

Health and Safety Plan Summary: Palisades School District

Initial Effective Date: July 22, 2020

Date of Last Review and/or Revision: June 16, 2021, August 18, 2021, September 9, 2021, October 6, 2021, December 6, 2021

Date this plan originally took effect: July 1, 2021

Introduction: School district operations will be implemented in the same manner as those in place prior to the pandemic; the exceptions will be fully described within this document. Palisades School District was open all year for in person instruction, for five days a week, during the 2020-2021 school year. This plan reflects those components we will keep in place to promote general health and safety for all students, employees and visitors as well as remaining compliant with national, state and local health guidance.

This plan will continue to be adapted as conditions change.

1. 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?

This plan will continually be monitored to include updated CDC and Bucks County Department of Health (BCDH) recommendations. The plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary at the district level by the district's Health and Safety Planning team as well as the building level teams. The revisions will be recommended to the Board for approval and changes will be communicated to students, staff and the greater school community.

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?

Our methods for educational delivery for the 2021-22 school year will be:

1. Instruction will resume on August 30, 2021 on a normal, Monday through Friday schedule.
2. The following options will be available to families:
 - a. Face to face, in classroom instruction
 - b. Online option (Palisades Cyber Academy) K-12; these are Palisades courses taught by Palisades teachers or vendor supported through Apex and K-12
 - c. Combination of face to face and cyber programming
 - d. Homeschool/face to face (this option has long been available to our homeschool families)

To adequately assess our staffing needs to provide these options, a survey was issued to parents/guardians who opted for a virtual setting in the previous school year or have newly registered

students to determine if their child(ren) will be joining us for face-to-face or online instruction for the upcoming school year.

Student medical issues which require a temporary leave from school will be addressed on a case by case basis to determine appropriate instructional alternatives to continue the student’s education in consideration of information provided by the student’s health care provider, parent/guardians, principal and counselor, and IEP team, if applicable.

To address the issue of mental health concerns for our students and staff, the following measures will be in place for the 2021-22 school year:

1. A licensed professional counselor (LPC), in addition to the 6 building school counselors, are available to provide mental health support for students and connect families with services
2. Staff will be routinely reminded of how to access the district Employee Assistance Program
3. Teacher support group developed last year will continue
4. Professional development options will continue that support mental health/stress reduction
5. Behavioral health supports will also be added through a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)

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
<p>a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;</p>	<p>Masking requirements while on school district property will continually be revised based on a variety of factors including: level of community transmission, vaccination levels, monitoring illness/clusters, if any, and updated guidance from national, state and local levels.</p> <p>1. As of Thursday, August 19, 2021, and until further notice, masks are required for all individuals in all indoor spaces and on buses.</p> <p>2. As of November 30, 2021, the state masking order is in effect at least until December 8, 2021 when the Supreme Court considers the mandate. As of November 30, 2021, the Bucks County Department of Health guidance remains indoor universal masking.</p> <p>Adhere to the state mandate regarding masking until the mandate expires, but reject the masking guidance issued by the BCDH if such guidance requires universal indoor masking and make masks optional for all students, employees and visitors while in school buildings.</p> <p>Contact tracing will cease but positive cases will continue to be reported to the BCDH. If BCDH identifies a cluster in a classroom, the district will assist with contact tracing and issue communications under the guidance of the BCDH. District COVID Dashboard is discontinued.</p> <p>This plan will go into effect once the state mandate is lifted.</p>

Rationale:

- On August 17, 2021 the BCDH issued updated guidance on masking to follow CDC guidance on masking in schools due to:
 - County transmission rate moving from substantial to high
 - Recommendation from regional hospitals due to concerns about pediatric COVID cases stressing the hospital system. Pediatric specialty hospitals are already operating at close to capacity due to non-COVID illnesses and staffing shortages.

2. Tuesday, August 31, 2021

PA Acting Secretary of Health issued an order requiring masking for all children/students, teachers, staff, and visitors ages two years or older while indoors working, attending, or visiting a school entity, regardless of vaccination status. Exemptions are noted in the order in section 3.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/Documents/Diseases%20and%20Conditions/Order%20of%20the%20Acting%20Secretary%20Directing%20Face%20Coverings%20in%20Schools.pdf>

This order became effective on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

3. Friday, September 3, 2021

PDE issued further guidance regarding the order. Updates are asterisked.

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/SchoolReopeningGuidance/ReopeningPreKto12/MaskingOrder/Pages/FAQs.aspx>

The update specific to medical exemptions:

***Are individuals required to show proof of an exception to the Order?**

School entities must require all individuals 2 years of age and older to wear face coverings unless the individual has a medical or mental health condition or disability that precludes the wearing of a face covering. In accordance with Section 3 of the Order, before an individual is excepted from the Order, all alternatives to a face covering, including a face shield, should be exhausted. It is recommended that any exception be in accordance with eligibility under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA for such medical or mental health condition or disability. School entities should follow their established processes for determining student eligibility under those laws, including any medical documentation that they would normally require.

As a result of this language, the medical exemption form has been updated and is now called Request to Initiate Section 504 Eligibility Process.

Palisades medical exemption process:

Parent/guardian submits Palisades medical exemption form which includes consent to complete a 504 evaluation to determine student eligibility under the law. A parent/guardian may sign and submit this form without the child's medical provider's diagnosis, treatment plan, duration and signature; however, any information or evaluations regarding the student's diagnosis, treatment plan and duration that the parent is willing to provide will be considered during the course of the evaluation.

	<p>a. Until the 504 evaluation is complete and a determination is made regarding the child's eligibility for an exemption from the Order, the child must continue to wear a mask. If it is determined there is in fact no medical condition that substantially limits a major life function, the student will not be eligible for accommodations outside of the current order requiring a face covering.</p> <p>b. For families that submitted a medical exemption, signed by their medical provider prior to Saturday, September 4th, a face shield or other approved face covering will be acceptable to comply with the PA Department of Health order until an evaluation is completed and the district can determine if the child's medical or mental condition substantially impacts a major life function which would allow an accommodation other than a face mask as per the order.</p>
<p>b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom configurations will promote learning and maximize distancing where feasible. • Elementary core content classes will remain self contained. • Students will be taken outdoors as often as possible. • Building faculty meetings, full administrative team meetings, and professional development activities will occur in person unless designated as virtual by the meeting coordinator.
<p>c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General hand hygiene will be practiced throughout the day to minimize spread through use of common items. • Proper hand washing technique signs will be posted in all bathrooms and sinks
<p>d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All high-touch surfaces cleaned/disinfected by custodial crew daily (water fountains, door handles, desks, light switches, etc.) following posted EPA/CDC/manufacturer guidelines. • Clean desks on a frequent basis (soap and water for students/cleaning solution for faculty/staff). • Students and staff should sanitize/wash hands on a frequent basis. (Make hand sanitizer available in common areas, hallways, and/or in classrooms where sinks for handwashing are not available). • PE equipment will be cleaned daily with Victory Sprayer. • Water fountains will remain disconnected and faculty/staff and students are encouraged to bring water bottles from home and use filling stations. • Personal cloth furniture and area rugs will remain out of the classrooms for an additional year to promote distancing in classrooms. • Ventilate all classrooms and common areas when available/possible using windows. Use air circulation patterns that push inside air towards open windows. Doors and windows will be open to the maximum extent feasible (doors locked and propped in case we need to lockdown classrooms quickly) and ceiling fans will be operational to promote proper ventilation. Pedestal fans will be used in multipurpose rooms/gyms/cafeterias. If AC is running - doors and windows will be closed. Exterior doors will remain locked. Quarterly filter changes will occur to maximize air flow

e. [Contact tracing](#) in combination with [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#), in collaboration with the State and local health departments;

Recommended quarantine: 7-10 days and as with the 2020-2021 school year, the quarantine is based on an ongoing vs. non-ongoing exposure. (BCDH 8/27/21)

Close contact scenarios for non-ongoing exposure:

1. Student distance is between 3' - 6' for more than 15 minutes. If both parties masked, no close contacts thus no quarantine required.
2. Student distance less than 3' for more than 15 minutes, regardless of masking, 10 day quarantine or 7 day quarantine with 5 day negative COVID test. (BCDH 8/27/21)
3. Less than 6' for more than 15 minutes, if one or both of the parties are not masked, 10 day quarantine or 7 day quarantine with 5 day negative COVID test. (BCDH 8/27/21)
4. Regardless of distance and duration, if the exposed person is vaccinated and not showing symptoms, no quarantine is required. If proof of vaccination is not shared, 10 day quarantine or 7 day quarantine with 5 day negative COVID test.
5. Regardless of distance and duration, if the exposed person was COVID positive within 3 months of exposure and not showing symptoms, no quarantine is required. If proof of positive COVID test is not shared, 10 day quarantine or 7 day quarantine with 5 day negative COVID test.

See link below for timeline: [PA DOH Quarantine/ Isolation](#)

Contact for ongoing exposure (household)

If you are able to live completely separate from the person in your house with COVID-19 follow the non-household contact timeframe (see above). Living separate from your housemate means no contact, no time together in the same room, and no sharing of any spaces such as a bathroom or bedroom.

Recommended isolation: 10 days for all positive COVID-19 cases

- Students and employees are encouraged to report positive cases of COVID 19 to their building nurse
- In the event of a confirmed positive case, the building will call close contacts and advise of next steps and send a notification to the parents/guardians of the students in grades K-8 in the same classroom, bus and/or extra curricular activity. At the high school, close contacts will be called and a notification will go to the entire building, individual bus and/or extracurricular activities.
- Consult with the Bucks County Health Department on decisions impacting the closure or classrooms, schools, or the district due to an outbreak.

An outbreak is defined as three (3) or more infectious cases of COVID-19 while at school, within a single classroom within five (5) days. The Bucks County Department of Health will conduct case investigations and external contact tracing related to the outbreak. (Issued guidance on 8/27/2021)

- Although the flu vaccine and COVID vaccine are not required for school attendance or employment, it is highly encouraged for all students and staff to get the flu vaccine and COVID vaccine.

<p>f. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educate all stakeholders (students, staff, parents/guardians) on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at home before sending children to school and/or reporting to work. ● The nurse or designated employee will evaluate any individual who presents with symptoms and advise parents/guardians how to obtain a COVID test. No student will be tested without parental permission. ● School nurse medical record tracking system currently in place for students will be used to monitor symptoms/exposure history for all employees including the tracking of vaccinations. ● Emergency contacts must be up to date. A symptomatic student must be picked up within an hour and will not be sent home on the bus. ● Until further notice, recognitions or awards for perfect attendance will not occur. Maintaining this recognition may encourage symptomatic students to attend school.
<p>g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue to work with BCDH to provide opportunities for students and community members to receive vaccinations. No student will be vaccinated without parental permission. ● District communications vehicles will be used to distribute information regarding vaccination clinics and designated hours.
<p>h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Director of Student Services, IEP case managers, school nurses, principals and counselors will work with families to develop a student-specific education plan for students with complex needs. ● The district will also collaborate with BCIU and other education providers to coordinate plans for students with complex needs.
<p>i. Coordination with state and local health officials.</p>	<p>Regular communication will continue with the Bucks County Department of Health to confirm updated guidance from the CDC and other health officials.</p>