

Patchogue-Medford School District



Where Education is Met with Excellence!

Reopening Plan

September 2021

Updated March 2022

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

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

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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 CDC, the Departments of Health of NYS and Suffolk County and the Office of the Governor of the State of NY 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 for the remainder 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 part of the year. Our data shows that most students did not thrive under these conditions. Therefore, all students, K-12, will be in school and in person. The district will identify persons at risk and inform individuals of appropriate procedures to provide reasonable accommodations 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 fill out a Home Instruction Application. The District's Doctor may be consulted in approving the application for Home Instruction. If the determination is in the affirmative, the student will be placed on Home Instruction at the expense of the district. This arrangement will continue until the student is able to return to onsite instruction.
 - For students who are quarantined due to COVID, either as positive case or close contact, asynchronous assignments will be provided through Schoology or Teams. The students will have access to remote home instruction/tutoring during their mandated quarantine period. A home instruction packet is not required for a mandatory quarantine. A schedule for home/instruction/tutoring during quarantine can be found on our website at www.pmschools.org. The student is required to finish 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 provided to students and parents throughout a 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:

Effective March 2, 2022 Governor Hochul lifted the mask mandate for NYS schools. Therefore, as of March 2, 2022 masks are optional for all students and staff.

Physical Distancing:

The CDC recommends physical distancing in schools and further recommends a distance of three (3) feet, if possible. Therefore, the following procedures and protocols will be enacted.

- All employees and students shall practice physical distancing, where practicable.
- Classrooms and other instructional areas will attempt to allow for three or more feet of physical distancing whenever possible.

Visitors to Schools:

The following protocols and procedures will continue to be required of all visitors to schools:

- 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 must wear the disposable badge 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.
- Face coverings are optional for visitors.
- Any contractor must submit proof of weekly testing to the Business Office. Should a contractor be vaccinated, proof of vaccination may be used in lieu of testing.

Transportation:

Face coverings are optional on school buses.

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.

School Closures:

The district will continue to prepare for situations in which one or more school buildings need to close due to a significant number of students or staff testing positive for COVID-19 or if it is directed to do so because there is a considerable regional increase in COVID-19 cases. The district will consult the Department of Health when making such decisions.

The district may choose to modify operations in one or more schools prior to closing to help mitigate a rise in cases. The district will consult the Department of Health when making such decisions.

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.

COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Update

Isolation (Positive Case)

- Vaccination status (regardless of the number of shots and booster) is no longer a factor in the isolation period if you test positive.
- Individuals testing positive for COVID-19 must isolate for (5) days regardless of vaccination status.
- Day 0 is the day of symptom onset, or if asymptomatic, the date the test was taken.

Return from Isolation (Positive Case)

- Students/staff may return from isolation after five (5) days as long as symptoms are improving and they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Students/staff who return from being positive after five days, must wear a mask for days 6-10.
- Students/staff who are moderately-severely immunocompromised should discuss their return with their medical provider.

Exposure (Close Contacts)

Exposure is defined as those who meet the definition of a “close contact” to an individual with COVID-19. A close contact is a person, regardless of vaccination status, who was less than 6 feet away (unmasked) from an infected person 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).

A simpler operational definition of exposure for unmasked individuals is to consider the entire classroom in which the infected individual was present to be exposed or potentially exposed. This group definition considers all individuals in the classroom as exposed or potentially exposed. All should mask and test.

Exposure is not a reason to remove students or staff members from the classroom setting or school.

Symptomatic Individuals

If symptoms are evident while school is in session:

- The school nurse will evaluate employees and students, 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. Additionally, staff will continue to be provided with training on how to identify signs of illness in students and staff and the procedure to send symptomatic persons to the school nurse or other designated personnel in each building, at which time the following procedure will be initiated:
 - The person will be moved to a predetermined isolation room or area
 - These areas will be closed off and not used before they can be cleaned and disinfected
 - 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 children will be advised not to return until they have met the Department of Health criteria, which includes documentation from a health care provider following evaluation, negative test results and/or release from isolation (issued by the Department of Health).

- Persons who had close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 will be advised of their exposure. It is recommended that they wear a mask for ten days and monitor their symptoms. If a person does not have symptoms, they are not required to quarantine, regardless of vaccination status.
- Any student or staff member exhibiting **symptoms of COVID-19**, should refrain from entering the building and follow-up with their health care provider or take a COVID-19 test. 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**.

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.

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.
- Additionally:
 - All rooms will be managed using the following protocols and/or procedures:
 - Sanitizing supplies will be provided in each classroom.
 - Signage for healthy hygiene habits.
 - Use outdoor spaces for instruction whenever possible.
 - Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected each night.
 - 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.