

Health and Safety Plan Summary: Portage Area School District

Initial Effective Date: July 1, 2021

Date of Last Review: November 13, 2024

Date of Last Revision: November 13, 2024

Medical Condition Reporting: As per the guidance from the PA Division of School Health, individual cases of influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 are no longer mandatory reportable conditions to the school. However, outbreaks of any condition should still be reported as required by regulations.

Return-to-School for COVID-19 Cases/ Exclusion: If students are showing symptoms of a communicable disease, we will refer families to contact their doctor for medical advice and ask that they provide us a copy of their physician's guidance. The family's doctor(s) will advise them (families) accordingly. Additionally, staff and students should remain excluded until they are fever-free for a continuous 24-hour period without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Absence Reporting: Regarding absences, PASD will not continue to use any special code for COVID-19 -related absences. An absence derived as a result of communicable disease home test will be counted as a parental excuse. Communicable diseases confirmed by your health care provider will count as a medical excuse. Medical documentation is required for any staff member off work for more than three consecutive workdays.

If an outbreak of a communicable disease is determined to occur, the following plan will be implemented immediately.

How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?

The health and safety of the Portage Area School District (PASD) students and staff remains a top priority for the organization. The PASD will continue to take critical steps making decisions that protect the health and safety of our organization in the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease.

- a. PASD administration will stay up-to-date with CDC guidelines and recommendations. The district's plan will be updated as mandates and guidelines are changed/modified. Our instructional model will be in-person 5 days per week. Our plan will be utilized, to the maximum extent possible, to stay in school for in-person learning for the 23-24 school year. Our policies will remain flexible so that, should the communicable disease situation warrant a change, PASD will follow the requirements issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Health and/or the Pennsylvania Department of Education as they are issued. We will also continue to monitor the local situation and carefully consider implementing any

recommendations issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) should they become necessary. If needed, PASD will work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health, Department of Education, and local public health officials, consistent with applicable laws and regulations, including those related to privacy, to determine the prevention strategies needed to appropriately address the communicable disease level in our school and community. At the discretion of the Administration, in conjunction with the Department of Health and/or Department of Education, school closures might be necessary to mitigate the spread.

May 11, 2023, marked the end of the federal COVID-19 Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration. In response to this declaration, the district recognizes the importance of utilizing and monitoring the effectiveness of prevention and control strategies for all communicable diseases. PASD has identified organizational standards and expectations which outline the protocols expected of all staff members as the organization transitions forward. Protocols include the following:

- Self-screening for symptoms of communicable diseases
- Following required communicable disease reporting procedures
- Practicing hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Optional use of face coverings/adherence to health and safety plans of locations served
- Cleaning and disinfecting one's workspace
- Maintaining physical distancing protocols to the maximum extent feasible
- Staying informed of CDC's guidance relative to travel
- Monitoring communication and confidentiality
- Participating in required training

The PASD will continue to monitor communications from the Federal State and Local agencies. As conditions change related to communicable diseases, protocols are subject to change.

2. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?
 - a. As stated above, we plan to attend school 5 days per week. If PASD is not able to do so because of a communicable disease outbreak or school shutdown, we will utilize the plan we had in place during previous school years that were impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic. All students will have the option to be fed from our school food service program. We keep our staff on their normal shifts to cook and package food for our students. In addition, we are a 1:1 school, regarding computers/devices. Should we need to provide online education, our students and staff have access to and the capability to learn and teach in an online environment through Microsoft Teams. Included in those services are special education teachers/staff and paraprofessionals who are available to provide support and individualized educational services for all students with disabilities. Lastly, PASD's guidance counselor, mental health professionals, social worker and school

psychologist are available to provide social-emotional, and mental health services when needed in a virtual setting.

In the event of a required school closure, PASD will ensure access to remote learning opportunities for all our students in the following ways, including but not limited to: Live synchronized lessons and demonstrations by our teachers -Additional asynchronous lessons and student assignments via Microsoft TEAMS and/or other similar platforms. Paper packets will be utilized as a last resort.

3. Use the table below to explain how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

| ARP ESSER Requirement | Strategies, Policies, and Procedures |
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| <p>a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;</p> | <p>On December 10, 2021, the PA Supreme Court ruled the mask mandate to be unconstitutional and as a result, our plan for masking to be optional went into effect following this ruling.</p> <p><u>Busing</u> Effective February 25, 2022, CDC exercised its enforcement discretion to not require that people wear masks on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and education/child care programs.</p> <p>PASD will fall in alignment with this CDC recommendation. As such, masks are not required on school transportation.</p> |
| <p>b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);</p> | <p>The Commonwealth does not have any social distancing requirements in place at the current time for the 23-24 school year. Additionally, in August of 2022, the CDC removed any guidance and/or recommendations regarding social distancing.</p> |
| <p>c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;</p> | <p>Expectations related to handwashing and respiratory etiquette will be posted on PASD's website, and within each building.</p> |

c. [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette \(cont\)](#);

Protocols include:

- Washing one’s hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- It’s especially important to wash:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - Before touching eyes, mouth, or face
 - After using the restroom
 - After leaving a public place
 - After nose-blowing, coughing, or sneezing
 - After mask handling
 - After changing a diaper
 - After caring for someone sick
 - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not available, using hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Avoid touching one’s eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough or sneeze into one’s elbow.
- Increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students and staff.

d. [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving [ventilation](#);

The facilities will undergo regular cleaning & disinfecting with high-touch surfaces being disinfected more often. More thorough cleaning & disinfecting will take place if:

- The transmission rate is high in the building/district.,
- frequent hand hygiene is not possible
- space/s are occupied by communicable disease positive person/s.
- Staff will continue to be expected to share in the cleaning and disinfecting of shared equipment and / or furniture / items within one's office / classroom.

All classroom unit ventilators and air handlers will have a minimum of two air filter changes per school year. The volume of airflow in the classroom unit ventilators may be increased by turning the speed of the fan to the "high" setting. The district is required to introduce outside air into our buildings through our heating, ventilating, and air condition systems. Our HVAC systems are able to provide more fresh air than required. The supervisor of Building and Ground can set/adjust the system to increase the amount of outside air when the building load requires an increase. The outside air settings will be adjusted above the required limits, but not to jeopardize our ability to heat and cool the spaces with the equipment's ability to operate efficiently. We may also increase the run time on building exhaust fans to assist with air changeover.

| ARP ESSER Requirement | Strategies, Policies, and Procedures |
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e. [Contact tracing](#) in combination with [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#), in collaboration with the State and local health departments;

Asymptomatic staff/students who are exposed (home or school), regardless of vaccination status, may remain in the classroom environment if they do the following:

School Exposure

- A. Self-monitor, or parent-monitor for symptoms of communicable disease.
- B. Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with a communicable disease regardless of severity.

Home and/or Community Exposure

- C. Self-monitor, or parent-monitor for symptoms of communicable disease.
- D. Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with a communicable disease regardless of severity.

Symptomatic Students/Staff will be isolated to mitigate further exposure and spread of illness. Symptomatic students should not be sent to school for testing. Please call your primary care physician (PCP).

Home Tests: The district will accept home test results provided by the family. Please include the student's name, date of birth, date, and time test performed with the test results. Home tests results can be used as the basis for a parental excuse for a school absence. Your health care provider or PCP needs to confirm the results of the home test to count as a medical excuse for being absent from school.

Positive communicable disease cases

Students/Staff who see a doctor for a communicable disease may return with a doctor's excuse, or once their symptoms are resolved with no fever for at least 24 hours without medication.

For students who test positive for communicable disease and participate in extracurriculars. They can resume extracurricular activity upon receiving a doctor's excuse, or once their symptoms are resolved with no fever for at least 24 hours without medication.

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| <p>f. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p> | <p>Students/Staff are required to follow the recommendation of their primary care physician, attending physician and / or DOH directive(s) as it relates to diagnostic and screening testing.</p> <p>Parents/guardians will be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening.</p> <p>Testing for communicable disease should be performed in the presence of symptoms or as a result of exposure.</p> <p>Families should consult their PCP.</p> <p>If any student/staff member exhibiting communicable disease symptoms is seen by our health care professionals, they may be isolated and sent home with the recommendation that a communicable disease test be administered.</p> |
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| ARP ESSER Requirement | Strategies, Policies, and Procedures |
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| <p>g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;</p> | <p>Upon request from local hospitals and health care providers, PASD previously served as a vaccination host site or the community.</p> <p>PASD continues to collaborate and communicate with healthcare providers/agencies to provide parents/guardians information and educational resources regarding vaccines and vaccine opportunities available to the community.</p> |

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| <p>h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special accommodations for health care needs of students with disabilities will be addressed through the IEP process. • Accommodations may include but are not limited to adapted service delivery models (i.e., teleintervention, individualized services, when appropriate), and /or other health and safety precautions (masking, no masking) as outlined in an individualized health plan or the IEP. |
| <p>i. Coordination with state and local health officials.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PASD will continue to maintain existing partnerships with local, state and federal agencies. • PASD will continue to use DOH and CDC for collaboration, coordination and assistance when needed. |

Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for **Portage Area School District** reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan on **November 13, 2024**.

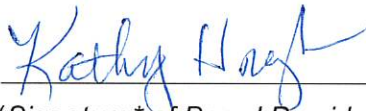
The plan was approved by a vote of:

7 Yes

0 No

Affirmed on: **November 13, 2024**

By:



(Signature of Board President)*

Kathy Hough

(Print Name of Board President)

*Electronic signatures on this document are acceptable using one of the two methods detailed below.

Option A: The use of actual signatures is encouraged whenever possible. This method requires that the document be printed, signed, scanned, and then submitted.

Option B: If printing and scanning are not possible, add an electronic signature using the resident Microsoft Office product signature option, which is free to everyone, no installation or purchase needed.

