



Pearl River School District

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Earlier this month, the District assumed the task of formulating its own protocols and procedures for the reopening of our schools given the absence of guidance from the New York State Department of Health. In an effort to establish a full-time, in-person return to school come fall, we reconvened our School Health Committee in order to develop a series of recommendations to meet the challenges of operating our schools during a continuing pandemic.

On August 24, newly-appointed Governor Hochul stated that her “priority number one” is making sure children are safe in school, including: "Immediately directing the Department of Health to institute universal masking for anyone entering our schools, launching a back-to-school COVID-19 testing program to make testing for students and staff widely available and convenient, and developing a method ‘to require vaccinations for all school personnel with an option to test out weekly, at least for now.’”

The Governor stated that she will announce "a series of school-related policies" later this week. It is clear the path forward about masking will be decided at the state level. What remains unclear is what the series of school-related policies issued later this week will be. We await these policies and how they could impact the protocols and procedures that we have planned for our students’ return to school on September 1st.

Our current plans for our return to school are outlined below:

Back-to-School Nights: This school year’s Back-to-School Nights will be held virtually. Parents will receive information from their child’s school on how to log in to their child’s classes in order to attend.

Cleaning Practices: All cleaning and disinfecting practices implemented in the 2020-21 school year will continue this school year. Cleaning materials for desks will be readily available in each classroom.

Daily Attestation: During the 2020-21 school year, parents were required to complete a daily attestation for each child attending school. This upcoming school year, it is recommended that parents receive guidelines for keeping their children home when they are exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19 and submit one form attesting that they have read and understood the guidelines.

Disposable Desk Covers: Disposable desk covers will not be used as they were last school year. However, cleaning materials that were available last year will be provided in each classroom.

Handwashing and Sanitizers: Students will be strongly encouraged and frequently reminded to wash their hands properly and use hand sanitizer throughout the day. Hand sanitizing stations will be accessible and available for student and staff use. (Parents who do not want their child to use hand sanitizer can send a letter to their school nurse and principal).

Masking: Currently, masking will be required for everyone in schools. Masks are not required outdoors.

Quarantining of Students and Staff: Students and staff that are vaccinated will not be required to quarantine if exposed. These individuals, however, must remain masked and will be required to get tested for COVID-19 three to five days after exposure.

Please note: This summer, the CDC modified who would need to quarantine if exposed to a positive case of COVID-19. The CDC now states that students who wear masks properly and consistently do not need to quarantine unless they are closer than three feet apart. This is a substantial change from last year where anyone exposed to a case that was six feet or closer in distance was required to quarantine.

Sharing of Materials: For this school year, the committee's recommendation was to allow the sharing of materials (i.e. toys in a kindergarten classroom, lab equipment, etc.) in conjunction with proper hand washing/hand sanitizing before and after use.

Social Distancing: Students will be seated three or more feet apart whenever possible. During lunch, students will be seated six feet apart whenever possible.

Symptoms of COVID-19: Any student with [symptoms of COVID-19](#) must remain out of school. Students may return to school with a negative PCR or NAAT test, must remain fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication, and have symptom resolution. Any student who develops symptoms in school will be isolated and a parent/guardian will be called to pick up the student.

Ventilation: All spaces used by students and staff will have HEPA filtration units. Unit ventilators will be serviced according to their seasonal schedule and made ready for the start of school. In addition, new window screen installation allows for open windows and the circulation of fresh air. All elementary school classrooms will have air conditioners for the start of the new school year as we transition from summer to fall.

Visitors to Schools: Visitors during school hours will be limited. School events during the day will be held outdoors if possible. After-school and evening events may be held indoors with an audience provided that we can keep students and staff separated from event attendees. Each evening event will be held on a case-by-case basis.

Further information will be forthcoming from building principals regarding school-specific procedures such as arrival and dismissal procedures, locker usage and lunch procedures.