



Pascack Valley Regional High School District Reopening Operations Plan 2021-2022

As of November 15, 2021

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Introduction

The The Pascack Valley Regional High School District's (PVRHSD) Operations Plan describes the district's reopening goals and health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 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 the CDC, Governor Murphy our Health Departments and our school physician.

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 2021-22 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 2021-2022 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 prior to the start of the school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become 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 2021-2022 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 all students and staff will be required to wear masks indoors regardless of vaccination status;
- Schools will reopen for students on September 1, 2021

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.

These 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 encourage all individuals to get vaccinated. Individuals five years-old and older are eligible. 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 Delta variant. Boosters are highly encouraged for those individuals who are eligible for them. 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](#) and/or consult your healthcare provider.

Governor Murphy's [Executive Order 253](#) requires vaccinations of all district employees and contractors. The Executive Order does provide a weekly testing component for those individuals who cannot or prefer not to get vaccinated. Effective October, 2021, all district employees who have chosen not to be vaccinated are tested weekly. If the CALI report has Bergen County go "Red", staff members will be tested twice a week. (As it is in January 2022)

To assist with contact tracing, copies of vaccination records must be 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

Recently, [Governor Murphy announced](#) and signed [Executive Order 251](#) that all students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks in school buildings for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. The Executive Order is effective on Monday, August 9, 2021. We will continue to monitor guidance from the State and collaborate with the Health Department to monitor local data should districts be permitted to make decisions on the local level.

Mask breaks must be outdoors as feasible and only when physical distancing can be maintained. Gaiters, bandanas and masks with vents are not acceptable. Currently NJDOH guidelines and local health department recommendations, outdoor masking may be less restrictive as it is easier to social distance. We will continue to monitor and share updates as we receive them.

There is no definition of extreme heat as it concerns wearing masks. Districts have been tasked to make that determination locally. Principals will consult with the Superintendent to determine if wearing masks is detrimental to staff and students prior to their removal.

Masks are required on school buses as per the [Federal Order](#).

Learn more about the proper use, removal, and washing of masks on the [CDC website](#). Generally, have at least two layers of washable, breathable fabric, completely cover your nose and mouth, and fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps.

1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing

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 possible while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students." Students will return to schools in un-cohorted formats. Social distancing protocols will be implemented as much as possible during transitions, and in common areas, and plexiglass shields will continue to be used in high-traffic areas such as front offices.

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

Pomptonian 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 with physical distancing. 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 open.
- Students will have the ability to pre-order and pre-pay for lunch - details to follow under separate cover.

1.7 Transportation

Bus companies will provide transportation to eligible students and follow normal school schedules. Masks must be worn by all students who are able to do so before entering the bus. Students will follow the same protocol when boarding a bus as required to enter a school building. Students refusing to wear masks may lose their transportation privileges. Buses will be disinfected each time they return to the bus yard after morning routes are complete, and

before the afternoon routes. When weather permits, windows will be opened.

Masks are required on school buses as per the [Federal Order](#).

1.8. Visitors

Visitors are not permitted to enter the building, unless they are essential visitors such as emergency and law enforcement personnel in their official capacity, District partners, DCP&P personnel and Health Department personnel. The principal may admit a visitor at their discretion if the principal determines that it is necessary. In all such cases, the visitor may be submitted to the screening procedure before entering the building (i.e., temperature and exposure questionnaire) and shall be required to wear a mask. Food delivery and other non-essential deliveries will not be allowed.

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. Re-sanitize rooms with electrostatic spray applicators and hydrogen peroxide-based 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 clean dry cloth and 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 and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

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. This includes:

- 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

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 **September 1, 2021 and again at mid-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.

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. Based upon current condition and CALI status, athletics may implement spectator restrictions as needed. 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. 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 will 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 (separated) from others and excluded from school:

- At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measured or subjective), chills, cough (dry or wet), fatigue, 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 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 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, 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 or high, 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.

Exclusion

- **Unvaccinated Close Contacts**
 - As per the [NJDOH Exclusion Criteria](#), individuals who are identified as close contacts of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 must quarantine based upon community transmission levels as follows:
 - High (**orange**) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days.
 - Moderate or Low (**yellow or green**) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days
- **Vaccinated Individuals Who Are Close Contacts**
 - Proof of vaccination must be provided in order to be excluded from quarantine requirements.
 - The individual should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days following an exposure and wear masks indoors during this time.
 - If symptoms are present, the individual should be excluded from school and be evaluated by a health care professional for COVID-19.
- **Sick or COVID Positive**
 - Staff and students who are ill with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested OR
 - individuals who have tested positive may not attend school and must complete a 10-day quarantine from the onset of symptoms.
- **Positive and Asymptomatic**
 - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic must stay home for 10 days from the positive test result.

**A COVID negative test is required for symptomatic individuals even with an alternate diagnosis, such as a positive strep test or influenza swab.*

For more details, visit the [NJDOH website](#).