

Patchogue-Medford School District



Where Education is Met with Excellence!

Reopening Plan

September 2021

DISTRICT WIDE REOPENING COMMITTEE

Dr. Donna Jones – Superintendent of Schools and Chairperson of District Wide Reopening Committee

Lori Cannetti - Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction and Subcommittee Chair for Secondary Education

Dr. Joey Cohen - Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Subcommittee Chair for Elementary Education

Dr. Jessica Lukas - Assistant Superintendent for Special Education & Pupil Services and Subcommittee Chair for Special Education and Social and Emotional Supports

Frank Mazzie - School Business Administrator and Subcommittee Chair for Operations

Kelvin Ortiz - Director of Special Education and Subcommittee Chair for Nursing Supports

Ryan Cox - Director of Athletics/PE/Health and Subcommittee Chair for Athletics and Physical Education

Robert Epstein - Principal of Canaan Elementary School and Subcommittee Co-Chair for Music and the Arts

Nathan Brinkman - Director of Art, Music & Cultural Arts and Subcommittee Co-Chair for Music and the Arts

Erin Skahill – PMAA President and Principal of Eagle Elementary School

Kevin Toolan – PMCT President and Teacher

Christopher Angelora – PMCT Vice President and Teacher

Candida Bednarski – Nurses Unit President and Registered Nurse

Michelle Jordan – CSEA Clerical Unit President and Principal Office Assistant

John DeSantis – CSEA Custodial Unit President and Maintenance Mechanic II

Lori Musumeci – CSEA Part-Time Unit Vice President and PTA Council President and Part Time Special Education Aide

Emily Moss – Director of School Age Child Care

Paul Noonan – Director of Plant and Facilities

Carol Sicignano – Transportation Supervisor

Daniel Erwin – Food Service Director

James Richroath – Administrator of Technology

Randy Rusielewicz – Principal of High School

DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

Donna Jones, Ed.D.
Lori Cannetti
Joey J. Cohen, Ed.D.
Jessica Lukas, Ed.D.
Frank Mazzie

Central Administration

Superintendent of Schools
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Services
School Business Administrator

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This reopening plan was developed to ensure a safe and educationally sound environment for the students in the Patchogue-Medford School District. It relied on input from members of the school community, teachers and administration.

Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, the district will:

- Maintain safety protocols recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Departments of Health of New York State and Suffolk County and the Office of the Governor of the State of New York and the County Executive of Suffolk County.
- Maintain communication with all local and state authorities.
- Work in every way possible to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

In furtherance of the district's desire to keep all members of the school community safe, the following procedures will be instituted at the start of the school year:

Delivery of Educational Services:

It has always been the belief of the Board of Education and District Administration that in-person education is the most effective way for students to learn. This belief was tested during the 2020-2021 school year when students were on hybrid and remote schedules for a portion of the school year. Our data shows that most students did not thrive under these conditions. Therefore, all students in grades K-12, will be provided with in-person instruction. The district will identify persons at risk and inform those individuals of the appropriate procedures to provide reasonable accommodations while in school.

- Remote Teaching:
 - There will be no remote teaching provided, except as noted below. If a student is ill for an extended period of time, a doctor's note is required and the parent/guardian must complete a Home Instruction Application. The district's physician may be consulted before the district approves an application for Home Instruction. If it is determined that a student should be placed on Home Instruction, any expenses related to the services will be charged to the district. This arrangement will continue until the student is able to return to onsite instruction.
 - For students who are quarantined due to COVID-19, either as a positive case or close contact, asynchronous assignments will be provided through the Schoology or Teams platform. The students will have access to remote home instruction/tutoring during their mandated quarantine period. A home instruction packet will not be required for a mandatory quarantine. A schedule for home instruction/tutoring during quarantine may be found on our website at www.pmschools.org The student is required to complete and turn in all assignments during the quarantine period. Failure to do so will result in a recorded absence from class. The district expects that an open line of communication will be maintained between the home and the school throughout the student's quarantine.
- Home Schooling: Home schooling will be permitted when all of the New York State guidelines for home schooling are followed. This is handled by the Registration Department. Please do not hesitate to contact the Registration Office at 631-687-6340 with any questions.

Face Coverings:

Pursuant to the New York State Commissioner of Education ruling (10 NYCRR 2.61), and the New York State Department of Health, any individual over the age of two, must wear a mask at all times while indoors in P-12 school buildings - regardless of vaccination status. Individuals with medical conditions that preclude them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements with documents submitted by a medical provider (see below). Individuals do not need to wear a mask when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument. When masks are removed for these purposes, it is recommended that students be spaced as far apart as possible. However, limited ability to space out, should not exclude students from in-person learning. All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal laws (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act). **As such, face coverings are required universally in all of Patchogue-Medford schools.**

Additional information/protocols regarding face coverings:

- Acceptable coverings for COVID-19 include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and surgical masks that cover both the mouth and nose. Face coverings should be two-ply.
- The district will obtain and maintain adequate supplies of face coverings for school staff and for students who forget their face coverings.
- All school health professionals will be provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in order to carry out their daily functions.
- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled. In addition, PPE should not be shared and should be properly stored or discarded.
- Students who are not able to medically tolerate a face covering, will be permitted to attend school without a face covering. In the event that a student is not able to tolerate a face covering, medical documentation must to be submitted to the district. After appropriate review of the document and in consultation with the district's physician, a determination will be made on a case by case basis.
- The district will continue to train all students and staff on how to adequately utilize PPE. In addition, all contractors and vendors will be reminded of the requirements to have appropriate face coverings when entering school district buildings.

Physical Distancing:

The CDC recommends physical distancing in schools and further recommends a distance of three (3) feet, where possible. When students are eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument, mask removal will be allowable. In these instances, student will be spaced as far apart as physically possible. The following procedures and protocols will be enacted:

- All employees and students shall practice physical distancing, especially in common areas such as the cafeteria and hallways whenever possible.
- The district will take measures to ensure appropriate distancing of three or more feet whenever possible in classrooms and other instructional areas.

Visitors to Schools:

Pursuant to the New York State Commissioner of Education ruling (10 NYCRR 2.61), and the New York State Department of Health, any individual over the age of two must wear a mask at all times when indoors in P-12 school buildings - regardless of vaccination status. The following protocols and procedures will continue to be required of all visitors to schools:

- Visitors and contractors will be required to wear appropriate PPE prior to entering the building.
- Visitors will display their license, passport, or other government issued identification to school personnel who will process their information in our visitor management system.
- The visitor will be given a disposable badge that must be worn at all times while present on school grounds.
- All entry to the buildings by visitors or guests will occur through the main entrance to a check-in point at the greeter station.
- All individuals may choose to utilize their own face covering, however, face coverings will be provided by Patchogue-Medford School District when necessary.

Transportation:

All bus occupants must wear a face covering before entering school buses and must keep the face covering on for the duration of the time that they are on the bus. Additionally, the following protocols and procedures will continue to be implemented:

- Signage about COVID-19 prevention will be displayed on every bus.
- PPE supplies will be available on all buses.
- Drivers will sanitize touch points after each trip.
- Whenever possible, bus windows will be kept open.
- Buses will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized at the end of the day.
- Drivers will maintain a passenger and seating log for each run to assist with contact tracing.
- Whenever possible, a single driver will be assigned to the same bus and same routes to minimize contact.

Lunch:

Students will eat in the school cafeteria or other designated space. Students will be assigned seating in order to assist with contact tracing where necessary. Appropriate physical distancing will be maintained whenever possible. Students will be permitted to remove their mask while actively eating and drinking, but must wear the mask immediately after finishing their meal.

Extracurricular Activities, including Interscholastic Sports:

It is the belief of the Board of Education and the District Administration that the resumption of extracurricular activities and interscholastic sports is vital to the social and emotional health and well-being of our students. Therefore:

- It is the intent of the district to provide the normal complement of extracurricular activities and interscholastic sports for students as long as no state or county agency prohibits them.

- The district will monitor clubs and activities which interact with outside agencies and/or facilities, including field trips in order to maximize the educational opportunities for students.

School Closures:

The district will continue to monitor positive COVID-19 cases and will make appropriate determinations based on infection rates. In the event that the district experiences an increase infection rates, the district will consult with the Department of Health before making a determination regarding school closures.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing in order to mitigate an increase in infection rates. The district will consult the Department of Health before making any final determination regarding school closures.

School building administrators will communicate with the Superintendent or his/her designee regularly and, if needed, will consider closing school if absentee rates affect the ability of the school to operate safely.

Procedures for Suspected and Confirmed Cases:

The district will follow all guidance provided by the Suffolk County or New York State Department of Health in connection with the New York State Education Department. If symptoms are evident while school is in session, the district will take the following actions:

- The school nurse will evaluate the employee or student who show symptoms of COVID-19 while in school.
- If the nurse determines that the employee or student has symptoms of COVID-19, the employee or student will be isolated until they can be transported home.
- The individual will be isolated in a predetermined isolation room until they can be transported home.
- If the individual is a student, the parent/guardian will be contacted so that the child can be picked up as soon as possible.
- Sick staff members and students will be advised not to return to school until they can present documentation from a health care provider indicating a negative test result and/or a Release from Isolation issued by the Department of Health.

Persons who may have had close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 will be advised to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, they will be instructed to follow appropriate CDC guidance for home quarantine.

Any student or staff member exhibiting **symptoms of COVID-19**, should refrain from entering the building and follow-up with their health care provider. Students and staff absences related to COVID-19 should be reported using the **Student and Staff COVID-19 Absence Reporting Form**, which is located on our District website at **www.pmschools.org**.

In the event that the school is notified of an employee or student who was exposed to COVID-19 and are quarantined by the Department of Health, or if a family member has been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19 and/or is being isolated, the following procedure will be followed:

- Personnel and students required to quarantine will be instructed to quarantine at home

for ten (10) days.

- When possible, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks and/or workspaces of the individual are thoroughly disinfected.
- The district will report the case to the Suffolk County Department of Health and the district will follow all the protocols established by the Suffolk County Department of Health, including contact tracing according to the guidelines established. Additionally, all positive cases will be reported on the New York State COVID Report Card.

The aforementioned protocols may be adjusted, depending on regulations promulgated by the Department of Health.

Once a student or employee is excluded from the school environment, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC and their return is coordinated with the local health department. Individuals must provide a Release of Isolation Letter to the district.

Contact Tracing:

Any instances of COVID-19 infection will be reported to the Suffolk County Department of Health and contact tracing will be conducted immediately. If any student or staff member comes into close contact with an infected person, the following quarantine procedures will be required pursuant to the Suffolk County Department of Health and CDC for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools/CDC as of August 2021. This document is available on the www.pmschools.org website in its entirety:

Close Contact through Proximity and Duration of Exposure: Someone who was within six (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 (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). 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 classroom** setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within three (3) to six (6) feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if 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.

Students and staff absences related to COVID-19 should be reported using the **Student and Staff COVID-19 Absence Reporting Form**, which is located on our District website at www.pmschools.org.

Public Health Recommendations:

Except in certain circumstances, individuals who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should [quarantine](#). However, the following individuals with recent exposure may NOT need to quarantine:

- Individuals who have been [fully vaccinated](#).
- Individuals who were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three (3) months.

Health and Hygiene – General Procedures:

The District is committed to providing the safest learning environment for staff and students. Therefore:

- Staff will be directed to stay home if they are sick and parents/guardians will be encouraged to keep sick children at home.
- The district will continue to support training of district nurses.
- Additional receptacles will be placed in schools for the disposal of soiled items including PPE.

Regarding facilities management:

- All classrooms will be managed using the following protocols and/or procedures:
 - Sanitizing supplies will be provided in each classroom.
 - Signage for handwashing, distancing recommendations, wearing of face coverings will be posted.
 - Sharing of supplies, toys and manipulatives will be limited whenever possible.
 - Alternative spaces will be used to accommodate larger instructional groups if necessary.
 - Use outdoor spaces for instruction whenever possible.
 - Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected each night.
- Physical Education – encourage activities that allow for social distancing and limit use of locker rooms for Physical Education, but may be used for Interscholastic Sports
- Hallways and Lavatories
 - Traffic patterns will be reviewed to promote distancing in hallways.
 - The number of people in restrooms will be restricted.
 - Signage about hand hygiene will be posted in restrooms.
- Building Cleaning
 - Buildings will be cleaned and disinfected each evening.
 - High touch areas of the buildings will be cleaned and disinfected frequently each day, including, but not limited to door handles, rails, counters, tabletops, bathroom fixtures.
 - Staff will be provided with the appropriate PPE to perform cleaning and disinfecting tasks.
 - Cleaning and disinfection training will continue to be provided to all custodial employees.
 - Cleaning chemicals used in the workplace will comply to all OSHA standards and be safe to use in schools.

- Office Spaces
 - Workers will be discouraged from using other worker's phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment whenever possible.
 - Hand sanitizer dispensers and disinfecting wipes will be available near shared equipment.
 - No touch trash cans will continue to be utilized.
 - When videoconferencing is not possible, meetings will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with a minimum of three (3) feet distancing between participants whenever possible. Face coverings will be required.
 - Conference rooms will be disinfected on a daily basis at a minimum if they are used.
 - Each conference room has disinfectant wipes or spray and employees will be encouraged to wipe down all surfaces and equipment (for example: mouse, keyboard and phone) touched when the room was in use.
 - Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available through all school buildings.
 - Signage will be installed near hand sanitizer stations and sinks indicating proper hand hygiene.

Safety Drills:

Conducting drills is an important part of keeping students and staff safe in an emergency, however, steps will be taken to minimize the risk of spreading infection while conducting drills. All schools will ensure that all students and staff are receiving instruction in emergency procedures and participating in drills when they are in attendance. All state required drills will be conducted.

Regardless of the modification used when conducting a drill, students will be instructed that if it was an actual emergency that required evacuation or lockdown, the most imminent concern is to get to safety.

Maintaining physical distancing in an actual emergency that requires evacuation or lockdown may not be possible and should not be the first priority. However, drills may be conducted on a staggered schedule where classrooms evacuate separately, rather than all at once, and appropriate distance is kept between students to the evacuation site.