

# Pennsville Schools 2021-2022 School Year

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

(all items are based on mandates found in the [The Road Forward](#) - Health and Safety Guidelines for the 21-22 school year)

### Busing and transportation to/from school

#### **What procedures are in place for busing to start the school year?**

- Students should socially distance themselves at the bus stop as long as they can stay in a safe area.
- All students must wear a face covering on the bus from the time they enter until the time they exit. Face coverings on buses are a federal mandate.
- When practical, students will fill the bus from the rear to the front so that they don't have to pass by other students.
- All seats are assigned.

### Face Coverings

#### **When would my child have to wear face coverings during the school day?**

The Governor's [Executive Order 251](#) requires all public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, to "maintain a policy regarding mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises," effective as of August 9, 2021.

The new Order does not change the previous Federal mandate that masks must be worn on public transportation, which includes school buses and other student transportation.

#### **Who provides face coverings?**

- Families are being asked to provide face coverings for their child just as they would be required to do so in any other indoor public setting, as per state guidelines.
- Additional face coverings will be available at the school if the family-provided mask becomes unusable at some point during the school day or if families can't provide them. However, school-issued masks may be less comfortable than masks that students are already comfortable with from home.

### **What if my child has a medical condition that prevents him or her from wearing a face covering at all or for long stretches of time?**

- Parents have the opportunity to provide medical documentation that demonstrates that wearing a face covering complicates a significant existing medical condition. Any medical documentation provided will then be reviewed by the school district physician. (Contact your school for details.)
- Please note that the district has limited options depending on the number of children in a given area who cannot wear face coverings due to medical circumstances, resulting in potential options that will be communicated to parents on a case by case basis.

### **What about wearing face coverings during lunch?**

- Students will only be permitted to remove face coverings while seated during lunch and actively eating/drinking while at least 3 feet apart. AM Breakfast will follow the same dining protocols.
- Additional lunch sessions have been created in some schools, additional rooms are being utilized and additional lunch aides have been hired so that students can be spaced out as far as possible.

### **What about using the bathrooms, student hallway traffic and using lockers?**

- Wearing a mask into the bathroom is a requirement. No loitering of students in bathrooms will be permitted.
- Students who need special assistance using the bathroom will be supported by staff members who will have appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available.
- The district's ongoing emphasis on a digital approach to education through Chromebooks should minimize the need for traditional locker use.
- Signs and markers will be present throughout the building and grounds reminding students to maintain social distancing, utilize handwashing and hand sanitizing techniques and to wear face coverings in appropriate ways.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building with an enhanced presence at entrances and exits, the main office, bathrooms, the nurse's office and other hubs within the building.

### **Will my child get a chance to take the face covering off during the day?**

- We are exploring ways to take the face coverings off for breaks during the day in an environment that complies with social distancing and state health guidelines.

- The district strongly recommends that parents begin having their child practice wearing face coverings in the weeks leading up the start of school.

### **What about the heat and the wearing of face coverings?**

- There are usually a number of days in September and June when the heat and humidity make the classroom environment uncomfortable. We will be especially vigilant with this issue because of the need for students to wear face coverings under these conditions.
- On days when wearing a face covering becomes a potential health hazard due to the heat, the district may announce an early dismissal day. This will allow students to escape the worst of the heat in the afternoon. In cases of extreme heat, school may be canceled altogether.
- There is currently no state approval for virtual days due to weather conditions - heat or snow. The district does not currently have the option to “go virtual” in the event of extreme heat or significant snow/ice.

### **Building Cleaning and Sanitation**

#### **How will buildings be cleaned?**

- All cleaning protocols follow NJDOE and CDC recommendations and guidelines for cleaning and sanitation with hospital-grade resources.
- Custodial staff will continuously clean and sanitize high traffic areas throughout the day including wiping down door handles and cleaning bathrooms.
- Once staff and students leave for the day a hospital-grade disinfectant will be utilized on every surface in the building.

### **Health screening and positive results**

#### **How should a daily health screening be conducted for students and staff?**

- All families should check students each day for COVID-like symptoms.
- “If in doubt, keep your child out.” Obtaining an excused absence for a child is as simple as contacting the school through a phone call or email. No doctor’s note is required for short term absences.
- Virtual instruction is not an option this year. However, most assignments are typically available through Google Classroom/Seesaw. If students feel well enough during an absence, most of their school work should be available digitally if they are concerned about “getting behind”.

- In addition, school staff will be monitoring students who are in the buildings for any symptoms or signs of discomfort every day.

### **What if a student exhibits potential symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day or tests positive for COVID-19?**

- There are a set of state guidelines that direct the [steps](#) that the district must take.
- Students will be quarantined and closely (and safely) monitored until a parent can arrive to transport the student home.
- Detail will be provided to parents should those circumstances arise.

### **Visiting the schools**

### **What if I need to visit the school during the school day to pick something up or drop something off for my child? What if I need to pick up my child during the middle of the school day?**

- For parents who need to visit the school while instruction is taking place, we ask that you contact us ahead of time - as best you are able. Please know that depending on how many other visitors are inside the lobby or the main office, we may have to ask you to wait outside for a time to practice social distancing.
- We ask that parents minimize picking up and dropping off materials for students unless they are absolutely essential. We do understand that students forget things and, more importantly, emergent life situations may require you to pick up a child on very short notice.
- The best approach is to call ahead and let the main office know what you need. They may ask you to drop an item in an outside bin as opposed to entering the building. They may ask you to call back when you arrive and they will contact you while you wait in your car until your child is ready to be picked up.

### **What about substitutes?**

We have a training program for all the district substitutes that reviews COVID-19 protocols in our buildings.

### **Miscellaneous (but important!) Questions**

### **What about traditional school events and extracurricular activities?**

- Our intention at this point is to conduct as many of those events in a traditional way as possible. Some modifications may be needed depending on circumstances.

### **What about Athletics and Marching Band?**

- The district will follow guidelines established by NJSIAA.
- More information concerning those guidelines can be found [here](#) or by contacting the Assistant principal for Athletics at PMHS.

### **What if the state of NJ closes the school(s) completely like they did several times during the 2020-2021 school year, one or more schools have to be shut down as the result of quarantine or students have to be placed on home instruction with medical issues?**

- We have skilled and accomplished educators who are already proficient in delivering robust and meaningful instruction in a virtual environment. Our experiences have only made us stronger in that area.
- This topic will be an ongoing area of professional development once school opens so that we are prepared for any possibility.

### **What happens next?**

As you can imagine, quite a few updates will follow throughout the school year. We ask for your patience, understanding and flexibility. Meanwhile, we are focused on providing an excellent education for our students during the 2021-2022 school year!

Aug 23, 2021