

Work Session
Thursday, September 9, 2021 6:00 PM Alaskan

MS/HS Library
109 Charles W St
Petersburg, AK 99833

1. 2021-22 Covid Mitigation Plan (School Reopening Plan)

August 7, 2021

School Reopening Update

In May, the school district sent out a number of surveys to students, staff, and parents asking for feedback on how the year went, including successes and challenges, and hopes for the future. At a June work session, the school board discussed the survey results and reflected on the year's protocols and procedures. With the low case counts and rising vaccination rates, we were very hopeful to start the '21-'22 school year with reduced or minimal protocols (i.e. masking, etc.). We hired additional teachers to provide smaller class sizes at the elementary level again, but moved to a more typical schedule in the middle/high school without podding. Also in June, the Borough removed all mandates and disbanded the EOC.

On July 9, the CDC released guidance related to school reopening, and then released an update on July 27. Unfortunately, the rising case numbers and increased presence of the highly transmissible Delta variant in Alaska (and across the country) are creating further concerns for schools and communities. See [Updated CDC guidance as of 7.27.21](#). Here is the latest:

Given new evidence on the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant, CDC has updated the [guidance for fully vaccinated people](#). CDC recommends universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status. Children should return to full-time in-person learning in the fall with layered prevention strategies in place.

The school board held a work session on July 30 to discuss this latest guidance and consider protocols for the upcoming school year. There is concern about the highly transmissible Delta variant and how it will impact our school and community. There is also concern about universal masking for all students and staff and how it affects teaching and learning. We discussed our "ideal" scenarios (optional masking, attention to hygiene/handwashing, strict symptom free protocols, increased antigen testing, adjusted travel protocols, etc.), acknowledging that we must consider CDC guidance in our reopening plans under the American Rescue Plan requirements as an entity that receives federal funding. As the State of Alaska has no current mandates, the CDC is our primary resource for our medical guidance.

At this point, we are still hopeful for reduced protocols once the school year is underway, but will have to monitor the case counts and evolving data/recommendations in the coming weeks. It is likely the district will start the school year with two weeks of universal indoor masking to get the school year underway after summer travel and to allow a "slow start" while other routines and procedures are being ironed out. Other than masking, nearly all other things will look very much like school has in the past, and we want to keep it that way (i.e. no podding during lunches, using the cafeterias regularly, full course offerings available to students, extracurricular activities, etc.). It is unlikely that plans will differentiate between vaccinated/unvaccinated for masking protocols during the school day. It will either be required universal for all or recommended masking for all. We welcome the community and Borough

Assembly discussing this new guidance in the coming weeks, as we cannot carry the burden of the community's public health alone.

Please be patient and know that this situation will continue to evolve over the coming weeks as we observe case counts and receive new information and recommendations. Our **primary focus** is keeping our students and staff healthy and **in school**. There is great concern that without universal masking we will have more students and staff out of the classroom more often as close contacts are required to quarantine when covid cases arise. We are weighing the impact to the community as a whole if Covid spreads within our schools. Regardless of our beliefs or opinions, positive cases and close contacts will still be subject to Public Health quarantine rules; we don't get to make or break the rules. If our learning is disrupted due to decreased mitigation strategies and rising case counts, protocols will be revisited.

A formal presentation and recommendation will be provided to the board during the meeting on Tuesday, August 10. You are encouraged to provide comments and suggestions prior to the meeting via email to exec@pcsd.us (Mara Lutomski). All emails will be forwarded to school board members. You are also welcome to provide feedback during the school board meeting during "Comments Related to Agenda Items." Please use this link [Ring Central Meeting Link](#) to attend the meeting virtually August 10th at 6:00 pm; Password: Viking. A detailed plan will be released after the board meeting discussion on August 10th, with an opportunity for additional feedback before finalizing.

Thank you all for your patience throughout this process. As you know, there are multiple voices to be heard and multiple considerations to be made to create the safest and least disruptive learning environment possible.

Respectfully,
Erica Kludt-Painter, Superintendent

Maintaining in person learning was the #1 priority for students, staff, and families in the end of year survey results. Our focus is on keeping our students and staff healthy and minimizing disruptions to high quality, in person learning. With this goal in mind, the school board discussed the [Updated CDC guidance as of 7.27.21](#) during a work session on July 30 and recommended protocols for the upcoming school year during the August 10 school board meeting. The American Rescue Plan federal funding program requires that school districts consider CDC recommendations and provide an opportunity for public feedback. We are weighing the impact to the community as a whole if Covid spreads within our schools, and striving to balance public health concerns with instruction and learning needs. There is concern about the highly transmissible Delta variant and how it will impact our school and community. There is also concern about universal masking for all students and staff and how it affects teaching and learning. Regardless of our personal beliefs or opinions, positive cases and close contacts are subject to Public Health quarantine rules, and will cause disruptions to in person learning. If student learning is disrupted due to decreased mitigation strategies and increased transmission and quarantines, the district reserves the right to tighten protocols as needed.

The two biggest topics of discussion with regard to protocols are masking and travel requirements. Other than masking, nearly all other things will look very much like school has in the past (pre-Covid), and we want to keep it that way (i.e. no class podding in the middle/high school, using the cafeterias regularly, full course offerings available to students, extracurricular activities, etc.).

Moderate Risk Plan

A local Health Advisory Committee will be created to advise administration and the school board in decision-making related to health and safety. This committee will meet weekly and will include: PSD school board representative, PSD superintendent, PSD principals/activity director, Public Health Nurse, PMC representatives, and PSD Union representatives. The school board will consider overall protocols during each school board meeting and receive an update from the local Health Advisory committee through the Superintendent. After consultation with the local Health Advisory Committee and when there is low community/school transmission, fewer masking protocols may be considered by the school board. Based on input from the Health Advisory Committee and school/community case numbers, the superintendent *may* tighten mitigations as needed throughout the month to prevent/address outbreaks.

All plans for in person learning assume some risk of Covid transmission, as well as other illnesses, regardless of protocols implemented.

There is still a risk for classrooms to be shut down due to transmission/exposure, and mitigation strategies may be adjusted; i.e. moving to red status and increasing masking protocols and/or tightening post-travel quarantine requirements. Masking will not keep students or staff out of quarantine if exposed to an unmasked person who is Covid positive.

We don't make Public Health directives, and we can't break Public Health directives. Students/staff may be out on quarantine multiple days/times throughout the school year, regardless of protocols in place. Allowing optional masking increases the chance of close contact quarantines, as opposed to universal masking. Under State Public Health directives, schools must comply with contact tracing requests and must comply with quarantine requirements for identified close contact exposures and positive cases.

Universal

- PSD does not offer a full virtual learning option this year, except when in remote learning/school closures or special circumstances, as approved by the school
- Strict symptom free policy implemented for all staff, students, and visitors; masks required for visitors
- Continued emphasis on use of hand washing, sanitizer, desk/surface cleaning between classes, ventilation strategies
- Regular antigen testing available and encouraged for all students and staff (permission required for optional student antigen testing during school; bi-weekly antigen testing required for participation in secondary school-sponsored extracurricular activities)
- At home symptom/temperature screening for staff and students, but no screening/temperature checks at the door
- Emphasize 3-6' distance between students in classrooms
- Close contact quarantine, **per Public Health directive**, for unvaccinated students and staff:
 - *7-day quarantine + Negative PCR test on day 6 or later +No Symptoms-Return on Day 8*
OR
 - *10-day quarantine + No Symptoms-Return on Day 11*
- Close contact quarantine is not required for vaccinated staff and students at this time, or for anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 90 days, **per Public Health directive**.
- Students who are within 3-6' of each other wearing masks consistently are no longer subject to close contact quarantine, regardless of vaccination status.

Operationally: The '21-'22 school year will start with Universal Masking until Sept 14th (school board meeting) to allow for a slow transition while other routines and procedures are fine tuned. Decisions regarding retention or reduction of universal masking protocols will be based on school/community risk level at that time and medical recommendations, and may be different for each building. This moderate risk plan also allows administration to move between color designations as needed for "real time" risk assessments of positive cases/possible exposures in individual classes or grade levels.

Yellow: community cases are low, low to no positive cases in the school (staff or student), contact tracing happening easily

- Indoor masking recommended for preK-12, regardless of vaccination status
- In person school open, secondary extracurricular activities in session as allowed per mitigation plans (including bi-weekly antigen testing)
- Travel policy in place addressing intra or out of state travel on Alaska Airlines or AMHS:
 - OPTION #1: Return to school with required masking until negative PCR test result received on Day 7, strict symptom monitoring, PCR test on Day 7 (option #1 required for staff/option for students)
 - OPTION #2: 10-day quarantine, strict symptom monitoring, no PCR test (option for students)

Red: community cases rising, several positive cases within the school (staff or student), contact tracing difficult

- Universal required masking indoors preK-12, regardless of vaccination status
- In person school open; secondary extracurricular activities in session as allowed per mitigation plans (including bi-weekly antigen testing)
- Travel policy in place addressing intra or out of state travel on Alaska Airlines or AMHS:
 - OPTION #1: Return to school with required masking until negative PCR test result received on Day 7, strict symptom monitoring, PCR test on Day 7 (option #1 required for staff/option for students)
 - OPTION #2: 10-day quarantine, strict symptom monitoring, no PCR test (option for students)

***TRAVEL POLICY and POST-TRAVEL QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE TIGHTENED based on school/community transmission.

To provide feedback on this plan please follow this link [Feedback](#)

COVID 19

District Protocols

PSD has developed this plan based on information from the CDC, the Alaska DHSS, our local Health Advisory Committee, and by closely monitoring the level of contagion in our community. This plan is subject to change at any time. PSD will notify the community of any updates or changes.

**ALL PSD
STAFF &
STUDENTS**

MASK USAGE

Masks mandatory for staff and students in the school building

Masks mandatory for all students on buses per federal law

ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING

All Staff and Students:

Regular asymptomatic testing is recommended. Antigen testing is available through the school district. Please consider participating in PSD's optional weekly asymptomatic antigen testing program. Contact your school principal if interested in participating. PCR testing is available through PMC. Call the Covid Line for more info at 772-5788.

Secondary Activity Participation:

Extracurricular activities require participation in antigen testing according to their specific mitigation plan. High School Activities require Bi-Weekly antigen testing; Middle School activities require antigen testing prior to a trip off island.

CLOSE CONTACT QUARANTINE (per Public Health)

VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

Do NOT need to quarantine if exposed to someone who has COVID-19. A PCR test is recommended 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms. Please continue to mask indoors in public until your test result is negative.

UNVACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

OPTION 1: 7-day Quarantine + COVID-19 Negative Test (on day 6 or later) + No Symptoms= Return Day 8

OPTION 2: 10-day Quarantine + No Symptoms= Return Day 11 (Not an option for staff)

Additional Requirements for all Close Contacts: If you develop symptoms within 14 days of an exposure you should immediately self-isolate and seek testing. If symptoms develop anytime during quarantine, please notify Public Health and your school office.

POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST ISOLATION

VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS & UNVACCINATED INDIVIDUALS

Quarantine for 10 days after symptom onset

Return to work/ school on the 11th day after at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine, and other symptoms are improved and cleared by Public Health.

Personal/Independent Travel
(not extracurricular activity related)

regardless of vaccination status

All Independent Travel via Alaska Airlines or AMHS

Strongly recommend upon arrival traveler should get a PCR test from PMC travel testing site, before attending school. Free PMC PCR travel testing is available at the ER entrance Mon-Sat 12-4pm, Or by calling the Covid Info Line at 907-772-5788.

Individuals may return to work/school, but must wear a mask and strictly monitor for symptoms for 7 days.

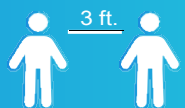
A negative PCR test is required on day 7 or later after arrival. Free PMC PCR travel testing is available at the ER entrance Mon-Sat 12-4pm, Or by calling the Covid Info Line at 907-772-5788.

Optionally, **students only** may choose to quarantine for 10 days after travel in place of testing.

Have you received a positive COVID-19 test within 90 days?

The positive test result exempts you from testing or quarantine related to travel or being a close contact.

All staff and students will strive to maintain three feet of physical distance at a minimum.



All individuals experiencing COVID-19 symptoms should schedule a test with a local healthcare provider by calling the Covid Info Hotline 772-5788, and return to work/ school only after receiving a negative test result – or – completing quarantine if they have received a positive test result.

*If you have questions, please call 877-526-7656 (school) or Covid Info Hotline 907-772-5788 (PMC).



Symptom Free Schools Protocol

Students, Staff, Volunteers, and Visitors:

If you are experiencing one or more of these symptoms* stay home, and do not go to school or report to work:

*Antigen testing available upon request



- Temperature of **100.4** or greater
- Cough or Sore Throat
- Shortness of Breath
- Chills, Muscle Pain
- Runny or Stuffy Nose
- Headache, Vomiting, or Diarrhea
- New Loss of Taste or Smell
- New undiagnosed or untreated rash or skin condition
- You are taking first 24 hours of antibiotic treatment



FEVER



COUGH



FATIGUE



LACK OR LOSS OF APPETITE



SHORTNESS OF BREATH



SPUTUM PRODUCTION



MYALGIAS

When to Return to School after Illness:

*Antigen testing available upon request



- If you have been tested and are diagnosed with COVID-19, you may return to school when cleared by Public Health.
- If you have COVID-19-like symptoms but choose not to be tested, you may return to school no sooner than 10 days after the onset of symptoms AND you must be fever-free for 72 without taking any medicine to reduce the fever AND you must be 24 hours without a cough, without taking medication to reduce the cough. This may be as long as 11 – 14 days.

*Exceptions for preexisting conditions will be determined and potentially approved by the administrator

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

State of Alaska Health and Social Services: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19>