

The Pathways Schools 2021-2022 Opening Plans

Updated August 23, 2021

Updates are consistent with local health department guidelines and the CDC

School Year Opening Day and In-Person Learning

The first day of school for all Pathways Schools students is **Tuesday, August 31**. All The Pathways Schools' students will be provided **in-person experiences**.

The Pathways Schools Planning Process

The Administrative Team and other key staff members have worked to consider several factors in determining our plans for opening for full in-person programming.

The various sources of information included:

- feedback from staff, students and family, and
- guidelines for reopening decision making from the local health departments, state health department, and the Center for Disease Control.

Just some of the various factors taken into consideration included:

- importance of connecting in-person with students,
- students' social and emotional needs,
- students' academic needs,
- families' concerns with sending their child to school in-person,
- reopening plans and guidance from the MSDE and local school systems, and
- most importantly, safety and health of staff and students.

Program Implementation

IEP Implementation

The Pathways Schools team collaborates with the local school system representatives to discuss with each family the:

- implementation of the approved IEP, included related services, and
- any concerns with the full in-person programming model.

Technology

Students will continue to have access to Chromebooks provided by the school during the school day. The way in which it will be utilized will be determined on an individual basis.

Google Classroom will continue to be a resource used for organizing instructional activities. Other applications and online resources will be utilized as appropriate for specific courses, activities, and interventions.

Options for providing a Chromebook to a student during quarantine or other extended absence will be considered based on individual specific circumstances.

Assessment of Presents Levels

An online assessment, such as IXL, will be administered for each student to determine present levels for reading, math and writing at the start of the year or upon enrollment during the school year.

Meals

Students will eat in their classrooms or outdoors as organized by staff. Staff and students will maintain physical distancing of more than six feet while eating.

Water

Water fountains will NOT be available for drinking purposes. Some will be available for filling water bottles. Students and staff may bring water bottles from home to use throughout the day. Water coolers will be made available at each school.

Medication Administration

We continue to encourage all medications to be given at home, before or after school. All medications taken during the school day, when in-person, will continue to be self-administered by the student while monitored by a trained staff member. The parent/guardian and prescribing doctor's permission are required for any medication during the school day. Special arrangements will be made, in consultation with the prescribing doctor, for any specialized medical needs or treatments, such as with a nebulizer, which may not be administered with a staff member during the school day.

Health and Safety Considerations

We are planning several steps in the process of moving to in-person learning experiences. Our plans to promote health and safety for our staff and students have been developed utilizing CDC recommendations, and in collaboration with our Administrative Team and the local county health departments. We will continue to adjust our protocols and practices as required.

GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON CONTACT INSIDE OF ANY BUILDING

Health Assessment

When a student or employee arrives for the school day, his/her temperature will be taken with a contactless thermometer. Students and their parents/guardians, as well as all staff, are asked to conduct a daily assessment of each individual participating in-person by responding to a series of questions regarding COVID-like symptoms and potential exposure prior to meeting another student or staff in person or entering the building. COVID-like symptoms assessed include:

- fever or chills,
- cough,
- shortness of breath,
- fatigue,
- muscle aches,
- headache,
- new loss of taste or smell,
- sore throat,
- congestion,
- nausea and
- diarrhea.

The results of the temperature and symptom screenings will be maintained confidentially consistent with our privacy policies. With a temperature of 100.4 or higher or any of the COVID-related symptoms or high-risk experiences, the student or employee will be isolated and sent home as soon as possible.

Health Support

Each school site will have a separate area for each student to be isolated in the event he or she develops COVID-19-like symptoms during the school day. Immediately upon identification of COVID-like symptoms, the school team will work with the student's parent/guardian to identify the means for transporting the student home as soon as possible. *In this case, the student will NOT be able to return home on a school bus.* The staff will follow all protocols recommended by the local health department.

In the event of a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID-19 in a school, Pathways will notify and follow the guidance of the local health department regarding contact tracing and quarantining those who may have been exposed. The specific health department contacted will be based on the county in which the school is located. Affected individuals will be contacted and next steps will be shared after consultation with the health department.

Physical Distancing

In classrooms and other school areas, students will be seated with at least six feet of spacing. With the active guidance of school employees and additional signage, physical distancing of six feet or more will be supported throughout the building. Movement in the hallways will be facilitated to maximize physical distance between all individuals. Outdoor spaces will be used as reasonable for specific activities. Only one person will be permitted access to the restrooms at a time.

Face Coverings

Surgical face coverings and face shields will be available for each staff and student as needed. Students and employees will be required to wear face coverings while at school. *Appropriate face coverings are recommended by the CDC for general use.* Signage and support from employees will further help students remember to wear masks and to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

Acceptable masks:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric or are disposable face masks;
- Are NOT made of vinyl which makes it hard to breathe;
- Include a gaiter ONLY IF it has two layers over the mouth and nose;
- Completely cover nose and mouth;
- Fit snugly against the sides of face and do not have gaps; and
- Should be used at anytime that a face shield is used.

If someone is able to blow out a candle through the mask, it is not an acceptable mask.

Regarding any student who does not wear a mask properly as expected, the staff will discuss the concerns with the student, parent/guardian, and local school system representative to determine safety plans and options.

Hand Hygiene

Hand sanitizing stations will be available at every building entrance, in classrooms, and at other locations throughout the buildings. Handwashing with soap and water will be scheduled at multiple intervals throughout the day, including at the transition to lunch.

Materials

Extra supplies and equipment will be made available to limit the sharing of items. Items that must be shared will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON CONTACT OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL BUILDING

Health Assessment Before Leaving Home

Prior to any in-person contact on a daily basis, families of each student and each employee will be expected to conduct a health assessment, including:

- Take a temperature reading, and
- Check for symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and headaches.

With a temperature of 100.4 or higher or any of these symptoms, the student or employee is expected to stay home and consult with a doctor.

Frequent reminders will be provided to families and employees regarding the expectations and guidelines for the daily screenings, as well as regarding the importance of staying home if sick or experiences any symptoms of COVID-19.

Health Assessment Upon First Contact Between Staff and Student Daily

Student's temperature will be taken with a contactless thermometer and each student will be asked to review the symptom checker. The results of the temperature and symptom screenings will be maintained confidentially consistent with our privacy policies.

With a temperature of 100.4 or higher or any of the COVID-related symptoms, the student will not be allowed to enter the vehicle or will be sent home as soon as possible.

Guidelines for Employee and Student When Together

- Student and staff member are not required to wear mask at all times when together OUTSIDE
- Maintain physical distance of 6 feet from each other to the greatest extent possible, and at minimum 3 feet
- Minimize sharing any items such as pens and disinfect items
- Use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day
- Remain in carefully selected outdoor locations (e.g., avoiding crowds) to minimize spread of the virus

Guidelines for Employee Transporting One or Two Students in a Vehicle

- Disinfect vehicle with wipes and/or disinfectant spray (70% or higher alcohol content) - including seats, inside surfaces, and door handles
- One student should sit in back seat on passenger side and, if necessary, the second student should sit in the front seat
- Student and staff member wear mask over the nose and mouth at all times when together in the vehicle
- Keep windows open to increase airflow as much as possible
- Staff and student use hand sanitizer before getting in and when getting out of the vehicle
- Keep a bag (e.g., small grocery bag) in the front and backseat for trash to be disposed each day

VACCINATIONS

All students who are eligible and staff members are strongly encouraged to get the COVID-19 vaccinations. At this time, they are not mandatory, however, this may change. In the event there is a positive COVID test result or an identified exposure to someone who tests positive, the vaccination status will have implications for the decision regarding a mandated quarantine from school.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND POSITIVE COVID TEST RESULTS

Anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms before coming to school should stay home, seek medical advice, notify the school principal or supervisor of the symptoms and obtain a COVID test.

If at anytime during the school day someone presents with COVID-19 symptoms, the individual will be expected to go home, seek medical advice, and obtain a COVID test.

A student with symptoms will be isolated immediately until a family member or staff member is able to transport the student home safely. N95 masks and other protective gear will be made available to any staff member providing care for the student with symptoms.

In the event an individual tests positive and was present in school, the site principal or designee will coordinate with the Executive Director or designee to consult with the local health department about contact tracing steps. Requirements for quarantine and COVID testing for others potentially exposed will be determined based on distance to positive individual, mask wearing, space in which they were together, length of time together, and COVID history and vaccination status of each individual.

FACILITIES CARE

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting of door handles, high-touch surfaces, and restrooms will take place throughout the school day. Each classroom will be equipped with cleaning and disinfecting supplies, including solutions with 70% alcohol content, for use following any student transitions, and as needed. Professional cleaning and disinfecting of all areas will take place throughout the week.

Ventilation and Fresh Air

In the classrooms, windows will be opened and fans, ionization units, and air purifiers will be utilized. Ionization systems have been installed in the HVAC systems at our school sites that do not allow for windows to be opened.

Other Safety Considerations

Refusal to Wear Masks

If a student is able to wear a mask but refuses to do so, a meeting will be held with the school team, parents/guardians, and Local School System to consider the needs for the student.

Inability to Wear Masks

If a student is unable to wear a mask, a discussion will be held to determine the reason and documentation may be requested to support the issue.

Large Gatherings

Decisions about each event involving a large gatherings, such as the Pep Rally, Art Show or school-wide group meetings, will be held virtually. Options for graduation will be determined in the spring.

Parents and Visitors in Schools

We will limit any visitors in our buildings. Meetings with community members and parents may be held virtually. All visitors must remain masked while in the building.

School Bus Transportation

Each local school system is providing school bus transportation for students who attending in-person. Students are required to wear masks while riding the school bus.