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# Health and Safety Plan

Parsippany-Troy Hills Township School District  
2021-22 School Year

Superintendent of Schools: Dr. Barbara Sargent Reviewed and

Approved by the Board of Education: August 26, 2021

Posted to the district website at [www.pthsd.K12.NJ.us](http://www.pthsd.K12.NJ.us)

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## Introduction

This plan outlines procedures for opening the Parsippany-Troy Hills Township Schools for full student attendance in September following a year of hybrid instruction. The Parsippany-Troy Hills School District has prepared this plan following guidance from the NJ Department of Education and the NJ Department of Health in The Road Forward and includes these key areas:

- I. General Health and Safety Guidelines
- II. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow
- III. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff
- IV. Contact Tracing
- V. Testing
- VI. Instruction During Quarantine/Virtual Learning

## Leadership and Planning

The district is grateful for the thoughtful planning provided by our district administration, faculty, local health officials, and Board of Education. Each school has established a Safety/Pandemic Response Team to centralize, expedite, and implement decisions related to health and safety issues at the building level. These committee members have reviewed the plan prior Board review.

### I. General Health and Safety Guidelines

#### 1.1. Vaccination

The Parsippany-Troy Hills School District partnered with Atlantic Health in Spring 2021 to provide opportunities for staff to be vaccinated. Anyone needing to leave for an appointment was provided with coverage. The district also partnered with the Boonton Walmart Pharmacy Department in June and July and provided one of our high schools as a site for vaccinations with a special focus on middle and high school students.

The district will require all school employees to be vaccinated by October 18, 2021 or be tested “once or twice a week”, as per Executive Order \_\_\_\_\_. This includes all full and part-time teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers, and administrators. It also includes anyone who provides these services to the district on a contract basis.

#### 1.2 Communication

The district will maintain close communication with the local health department to share resources of COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and containment.

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### 1.3 Masks

Per Governor Murphy's Executive Order 251, all public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools (collectively "school districts"), must maintain a policy regarding mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in the following circumstances:

- a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- b. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask without assistance;
- c. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face mask;
- d. When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- e. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask;
- f. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- g. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- h. When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

School principals will develop "mask break" schedules for students and staff members. Individuals are not required to wear masks outdoors. This includes outdoor time for recess, class instruction, Physical Education, fire/safety drills, snack, and meals. The Physical Education teachers will determine whether masks can be removed during indoor P.E. classes based on the level of physical activity.

### 1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing and Cohorting

Physical distancing of 3 feet will be encouraged in large group settings such as dining areas and physical education classes. Classrooms will be set up in a way that promotes distancing and supports student learning. Large group assemblies will not be held during the first quarter of the school year; this decision will be revisited at a later date. There will be no field trips except for special education Community Based Instruction trips. This decision will also be revisited later in the school year.

For the first marking period, middle and high school students will not change for P.E. classes. This will be reviewed once the school year is underway. Lunch arrangements will allow for cohorting.

To the extent possible, physical distancing will be prioritized for classes such as concert band, band, chorus, lunch, physical education, and other indoor activities when increased exhalation occurs. Additionally, physical distancing will be prioritized in common areas, when masks cannot be worn, and during outdoor activities.

### 1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand sanitizers are placed throughout the school buildings and by high-traffic areas such as the gymnasium, multi-purpose room, cafeteria, rest rooms, main office, and entrance lobbies. Signage will be placed throughout the schools to reinforce proper hand-washing procedures and promote healthy respiratory etiquette. If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) will be used.

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## 1.6 Meals

Physical distancing of 3 feet will be encouraged in large group settings such as dining areas. This may be accomplished by staggering lunch periods in schools, offering various areas (courtyard, cafeteria, gymnasium, media center) for eating, and spacing students farther apart during lunch periods. Students will be discouraged from sharing food. Routine cleaning between lunch groups will be enforced. Lunch can also be taken outdoors as conditions allow.

For the beginning of the school year, at least, lunch will be provided to students in a pre-packaged arrangement to the greatest extent possible.

## 1.7 Transportation

As per CDC Federal Order, masks must be worn by all passengers on buses regardless of vaccination status. Physical distancing will be employed when bus capacity allows for it. Windows may be open to increase airflow. Buses will be regularly cleaned after morning routes, afternoon routes, and extracurricular/athletic routes.

## II. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

### 2.1 Limited Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

To the greatest extent possible, students will have their own supplies, thus eliminating the need to share materials. Personal belongings will either be kept in lockers or in individual cubby areas.

### 2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

In addition to all existing established cleaning procedures, the District Facilities and Custodial departments will implement the following measures in an attempt to protect students, staff and visitors from contracting or spreading the COVID-19 virus:

- Special attention will be given to the disinfecting of high trafficked areas in and around all school facilities. Frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, door knobs, panic bars, and light switches will be cleaned and disinfected at a minimum of twice per day.
- Cafeteria tables will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each lunch session.
- Restroom and locker room cleaning and disinfecting frequency will be increased to at least twice per day. This will also include all frequently touched surfaces such as flushometers, faucets, soap and sanitizer dispensers, paper towel dispensers, door handles, etc.
- All hand sanitizing, soap and paper towel dispensers in restrooms and common areas will be checked and refilled regularly to ensure they are usable at all times.
- Water fountains will be covered and not used; bottle filling stations will be sanitized twice daily and once during the evening shift.
- Any areas designated as food consumption locations will also have an increased frequency of cleaning and sanitizing procedures once these areas have been established.

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- The facilities department management team will be responsible for tracking the inventory and restocking as necessary all cleaning and sanitization supplies used throughout the District. Supplies will be reordered as available.
  - PPE supplies (face masks and gloves) will be purchased and supplied to personnel and staff in accordance with the district's COVID-19 Safety Plan. The Facilities management team will be responsible for providing training and updated procedures and products to all custodial personnel as they become available.
  - Fitness centers will be cleaned and sanitized twice daily and once during the evening shift focusing on any items being regularly handled. Sanitizing wipes and products will be provided for self cleaning by users.
  - All vehicles involved in the transportation of students will be cleaned and disinfected daily using a combination of sanitizing wipes and Atomizing Disinfectant Sprayers

In summation the Parsippany-Troy Hills School District will follow all recommendations outlined in numerous Government publications and advisories which are already established and will adjust our procedures and policies accordingly as new advisories are released and updated. A Custodial Handbook (Parsippany/Troy Hills Custodial Handbook Best Practices Reference and Training Guide) outlines each of these procedures and contains additional protocol for general cleaning and maintenance of the district facilities.

### 2.3 Improving Airflow

The district will ensure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating, and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component. Windows may be open to increase ventilation provided that doing so will not pose a safety, health, or security risk (extreme temperatures, triggering asthma symptoms, falling). Air filters in all HVAC equipment will be changed quarterly as long as the COVID-19 issue continues.

All rooftop HVAC units follow a Preventative Maintenance Schedule and are inspected for proper operation every 3 months. Filters are replaced prior to the heating season and cooling season. The district uses a combination of MERV 8 and MERV 10 filters. The air flow restrictions caused by higher rated filters are not compatible with our HVAC systems. The unit vent systems in individual classrooms are changed when filters are replaced.

Physical education classes may occur outdoors as conditions allow. Teachers may conduct lessons outdoors if they choose. Lunch can also be taken outdoors as conditions allow.

## III. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

### 3.1 Parental Screening

Parents and caregivers will be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness.

### 3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Students and staff presenting symptoms of COVID-19 while in school will be referred immediately to the school nurse for assessment. In the event that a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19, the district will follow the guidelines of the local Health Department and NJ Department of Health.

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### 3.3 Exclusion

The district has a strong partnership with the Parsippany Health Department and the local Health Officer. In the event that a student or staff member should be in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19 or have a positive test for COVID-19, the district will follow the guidelines of the Health Officer and cooperate in all tracing endeavors. All applicable federal and state requirements regarding privacy of educational and health records (FERPA) will be followed.

As per NJ Department of Health guidance, students with the following symptoms will be isolated and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever, chills, shivers, 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.

Finally, District Policy #8451 “Control of Communicable Disease” outlines the district’s responsibilities in controlling the spread of communicable disease. This includes complying with regulations of the NJ Department of Health and the Parsippany-Troy Hills Township Board of Health, excluding students and staff who are ill or have been exposed to a communicable disease, and developing procedures for the control of communicable disease -- ie, symptom monitoring and other protocols.

#### 3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

School nurses will follow the standard protocols for staff and students demonstrating COVID-19 symptoms. The individuals will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider. If community transmission is low, ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#) to determine when they may return to school. No public health notification is needed unless there is an unusual increase in the number of persons who are ill which might indicate an outbreak. If ill individuals have potential COVID-19 exposure or if community transmission is moderate or high, they should be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria. In all instances, the district will coordinate with the local Health Department.

#### 3.3.3 Exclusion

- Ill individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset or at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medication and improvement in symptoms.
- Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home 10 days from the positive test result.
- An alternate diagnosis without a negative COVID-19 test is **not** acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school/work earlier than the time noted above.
- Individuals identified as close contacts will be excluded from school/work for 10 days (or 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days) as long as the community transmission level remains at Moderate or Low (Yellow or Green).
- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms **do not** need to quarantine or be tested. They should monitor for symptoms for 14 days following an exposure.

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## IV. Contact Tracing

The district will continue to cooperate with the local Health Department in identifying close contacts within the school community.

Per the CDC, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

*Exception: In the K-12 indoor setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting. (Note: We are waiting for confirmation from the local Health Department on this exception.)*

## V. Testing

### 5.1 Diagnostic Testing

The district will partner with the local health department and refer staff and families to their own personal health providers.

### 5.2 Screening Testing

The district will not engage in screening testing.

## VI. Instruction During Quarantine/Virtual Learning

### 6.1 Virtual Instruction Due to Extended District Closure

In April 2020, Governor Murphy issued an executive order that became P.L.2020, c.27. This law provides for the continuity of instruction in the event of a public-health related district closure so that LEAs can utilize virtual or remote instruction to satisfy the 180-day requirement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. The district closure must last more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure.

This plan addresses the requirements listed in “LEA Guidance for Chapter 27 Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Programs for the 2021-22 School Year”. Specifically, this includes:

- The plan outlines how virtual or remote instruction will be provided to students who may not have access to sufficient broadband, or to any technology required for virtual or remote instruction. *The district has a 1:1 Chromebook Program in place for students in grades 5-12. Students in younger grades will be provided with a Chromebook or iPad if they do not have access to a device at home. The school principals will track this information in our student information database. Similarly, the district has purchased a supply of hotspots and can distribute these to families on an as-needed basis.*

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- The plan addresses the impact of virtual or remote instruction on the school lunch and school breakfast programs.

*In the event of a district closure, the Free Meal program continues at Parsippany Hills HS and Parsippany HS. The distribution of school meals for any student in need will be Monday (for two days of meals) and Wednesday (for three days of meals) between 11:00 a.m. and noon. Delivery can be arranged for families who are unable to get to either high school.*

- The plan contains the required length of a virtual or remote instruction day.

*Elementary Schools: 8:55 a.m. to 3:25p.m. (Teacher lunch/planning is between 11:30 and 1:00)*

*Preschool: 9:00 to 11:30 for AM Preschool; 12:30 to 3:00 for PM Preschool;  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for Full Day Preschool M - Th; 9:00 to 1:00 on Friday (Teacher lunch 11:30 – 12:30)*

*Middle Schools: 8:00 a.m. to 2:46 p.m. (Teacher lunch/planning is during their scheduled times.)*

*High Schools (Grades 9-12) 7:40 a.m. to 2:28 p.m.  
Parsippany HS and Parsippany Hills HS will continue to follow the posted rotating block schedule.*

## 6.2 Virtual Instruction Due to Individual Student Quarantine

Students in PreK through Grade 1 who quarantine will access lessons and resources on the *SeeSaw* platform. Lessons will not be live-streamed. Teachers may include students virtually in specific portions of a lesson when it is instructionally appropriate to do so.

Students in Grades 2 through 12 will access lessons through *Google Classroom*. Lessons will not be live-streamed. Teachers may include students virtually in specific portions of a lesson when it is instructionally appropriate to do so.

Students in self-contained classrooms may receive direct instruction from a staff member to ensure their services are continued.

Any student on quarantine status (either positive COVID-19 diagnosis OR determined to be a close contact of a COVID-19 case) will be considered an excused absence. All other student absences due to illness or otherwise will be considered unexcused unless recognized by the NJDOE. Please review our complete attendance policy in the Student/Parent Handbook available on each school's website.