

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 and or PA DOH:
 - 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 1-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: May 18, 2022

Date of Last Revision: May 18, 2022

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. On December 10, 2021, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down the Acting Secretary of Health's school masking order. Please note that this decision does not impact the federal directive requiring all passengers and drivers to wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems. On February 25, 2022, the CDC announced effective immediately, masks are no longer required on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and educational/child care programs.

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 COVI D-19 pandemic.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
a. Universal and correct wearing of masks;	- On December 10, 2021, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rescinded the Acting Secretary of Health's school masking order. Please note that this decision does not impact the federal directive requiring all passengers and drivers to wear a mask on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems. From this day forward, Pocono Mountain School District will not be mandating mask wearing. - Commonwealth Court Judge Christine Fizzano Cannon ordered the end of the mask mandate effective Dec. 4, 2021. Mask wearing will be recommended as per the CDC guidelines while inside of the school building and/ or on school grounds. When feasible and practicable, opportunities for close contact will be reduced. - 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. - On February 25, 2022, the CDC announced effective immediately, masks are no longer required on buses or vans operated by public or private school systems, including early care and educational/child care programs. If the guidelines change the district will adhere to the masking on transportation. - 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.
b. Modifying facilities to allow for physical distancing (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);	• 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. • 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.
c. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette;	• 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. • 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.

d. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation;	• 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;	• As COVID-19 has evolved, school mitigation strategies have had to adjust to address new challenges. Our medical partners have communicated that the quick spread of the Omicron variant, its rapid clinical course (infection period) and the reduced timelines for quarantine have made school contact tracing ineffective and impractical. Consequently, as of February 3, 2022 PMSD will no longer engage in routine contact tracing. Response to a Positive COVID Case: • All confirmed 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. • Staff and students who test positive for COVID, show symptoms, will need to quarantine according to CDC guidelines, PA DOH guidelines, and/or medical recommendations.

f. Diagnostic and screening testing;	• 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. • 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.
g. Efforts to provide vaccinations to school communities;	• The Pocono Mountain School District posted information regarding free COVID testing Feb. 1-5 at Pocono Township Municipal Complex. This information was shared by Monroe County Emergency Management. • The Pocono Mountain School District provided information regarding the January 6, 2022 "Sensory Friendly" COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic for everyone 5 years and older. • The Pocono Mountain School District provided information regarding the December 16, 2021 "Sensory Friendly" COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic for everyone 5 years and older. • 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 /4th (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.

h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and	• PMSD will adhere to all modifications and accommodations for students with disabilities.
i. Coordination with state and local health officials.	• 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-19 matters. • PMSD will continue to partner with public health partners to monitor and mitigate local outbreaks to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
j. Athletics/Extracurricular Activities	• Students, coaches and staff will continue to follow state guidance regarding 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.

2021-2022 PMSD COVID Guidelines

- Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. ALL PMSD teachers and staff are encouraged to get vaccinated. National Education Association President Becky Pringle stated, "Evidence shows that COVID-19 vaccines, combined with other safety measures are the most powerful weapon we have against the pandemic. We believe that such vaccine requirements and accommodations are an appropriate, responsible, and necessary step to ensure the safety of our school communities and to protect our students."
- CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students, staff, and teachers, regardless of vaccination status. PMSD supports the use of facemasks but does not mandate face covering in schools at this time.
- The district will follow the Pennsylvania Department of Health guidance in responding to a COVID-19 Outbreak in Schools. To preserve a safe in-person learning to the greatest extent possible, DOH staff will work with PMSD to determine if a closure is necessary and if so, the appropriate closure length to not exceed the following:

School	Number of confirmed cases with a rolling 14 day period
Medium Schools (500-900 students and Staff) CREC, TEC, SIS, EJHS, WJHS	25-45 case threshold (5% of total school population) A maximum 14-day suspension of in-person learning may be recommended by the DOH
Large School (>900 Students and Staff) SEC, CRIS, EHS, WHS	45+ case threshold (5% of total school population) A maximum 14-day suspension of in-person learning may be recommended by the DOH

DOH and PDE support continuation of in-person learning will limit closures recommendations when possible. The decision to close for any length of time remains a local decision. Schools may use other criteria to determine if a suspension of in-person learning is necessary for their local school community. The district will retain the right to close a school prior to the recommended 5% threshold due if deemed necessary.

- All employees shall remain socially distanced from students and other staff members to the maximum extent possible.
- All district classrooms will have at least three (3) feet distancing between student seats, where possible.
- Students will remain socially distanced to the maximum extent possible throughout the school day.
- Teachers will maintain updated seating charts to assist in contact tracing.

Staying Home When Sick and Getting Tested

- Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, should stay home and speak to a healthcare provider regarding testing for COVID-19. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keeping COVID-19 infections out of schools and preventing the spread to others. Getting tested for COVID-19 when symptoms are present will help with rapid contact tracing and prevent possible spread at schools.

Staff members who test positive for COVID-19:

- Immediately notify the Human Resources department.
- Isolate at home for at least 5 days from date of symptoms or date of positive test result (if asymptomatic) and can return to work on day 6 provided they continue to mask for days 6-10.
- If you test positive but do not have symptoms, you are still required to quarantine for at least 5 days and can return to work on day 6 provided they continue to mask for days 6-10.

Students who test positive for COVID-19:

- Parents please immediately contact the school nurse or administrator to alert the district of your child's Positive status.
- Students will be required to isolate at home for at least 5 days and can return to school on day 6 provided they continue to mask for days 6-10.
- If a child tests positive but does not have symptoms, he/she is still required to quarantine for 5 days and can return to school on day 6 provided they continue to mask for days 6-10.

Quarantine Procedures

- Individuals who have COVID-19 symptoms and are awaiting test results should quarantine until results are received.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home from school and isolate according to PA Department of Health guidelines.

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 May 18, 2022.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

9 Yes 0 No

Affirmed on: May 18, 2022

By:


(Signature* of Board President)

Marci Pyzik
(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.