

ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan

Guidance & Template

Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, hereinafter referred to as a *Health and Safety Plan*.

Based on ARP requirements, 90 percent of ARP ESSER funds will be distributed to school districts and charter schools based on their relative share of Title I-A funding in FY 2020-2021. **Given Federally required timelines, LEAs eligible to apply for and receive this portion of the ARP ESSER funding must submit a Health and Safety Plan that meets ARP Act requirements to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by Friday, July 30, 2021, regardless of when the LEA submits its ARP ESSER application.**

Each LEA must create a Health and Safety Plan that addresses how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, and which will serve as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. The Health and Safety Plan should be tailored to the unique needs of each LEA and its schools and must take into account public comment related to the development of, and subsequent revisions to, the Health and Safety Plan.

The ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education rules require Health and Safety plans include the following components:

1. How the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, implement prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;
2. How the LEA will 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;

3. 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:

- a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;
- b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);
- c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;
- d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;
- e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with State and local health departments;
- f. Diagnostic and screening testing;
- g. Efforts to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to school communities;
- h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and
- i. Coordination with state and local health officials.

The LEA's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the LEA's publicly available website by July 30, 2021. * The ARP Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated. The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Each LEA will upload in the eGrants system its updated Health and Safety Plan and webpage URL where the plan is located on the LEA's publicly available website.

The ARP Act requires LEAs to review their Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

LEAs may use the template to revise their current Health and Safety Plans to meet ARP requirements and ensure all stakeholders are fully informed of the LEA's plan to safely resume instructional and non-instructional school activities, including in-person learning, for the current school year. An LEA may use a different plan template or format provided it includes all the elements required by the ARP Act, as listed above.

* The July 30 deadline applies only to school districts and charter schools that received federal Title I-A funds in FY 2020-2021 and intend to apply for and receive ARP ESSER funding.

Additional Resources

LEAs are advised to review the following resources when developing their Health and Safety Plans:

- [CDC K-12 School Operational Strategy](#)
- [PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [PDE Roadmap for Education Leaders](#)
- [PDE Accelerated Learning Through an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)

Health and Safety Plan Summary: Pocono Mountain School District

Initial Effective Date: July 21, 2021

Date of Last Review: September 8, 2021

Date of Last Revision: September 8, 2021

The health and safety of the Pocono Mountain School District (PMSD) staff, students, families, and community, remains the top priority for the organization. PMSD leadership continues to take the necessary steps to protect the health and safety of our region in the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The primary goal is to work collaboratively with health professionals, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), and local health networks to adhere to protocols that are expected of all staff, students, and families. Standards and expectations are based on the latest mandates and recommendations by the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local health experts. As conditions related to COVID-19 change, PMSD protocols are subject to change and will be revised accordingly. Additionally, as per PDE, LEAs are to review their plans at least every six months or whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools

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?

For the 2021-2022 school year, students will return to five (5) days per week of in-person instruction. For parents who choose to have their children participate virtually, they can enroll full-time in the PMSD K-12 Comprehensive Cyber Program. The PMSD Cyber Program combines asynchronous learning along with synchronous learning opportunities.

The Acting Secretary of the DOH implemented an order requiring face coverings in School Entities to take effect at 12:01 a.m. on September 7, 2021, and shall remain in effect until otherwise terminated.

All PMSD activities and decisions will be informed by the PA DOH, PDE, and our partner health network. Depending upon the public health conditions in Monroe County, additional actions, orders, or guidance may be provided by the PDE and/or the PA DOH. PMSD will practice and support prevention and mitigation efforts in response to the changing conditions. PMSD is prepared to practice prevention and mitigation strategies along a continuum of most to least restrictive strategies in response to the changing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to practicing standard preventative measures such as handwashing, cleaning practices, and the option of PPE, PMSD will continue to practice standard mitigation efforts to include reducing close contact when feasible and practicable.

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?

Students and families will have access to a variety of supports: school counselors, school psychologists, social workers, school-based Mental Health Programs, free breakfast/lunch to in-person students, free “grab and go” meals for virtual students, and partnerships with local health networks.

It is essential to have data on how students are learning in order to support the goals of access and equity, especially for student groups that have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. PMSD recognizes that the safe return to in-person instruction must be accompanied by a focus on meeting students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs, and by addressing the achievement gaps that existed before, and were exacerbated by, the pandemic.

Students experiencing homelessness tend to be chronically absent from school, less engaged, and experience decreased social-emotional well-being due to housing instability. When COVID-19 closed schools in Spring 2020, the immediate elimination of social connections, services, meal programs, extracurricular activities, and in-person engagement exponentially impacted students experiencing homelessness, who were already vulnerable academically, socially, and emotionally.

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.

PMSD recognizes that safely reopening schools and sustaining safe school operations to maximize in-person instruction is essential for student learning and student well-being, as well as essential to address the educational inequities that may have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

ARP ESSER Requirement

Strategies, Policies, and Procedures

a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;

- On Tuesday, August 31, 2021, The Acting Secretary of the DOH implemented an order ([Order of the Acting Secretary of the PA Department of Health Directing Face Coverings in School Entities](#)) requiring face coverings in School Entities to take effect at 12:01 a.m. on September 7, 2021, and shall remain in effect until otherwise terminated. Any parent/guardian requesting an exemption to this masking order should complete the [Pocono Mountain School District “Student Face Covering Exemption Form.”](#)
- As of January 2021, the CDC still requires face coverings, regardless of vaccination status, when on public transportation, including school buses operated by public and private schools. A bus driver does not need to wear a face covering if they are the only person on the bus. PMSD will follow the most recent guidance of this order.
- All employees shall remain socially distant to the maximum extent feasible.
- All students shall remain socially distant to the maximum extent feasible.
- Provide standard PPE for all staff and students as needed.

<p>b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When feasible and practicable, opportunities for close contact will be reduced. ● All district classrooms will provide at least three (3) feet distancing between student seats, where feasible. ● All employees shall remain socially distanced to the maximum extent feasible. ● All students shall remain socially distanced to the maximum extent feasible throughout the school day. ● Teachers will continue utilizing seating charts to assist in contact tracing. ● Provide standard PPE for all staff and students as needed. ● Visual signage in hallways to instruct staff, students, and visitors on proper social distancing. ● As circumstances within the pandemic change, physical/social distancing procedures may be modified.
<p>c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students and staff will be instructed in and adhere to current PA DOH and PDE guidelines for handwashing and respiratory etiquette. ● Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. ● If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). ● Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. ● Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash can and hands should be washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Again, hand sanitizer may be used if soap and water are not available. ● Hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed throughout the school for student/staff use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Visual signage will continue to be posted at entrances, bathrooms, and throughout the facility to remind students and staff of proper handwashing techniques. ● Increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students.
<p>d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue daily deep cleaning and sanitation procedures in buildings along with high touch points and bathrooms in accordance with facility usage. ● Cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting will be performed in accordance with current CDC, and DOH guidelines. EPA approved products will be used in accordance with labeling requirements. ● Buildings will maintain proper temperature and ventilation during occupancy. ● Air filters are replaced on an appropriate replacement schedule. Flush buildings for at least two hours prior to daily occupancy. Maintain continuous monitoring of HVAC systems and building conditions

e. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;

- PMSD will follow the current PA DOH and PDE guidelines for contact tracing, isolation, and quarantine.
- Response to a Positive COVID Case
 - All positive cases will be referred to the Certified School Nurse, Human Resources, and/or Administration.
 - Students and staff who are symptomatic and undergoing COVID testing and/or identified as a positive COVID case must be isolated according to CDC guidelines, PA DOH guidelines, and/or medical recommendations.
 - Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well fitting masks the entire time.
 - Unvaccinated students and staff who are identified as a confirmed close contact of a COVID-positive individual must quarantine according to CDC guidelines, PA DOH guidelines, and/or medical recommendations.
 - Quarantine timelines may be adjusted depending on the current COVID positive cases in our school and community.

<p>f. Diagnostic and screening testing;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PMSD staff and students will follow current diagnostic testing and screening procedures required by the PA DOH or PDE. ● Daily symptom screening will be done by all parents/guardians at home each morning before the start of the school day. No children with symptoms will be sent on a bus or brought to school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All faculty, students, and staff experiencing known COVID-related symptoms will not be permitted on the district transportation and school campus. ● Signs will be posted on all District facilities, buses and building entrances.
<p>g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-site vaccination clinics were held on May 26 (WHS Campus) and June 15th (EHS Campus). Efforts will continue to be coordinated with St. Luke's Hospital. PMSD will facilitate these clinics through advertisement, personnel, and administrative resources. ● Additional community vaccination clinic opportunities in conjunction with St. Luke's Hospital are August 3rd/24th (WHS campus) and 6th/27th (EHS Campus). ● PMSD has partnered and will continue to work with public and private community health partners to provide access to care for staff, students, and families.
<p>h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PMSD will adhere to all modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities.

<p>i. Coordination with state and local health officials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PMSD will maintain a Pandemic Team, that will continue to coordinate with state and local health officials on an as needed basis regarding all covid matters. ● PMSD will continue to partner with public health partners to monitor and mitigate local outbreaks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
<p>j. Athletics/Extracurricular Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuing to follow state guidance, students, coaches, and staff are required to wear face masks on district transportation. ● Athletes are required to continue to bring their own water to practice and events. ● Regular cleaning of hands and shared equipment will continue. ● Participants should self-screen before arriving to campus and anyone not feeling well should stay home and call their healthcare provider.

Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for the Pocono Mountain School District reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan on September 8, 2021.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

_____ **Yes** _____ **No**

Affirmed on: September 8, 2021

By:

(Signature of Board President)*

(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.