

POMPTON LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS
237 Van Avenue
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
(973) 835-7100

August 12, 2021

updated 9/1/21 – updates highlighted in yellow

Dear Member of the Pompton Lakes School Community,

In June of this year, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), in conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), released the Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 school year, [*The Road Forward - Health and Safety Guidance for the 21-22 School Year*](#). The guidance provides the clear and direct statement that schools must plan to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. The remainder of the document provides expectations and recommendations for processes and procedures related to school operations. This document supplants the health and safety protocols outlined in last year's guidance (The Road Back) and Executive Order 175. In addition to the *Road Forward*, the Governor, on August 6, 2021, issued [Executive Order 251](#) which requires all students, staff and visitors to wear a mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status.

First and foremost, we are excited to return to full in-person days for all. Students benefit from attending school regularly. Classroom instruction is most effective when all students are together in a single place. We are excited to welcome back all of our students and staff on September 8, 2021. Below are some Frequently Asked Questions that may assist in understanding what we believe September will look like. This document is based on the guidance referenced above and in consultation with our own nursing staff and local health officials.

What will the typical school day look like?

We are planning a reopening and a return to a school schedule that existed prior to the pandemic. Daily school schedules will return to the same arrival and dismissal times as pre-pandemic: PLHS 8:00am-2:46 pm, Lakeside 8:10am-2:55 pm, Lenox & Lincoln 8:35 am-3:05 pm, Pre-K AM 8:35 am-11:15 am Pre-K PM 12:20pm - 3:00pm. There will not be a virtual option for students.

What, if any, mitigation strategies will the district employ to reduce the potential transmission of the virus?

Once again, we will depend upon our parents and guardians to utilize the [Daily Screening Tool](#) before sending their child to school. It is important that children remain home if sick. While at school, we will continue to emphasize frequent hand washing and proper respiratory etiquette. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all classrooms and hallways. As per the directive of the Governor (8/6/21), all students, staff and visitors will be required to wear face coverings/masks while inside the school building.

Our custodial staff will continue to clean and disinfect during the school day (i.e., wiping down common surfaces, enhanced cleaning) and in the evenings.

Physical distancing will be in place where feasible, though maintaining a distance of at least three feet may not be possible in all circumstances.

Will special school activities, trips, assembly programs return?

Yes, we do plan on reinstating a number of these school-community activities and experiences.

If my child is on a bus, must they wear a mask?

Yes. Currently the Road Forward guidance does in fact require masks to be worn while on buses.

How is air flow being addressed?

Last year, the district adopted a more frequent schedule for changing air filters in each unit ventilation system. Increasing air flow as much as possible continues to be a recommendation from our local health officials and the Road Forward guidance. Windows will remain open as much as possible. During colder months, windows may be cracked open an inch or two to maintain air flow without creating uncomfortable classroom conditions. Through a federal grant, the district was able to purchase air purification systems for every interior classroom and office (those classrooms and offices that do not have windows). These units are scheduled to be installed prior to the opening of school.

What happens if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

The district will continue to follow the guidelines for quarantine for those individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Current guidance requires a quarantine period of 10 days from when symptoms began or, if asymptomatic, when the individual tested positive.

What happens if my child is identified as a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19?

The NJDOE has adopted a recent CDC recommendation that defines close contacts, among students who are correctly wearing masks, as someone within 3 feet for 15 minutes or more. The length of quarantine for close contacts is dependent on a number of factors.

The district will continue to utilize the [NJDOH Weekly COVID Activity Level Report](#) as a basis for transmission levels.

If the current transmission risk level is low (green) or moderate (yellow):

- Quarantine can be as little as seven (7) days if the close contact tests negative for COVID on day 5, 6 or 7. Without a negative test, the quarantine period is 10 days.

If the current transmission rate is high (orange):

- The quarantine period is 14 days.

PLEASE NOTEAn individual identified as a close contact does not need to be quarantined if either they have had COVID within the past 90 days (lab confirmed) or they are fully vaccinated (proof of vaccination required).**

Quarantine includes removal from all extracurricular/athletic activities as well as inability to attend school.

If my child has to quarantine, how do they keep up with their schoolwork?

A recent memo from the DOE recommended that school districts work to provide instruction virtually to those individuals who are required to quarantine. Our district is working to be able to provide this access for any individual who must quarantine due to a school-based exposure. Students who are quarantined will also be expected to access their teacher(s) Google Classroom to access learning materials, resources, assignments, and instructions. In cases of extended absence due to illness, a student may qualify for a period of home instruction.

Will the district be inquiring as to the vaccination status of my child?

Yes, it is helpful for the school nurse to be aware of who is vaccinated. This information is confidential and will not be shared. We ask that parents whose child(ren) have been vaccinated submit proof of vaccination to the respective school nurse. While we are encouraging all staff and students who are eligible to get vaccinated, there is currently no requirement regarding vaccination.

Last year, the district sent a phone call, email and text message to all parents every time there was a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school. Will this be the practice this year?

Similar to last year, when there is a confirmed case of COVID in school, the contact tracing process will be followed. All close contacts will be notified. In the case of students deemed close contacts, the parent/guardian will also be notified. Communication to the entire school community for each of these cases will not be done this year. However, on a regular basis (i.e., weekly) the district will share the number of confirmed cases with parents and the school community.

Will the guidelines change at any point?

This document represents the guidance the district will use unless circumstances require changes or the Governor, NJDOH, NJDOE or local health officials provide updated guidance and/or directives. We will continue to provide updates regarding any changes to our reopening guidance.

Best wishes to you and your family for an enjoyable remainder of the summer. We are looking forward to the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,

Paul Amoroso
Superintendent of Schools

