



**PPSD Health and Safety
Guidance for the
2022-23 School Year**

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Overview

The purpose of this document is to outline health and safety guidance for Providence Public Schools (PPSD) for the 2022-2023 school year. This document is based on the [Outbreak Response Protocols](#) provided by the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH); guidance in this document is not intended to conflict or supersede guidance provided by RIDOH, but rather provide greater detail on PPSD specific policies. This document will be updated as external guidance or internal policy are adjusted. We will continue to monitor public health conditions and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and adjust this guidance accordingly. Additional guidance will be provided to principals/supervisors and staff members.

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A. Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hand Hygiene

Schools should utilize the [CDC Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs](#) for cleaning, disinfection, and hand hygiene. This guidance includes proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning and disinfection.

1. Cleaning protocols

Standard cleaning

PPSD and Aramark have hired additional staff members who will provide additional cleaning throughout the day for school buildings. Staff members will clean high touch surfaces and objects (such as, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) as well as bathrooms. Additionally, First Student will provide enhanced cleaning for buses at the end of the day, including the wiping of high touch surfaces.

Deep Cleaning

In the event of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case where the student or staff member were in the building within the last 24 hours, Aramark will conduct a deep cleaning. This includes a deep cleaning and disinfection of surfaces within the classroom and ventilation measures described below (see "[Ventilation](#)" section). Aramark will leave a cleaning slip on the door to confirm the Level 3 cleaning has been completed.

B. Masks

Masks will not be required for students or staff members when the school year begins. Masks should be worn by individuals who are recovering or have been exposed to COVID-19 (see "[Responding to Students or Staff Who are Sick](#)" section below) as well as when in school nurse offices.

PPSD will continue to monitor CDC and RIDOH guidance regarding masking. As of this writing, the CDC recommends communities in "high COVID-19 Community Level" implement universal indoor masking. If guidance regarding masks should change, PPSD will share information with students, families, and staff members.

In the event that masks become required for certain individuals, mask-wearing exceptions will be made for the following categories of people:

1. Children under the age of 2 years.
2. A person with a disability who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).
3. A person for whom wearing a mask would create a risk to workplace health, safety, or job duty as determined by the relevant workplace safety guidelines or federal regulations.

Staff members who believe they qualify for an exception under items 2 and 3 must contact Ray Lambert (Raymond.Lambert@ppsd.org) to review and approve/deny the request. Similarly, students should contact their school nurse to review and approve/deny the request.

C. Symptom Screening

Students and staff members who are sick and/or have symptoms that indicate a probable COVID-19 case should stay home, contact their health provider, and get a test. Staff and parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for symptoms of infectious illness every day through home-based symptom screening. The district will send communications to all students, families, and staff members reminding them of their obligation to self monitor for symptoms. Additionally, schools must post symptom signage at the entrance(s) of their building.

D. School Visitors

Visitors may enter the school building. A 30-day log of all visitors is required for contact tracing. Logs should document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times. All visitors must comply with the LEA's or school's COVID-19 policies and protocols.

E. Sports and Athletics

For sports identified as having close, sustained contact, athletes should participate in weekly asymptomatic testing administered by Providence Public Schools. For fall, football is identified as a close contact sport. In addition, all student athletes will be required to sign an attestation that they will remain home from school and sporting activities if they have symptoms.

F. Busing and Student Transportation

There are no capacity restrictions for school transportation. It is recommended that household members sit together in the same seat when possible.

Staff members should open windows to improve ventilation when it does not create a safety hazard.

G. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Schools will receive an adequate supply of PPE for all classrooms and office spaces, including:

- Disposable masks to be made available to staff members or students.
- Hand sanitizer for all classrooms, offices, and shared spaces where sinks/handwashing stations are not available.
- Disinfectant spray or wipes for all classrooms, offices and shared spaces.
- Gowns and gloves for school nurses.

Schools will receive a supply of the above to cover all classrooms, with replenishment happening through the school year. Staff members should contact their principal or supervisor if additional PPE is required, which will be replenished from the central warehouse.

If any staff have underlying immunocompromised conditions, they may wish to consult their doctor about any additional PPE. When in close contact with, or treating, a patient suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, recommended PPE includes N-95 respirator (or face mask if N-95 is unavailable), eye protection (goggles or face shield), gloves, and gown.

H. Ventilation

To support building ventilation during the COVID-19 pandemic, all classrooms are equipped with air purifiers utilizing MERV13 filters that meet or exceed CDC recommendations regarding air changes per hour (ACH). Each school will have an adequate allotment of replacement filters for air purifier units; school custodians will change when a replacement is necessary. Air purifiers should be placed at least 2 feet from the wall and should be turned on to maximum ventilation rates.

Opening windows and or doors when the weather permits helps improve ventilation and reduce viral transmission. Cross-ventilation is ideal and can be achieved with fans placed in windows or with combinations of open doors and windows. Ventilation is improved with each additional inch a window is opened. Using air purifiers and opening windows/doors to increase ventilation will allow for the greatest improvement in classroom ventilation.

I. Responding to Students and Staff Members who are Sick

Students and staff members who are sick and/or have symptoms that indicate a probable COVID-19 case should stay home, contact a healthcare provider, and get tested.

1. Symptomatic individuals

If a student or staff member is sick and is a probable COVID-19 case, they should not come to school or work and they should get tested. If a student or school-based staff member tests positive, he or she should contact his/her school nurse; central office-based staff members should contact Donna O'Connor (donna.oconnor@ppsd.org).

If a student exhibits COVID-19 symptoms that indicate a probable case at school, the student should be relocated to a separate space in the building and be given a mask. If a staff member exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, he or she should notify his/her supervisor and go home for the day before getting tested. Students and staff members may obtain a test from the school nurse.

2. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status, should stay home and isolate for at least 5 days. Then they may:

- Return to school on day 6, if they don't have symptoms or their symptoms are improving, and they've been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication). They should wear a well-fitting mask for an additional 5 days at school, at home, and with others; or
- Isolate at home until their symptoms are improving and they've been fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). They should wear a well-fitting mask at school and at home for the remainder of the 10-day period from symptom onset or specimen collection date if they are asymptomatic.

3. Individuals who are exposed to COVID-19

Students and staff without symptoms who are exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should:

- Self-monitor for symptoms for 5 days, and
- Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days.

J. School-Based Testing

Students under 15 years of age will be required to submit a consent form for both asymptomatic and symptomatic testing. Students who have a consent form on file from last school year do not need to submit a new form for this school year. Any parent or guardian who wishes to withdraw testing consent may do so by contacting their school nurse.

1. Asymptomatic testing

During the first four weeks of school, after school breaks, and in the event Providence County enters “high COVID-19 Community Level” status, PPSD schools will offer weekly asymptomatic testing for students and staff members on a voluntary basis.

2. Symptomatic testing

In addition to asymptomatic testing, nurses will have testing supplies should a student or staff member develop symptoms throughout the day, or in the event that multiple positive cases in a school necessitate additional testing of asymptomatic individuals.

K. Promoting Vaccination

Vaccination remains the most powerful strategy to keep children and families healthy and students learning and involved in extracurricular activities in person. Find more information at C19vaccineRI.org. RIDOH strongly encourages all eligible students, staff, and families to get vaccinated and boosted.

L. Communications

Schools will notify families of a potential exposure to COVID-19.