



Pearl River School District

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April 12, 2021

Dear Pearl River School Community,

We are moving steadily forward to our full-return, scheduled for April 19, 2021. This letter provides important updates to our school community regarding our plans for a full return to in-person instruction. Late Friday, the NYS Department of Health issued [updated guidance for schools](#).

A significant change in the guidance is: “The CDC no longer recommends physical barriers for mitigation where physical distancing cannot be maintained.” (NYSDOH, April 9, 2021). The district purchased desk shields in preparation for a full-return because they had been cited previously by the NYSDOH as a means of returning more students to in-person instruction. In light of this new guidance, desk shields will only be used in those limited circumstances for which they were already in place. These limited circumstances include placement on teacher desks, and where small group instruction typically brings staff and students closer together.

The new guidance renews the emphasis on air filtration and ventilation. In November, the District secured HEPA units for all workspaces and classrooms in all school buildings in the district to augment the unit ventilators in schools. As we move out of the heating season, unit ventilators will have their settings switched to a full open mode to allow for maximum intake of fresh air into classrooms.

The updated guidance addresses meal taking in schools and the requirement of 6 feet of social distance between individuals when eating. The CDC has recommended eating lunch outdoors when possible. The district will have tents in place for outdoor lunches at each of the schools to accommodate this need.

Students who are eligible for transportation and cannot be driven to school will be required to wear a mask and face shield while riding the bus as the ridership will be increasing. Face shields will be distributed this week to students who are attending in person classes. Students who will return to in person instruction from remote instruction on Monday, April 19th, will receive a face shield on Monday.

We regularly monitor community and county transmission rates, as recommended by the CDC and the NYSDOH. At this time, the transmission rates remain at a level that allows for our full-return as per the [Rockland County COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Please continue to support our ability for a full-return by following the recommendations for preventing the spread of COVID-19 and doing all that you can to remain healthy.

Sincerely,

Marco F. Pochintesta, Ed. D.