, and the School Nurses to perform contact tracing responsibilities where appropriate. This may include:

- Assisting in identifying the contacts with the school and communicating this information with the Health Department and
- Notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements with the guidance of the Health Department while maintaining confidentiality.

The Health Department contact tracing team may notify and interview the close contacts identified by the school and reinforce the exclusion requirements.



### **3.1 Parental Screening Protocol (*Not in effect for the 2022-23 school year*)**

~~Parents will screen students daily before their children leave the house for in-person instruction. This includes temperature and symptom checking. Parents/Guardians are asked to e-sign the 2021-22 Parent Statement of Assurance of Compliance with COVID-19 Guidelines quarterly. The letter will include: signs and symptoms of COVID-19; what to do when a child is ill; medical, health department and health insurance resources; travel advisory information; reminder to update emergency contact information on Genesis; the importance of sending healthy children to school with a mask; and the necessity of picking up ill children from school promptly. The compliance agreement can be found on the Parent Portal under "Forms" and must be e-signed by the start of the school year for students to continue to attend in-person school or school sponsored Activities.~~

When reporting absences to the school, parents should provide information about symptoms. School nurses will follow-up with the family when COVID-related symptoms are present. Temperature checks will not be taken as students enter school.

It is paramount that if staff or students have COVID-19 symptoms or feel ill, that they stay home and obtain COVID-19 testing.

### **3.2 Extracurricular Activities, Field Trips and Athletics**

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) resumed regular operations effective July 1, 2021. There are protocols established for all athletic teams. Proper social distancing (when possible) and hygiene protocols will be maintained by these groups under the supervision of their coaches and activity leaders while in progress. PVRHSD will consider allowing field trips, assemblies, and/or other large gatherings if these events are able to be held safely. External community organizations that use school/district facilities may be limited depending upon community spread. Virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings in lieu of field trips may be pursued.

### **3.3 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

Health Office: Procedures

All school nurses are in regular contact with the School Physician, local health officials, and the principals. When a student or staff member comes to the health office and presents symptoms typical of the COVID-19 disease, following the NJDOH guidelines, students will be placed safely and respectfully in isolation. This isolation will be supervised in a reasonable manner, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, and appropriate PPE will be worn to protect the staff member. The parent/guardian will be notified and instructed to pick up the child promptly. Should the parent/guardian not be reached, the emergency contact person will be contacted and notified to pick up the child. When the parent/guardian arrives at the school for pick up, the student will then be escorted out of the building maintaining a physical distance. For the health and safety of all, this pickup must be completed efficiently. Upon being sent home, the student shall be in consultation with their family physician in order to determine the appropriate

diagnosis and recommended treatment plan, which may result in a required COVID-19 test.

#### Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

As per the Road Forward, parents must not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; OR
- At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.

For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

#### When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Following the NJDOH guidelines, students and staff members with COVID-19 symptoms at school will be placed safely and respectfully in isolation. This isolation will be supervised in a reasonable manner, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, and appropriate PPE will be worn to protect the staff member. All school nurses are trained contact tracers and collaborate with the local Health Department in this capacity.

Individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider. Persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing.

- If community transmission is low (green), ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#).
- If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if community transmission is Moderate (yellow) or high (orange), they should be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria. Regardless of vaccination status, if a student or staff member experiences COVID-compatible symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2.
- If COVID-19 symptoms develop, get tested and follow isolation recommendations.
- If asymptomatic, get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact
  - o If the test is positive, follow isolation recommendations.
  - o If the test is negative, you can end quarantine after day 5.
  - o If testing is not available, you can end quarantine after day 5 (as long as there were no COVID-19 symptoms throughout the 5-day period).