

# Providence Schools

## **PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE**

Version 1

July 15, 2020

*As we reopen schools in fall 2020, Providence Public Schools will implement measures to prioritize public health for our students, staff, families, and community. This document details our latest draft of those measures. We will continue to update this document subject to stakeholder feedback and additional health guidance from the state.*

*In addition to these measures, we have plans in development with regard to school operations, academic strategies, and social-emotional support -- but those matters are not discussed in this document.*

*We want to hear from our community! If you have questions, feedback, or concerns, please email us at [innovate@ppsd.org](mailto:innovate@ppsd.org) or contact our Office of Family and Community Engagement at (401) 456-0686 or [face@ppsd.org](mailto:face@ppsd.org).*

**PROVIDENCE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT: PLANNING FOR A SUCCESSFUL REOPENING**  
**DRAFT**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE**

**Part I: Executive Summary**

Since the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Providence Public School District (PPSD) has worked to provide a high-quality education to our students and families. We have also been planning to reopen schools in a way that is safe, family-friendly, and staff-friendly.

We have five core principles that are guiding our reopening planning process.

1. **Put Safety and Wellness First:** We will make decisions that put the mental, emotional, and physical health and safety of our students, staff, and community first.
2. **Be Equitable:** We will provide access to high quality programming for all students and, when needed, prioritize our students who have been most impacted by educational inequities and COVID-19, including our youngest learners, multilingual learners, and students who are differently-abled.
3. **Strive for Excellence:** We plan to get stronger long term, not just survive. We will continuously assess and improve what we do and take advantage of opportunities created by our new context.
4. **Be Flexible, Transparent, and Responsive:** We will engage our community members with transparent communication and honor their voices by listening. We will keep our plans simple so we can adjust course as circumstances change.
5. **In-Person Learning Matters:** In-person learning best supports our ability to build a connected community and structure engaging, culturally-responsive, rigorous learning. To the greatest extent possible and safe, we will provide predominantly in-person learning.

This document provides a deeper look at the measures we are putting in place to prioritize our first principle: Put Safety and Wellness First.

**What measures will we implement to make our schools healthy and safe?**

Face Masks and Coverings

Under different circumstances in PPCSD's schools, face masks will be either required, recommended, or not required. Stable groups are defined as consisting of the same individuals over the long term. Unless otherwise specified, the below requirements and recommendations will apply to all students and staff.

<b>Face Masks Required</b>	<b>Face Masks Recommended</b>	<b>Face Masks Not Required</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During arrival and dismissal.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In a common space where a person can keep at least six feet of</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When the student/staff member has trouble breathing, is participating in</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When students ride the bus to school.</li> <li>• When students/staff are in common areas (hallways, open/shared office areas, etc.) where a minimum of six feet of separation cannot be guaranteed.</li> </ul>	<p>distance from all other people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In stable groups, when stable groups are with no other people.</li> </ul>	<p>naptime, is incapacitated or is unable to remove the covering without assistance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When the mask would inhibit a daily living activity (e.g. eating).</li> <li>• When a face mask would negatively impact safety.</li> </ul>
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Social Distancing

At school, students will be organized into stable groups, and the expectation is that these stable groups spend all or most of the day together. The table below shows the stable group sizes that we will maintain in different RI Dept. of Education (RIDE) and RI Dept. of Health (RIDOH) public health scenarios.

	<b>Limited In-Person Public Health Scenario</b>	<b>Partial In-Person Public Health Scenario</b>	<b>Full In-Person Public Health Scenario</b>
Grades K-8	15 people	30 people	30 people
High School	15 people	HS will have 50% student capacity. With such capacity, HS students will be scheduled as stable groups whenever possible. However, greater variety in courses at the high school level means that students from different groups will be in the same room for some classes. In these instances, physical distancing will be maintained to the extent possible, and all students and teachers will wear masks per RIDE guidance.	HS students will be scheduled as stable groups when possible. However, greater variety in courses at the high school level means that students from different groups will be in the same room for some classes. In these instances, physical distancing will be maintained to the extent possible and all students and teachers will wear masks per RIDE guidance.

**\*For more details, refer to Part II of this document.**

In certain circumstances, and particularly in high schools, some students or teachers may need to engage in classes with multiple stable groups. We will take measures to maintain social distancing in those cases.

Hygiene and Cleanliness

We will keep a steady supply of hand soap for all hand-washing stations and we will maintain hospital-grade hand-sanitizer in all areas, including classrooms, where hand-washing stations are not readily accessible. Students and staff will be expected to wash or sanitize their hands throughout the day. In the following instances, students and staff will be required to wash or sanitize their hands:

- When entering the school facility.
- When entering or departing the classroom.
- At mealtime.
- After restroom breaks.
- After sneezing or coughing.
- Before and after using water, classroom supplies, or other sensory objects.
- Before and after physical activity or being outdoors.

Custodians will clean and disinfect all Providence school buildings daily. This will include disinfecting soiled and high touch surfaces and conducting deeper cleanings in accordance with CDC guidelines per the following approaches:

1. **Daytime Specialized or Enhanced Cleaning:** During the day, we will clean our schools in the way that we normally clean them overnight – to disinfect soiled and high-touch surfaces.
2. **Deep Cleaning:** We will follow CDC guidance for deep cleaning for spaces that have been unoccupied for at least seven days.
3. **Confidence Cleaning:** We will follow CDC guidance to clean spaces thoroughly that have been touched by a person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

For more details on what each of these cleaning measures entails, please refer to Part II.

Visitors

Our schools will limit visitors from entering the building. Depending on RIDE’s and RIDOH’s public health scenario, we will have different measures in place to limit visitors.

1. **Partial and Limited In-Person Public Health Scenarios:** To the greatest extent possible, visitors will not be allowed to enter school facilities.
2. **Full In-Person Public Health Scenario:** Visitors may be allowed to enter the building, but school-specific limits and restrictions will still be in place. Visitors will have to attest that they (and members of their households) have no COVID-19 symptoms and are not positive for COVID-19.

**How will we monitor and respond to health conditions?**

Student and Staff Health Screening

Every day, students and staff will have to attest that they and members of their household do not have COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms. For students, we will require screening in the following ways:

When will we screen?	How will we screen?	What will we do if students have symptoms or COVID-19?
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Before School	Students and families will be expected to complete a self-attestation using the Crush COVID app or a state attestation form. This information will not be communicated to PPSD, but families should use it to determine whether or not a student should go to school.	If a student or member of the student's households is sick, then the student must stay home.
On Yellow School Buses	For students who ride yellow school buses, bus monitors will ask each student if they have symptoms.	If a guardian is with the student, the student will not be allowed on the bus and will be advised to return home. If the guardian is not with the student, the student will be isolated on the bus and then a family member will have to pick them up from school.
At School	For students who do not ride yellow school buses, a screener will ask each student if they have symptoms.	The student will be supervised in an isolated space, and a family member will have to pick them up from school.

All staff members will be required to attest that neither they nor any household members have COVID-19 or symptoms when they clock into school each day.

Responses to COVID-19 Symptoms or Positive Situations

We will have thorough measures in place to isolate students or staff who have symptoms and to protect others from potentially becoming ill. These measures will be updated upon further guidance from the state Department of Health and RIDE.

Coordination with State Health Officials

We will have a staff member dedicated as PPSD's point-of-contact with state and local health officials. This staff member is a health expert who will prioritize health and safety as well as confidentiality and student and family rights.

**What should you do if you have questions or concerns?**

We want to hear from our community. If you have questions or concerns, please email us at [innovate@ppsd.org](mailto:innovate@ppsd.org) or contact our [Office of Family and Community Engagement](#) at (401) 456-0686 or [face@ppsd.org](mailto:face@ppsd.org).

## Part II: Detailed Public Health Measures

### Face Masks and Coverings

#### *Protocols for Students and Staff*

To minimize the spread of illness, PPSD will have protocols in place that require face masks in certain circumstances, recommend face masks in some circumstances, and allow students or staff to go without face masks in other circumstances.

#### Required Face Masks

Face masks will be required in the following instances:

- During arrival to and dismissal from a PPSD school or facility.
- During other instances when stable group distancing may be limited.
- When students ride the bus to school.
- When students/staff are in common areas (e.g., hallways, open/shared office areas, etc.).

#### Recommended Face Masks

The face coverings for a student or staff member will be recommended but not required in the following instances:

- When a student/staff member is in a common space and able to maintain at least six feet of distance from all other people.
- When a student or staff member is solely with their stable group. When stable groups are together, with no other people (e.g., in the instructional room), the baseline expectation is that all students and teachers should wear face masks to the maximal extent possible.

#### Not Required Face Masks

In line with public health guidance, students and staff members will not be expected to wear face coverings in the following instances:

- When the student/staff member has trouble breathing, is participating in nap time, is incapacitated, or otherwise is unable to remove the covering without assistance
- When the face covering would inhibit an activity of daily living (e.g. eating)
- When a face covering itself would negatively impact the safety of an individual or lead to an increased risk of harm to others

Students for whom face masks are not developmentally appropriate (e.g., where they cannot properly maintain a face covering) will not be required to wear face masks.

#### *Protocols for Visitors*

In all scenarios, visitors to school buildings will be limited or restricted. When visitors are allowed to enter the building, the expectation will be that all visitors will be required to wear face coverings at all times when they visit a school or other school district facility. Please refer to the “Visitors and Distancing” section below on protocols for visitor entry.

#### *Distribution of Face Masks*

When possible, students and staff will be expected to provide their own face coverings. At the start of the school year, PPSD schools will provide all students and staff members with one reusable face covering. Each school will also have a supply of disposable masks in case staff members or students

forget their masks, though schools should take measures to encourage staff members and students to bring their masks every day.

### Social Distancing

#### *Teacher and Student Grouping and Details on Students and Staff with Health Risks*

Students will be organized into stable groups consisting of the same individuals, and the expectation is that these stable groups spend all or most of the day together. PPSD will follow the guidelines of RIDE and RIDOH when deciding which learning scenario will be implemented. The below table details stable group sizes under different public health scenarios.

	Limited In-Person	Partial In-Person	Full In-Person
Grades K-8	Stable groups will be limited to <b>15 people</b> , including students and staff. When needed for course offerings, staff will rotate among groups, but they will be required to wear masks and maintain at least six feet of distance from students in the groups.	Stable groups will be limited to <b>30 people</b> , including students and staff. When needed for course offerings, staff will rotate among groups, but they will be required to wear masks and maintain at least six feet of distance from students in the groups.	Stable groups will be limited to <b>30 people</b> , including students and staff. When needed for course offerings, staff will rotate among groups, but they will be required to wear masks and maintain at least six feet of distance from students in the groups.
High School	Stable groups of <b>15 people</b> will be maintained to the extent possible. Whenever possible, students stay in the same classroom, while teachers rotate rooms.	Only approximately <b>50% of the students</b> in a high school can be physically present in the school at one time.  Students will remain in predetermined cohorts throughout the day. Subject-specific teachers (including support teachers for Multilingual Learners and Special Education) will move from classroom to classroom, while students for the most part remain in their cohort's designated room. Teachers who serve multiple cohorts of students will maintain six feet of social distancing and wear masks.	HS students will be scheduled as stable groups when possible. However, greater variety in courses at the high school level means that students from different groups will be in the same room for some classes. In these instances, physical distancing will be maintained to the extent possible and all students and teachers will wear masks per RIDE guidance.

		<p>Students from different cohorts will be allowed to mix for unique course offerings. While six feet of distance will be maintained whenever possible, we will allow students from multiple sub-cohorts to mix for unique course offerings even if course enrollment is such that six feet of distancing in the classroom cannot be maintained. We will require masks for all students in order to minimize the risk of spreading infection.</p>	
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Groups of students indoors will not exceed the state’s maximum allowable group size during the applicable Rhode Island Reopening phase ([reopeningri.com](http://reopeningri.com)).

Staff members will be expected to maintain six feet of distance from one another in their workspaces, to the extent that this is feasible. Teachers should be able to maintain such distance by remaining with their stable groups. For school office staff, the expectation is that they will likewise adhere to these distancing requirements.

In addition to the above baseline protocols, PPSD will have measure in place to protect students and staff with health risks:

- Hygiene: For students with such risks, teachers will be expected to provide support to ensure the students strictly adhere to the hygiene and handwashing guidelines.
- Face Coverings: In classes in which a student or staff member has an underlying medical condition, all individuals may be required to wear masks at all times.
- Group Spacing: If possible, desk and workspaces will be adjusted to more easily allow health at-risk students and staff to maintain a six-foot distance from others.

*Classroom Layout*

In all grade levels, schools will be expected to assign students seats for their classes. In all classrooms, desks will generally be expected to face the same direction. Desks, to the maximum extent possible, will be spaced apart depending on educational needs.

*Social Distancing in Recreation Areas*

PPSD will encourage its schools to maximize student recreation time and the time that students spend outside of the classroom. Recreation areas can be indoors and outdoors and include gymnasiums, playgrounds, and sport fields. If more than one group is using an area at a given time, PPSD will require that there will be at least 14 feet of distance between the groups. Whenever playground equipment or toys/balls/etc. are used, the expectation is that schools will clean the equipment and items between each use.



### *Social Distancing in Common Spaces (Auditoriums, Gyms, Cafeterias, etc.)*

Whenever stable groups are in shared spaces, each stable group will be expected to maintain at least 14 feet of physical distance between other groups. After each use of a common space, schools will be expected to clean the space. Schools will be expected to ensure that equipment and materials in shared spaces and in classrooms are not used by multiple students. Schools will be required to ensure that the number of people in any shared room (e.g., in the cafeteria for lunch) will never exceed the maximum allowable statewide gathering size.

### *Social Distancing during Dining (e.g., School Lunch Time)*

To the extent possible, students will be expected to eat lunch in their cohort's classroom or outdoors – and eat lunch in a space with only their cohort. If students eat in a communally used space (e.g., cafeteria), schools are expected to stagger the use of that space and disinfect the space between each use. If more than one stable group is in a communally used space, it is expected that a distance of at least 14 feet will be maintained between each group.

Designated staff will be expected to deliver meals and a surface cleaning cloth to student classrooms during mealtime. Each meal is expected to be served in a single-serving container or bag. Staff will be expected to clean tables/surfaces before and after students eat. Students will be expected to sanitize their hands before and after eating their meal.

### *Limited Use of Bathrooms*

To the extent possible, stable groups will be expected to have designated bathroom times and designated bathrooms. Custodial staff will clean bathrooms between bathroom uses.

### *Social Distancing in High Traffic Areas (e.g., Hallways, Stairways, Locker Rooms, etc.)*

Schools are expected to plan for staggered timing to minimize traffic and congestion in hallways. Schools will be expected to mark hallways with six feet distance markers. The expectation is that hallways and stairwells will be used for one direction to the maximum extent possible, and schools will be expected to mark hallways and stairwells with their single direction, when applicable.

Students will not be allowed to use lockers. Instead, students will be expected to carry all their belongings for the day in a backpack.

## **Hygiene and Cleanliness**

### *Handwashing Procedures*

Students and staff will be expected to sanitize or wash their hands in all of the following instances:

- When entering the school facility.
- When entering or departing the classroom.
- At mealtime.
- After restroom breaks.
- After sneezing or coughing.
- Before and after using water, classroom supplies, or other sensory objects.
- Before and after physical activity or being outdoors.

All schools will be expected to provide students with [videos and lessons](#) on handwashing.

### *Handwashing Supplies*

All Providence Public School buildings will maintain numerous handwashing locations to include all restrooms, nurse's suites, faculty lounges, and kitchens. Aramark custodial staff will monitor the restrooms to ensure that those locations maintain an adequate supply of soap and paper towels.

We will make hand sanitizer of hospital grade quality and with at least 70% alcohol content available in all classrooms and in areas where handwashing is not feasible. Such areas include school main offices and other high traffic common areas. All our schools will be expected to identify locations for hand sanitizer given that schools have the best understanding of their high-traffic areas where handwashing is inaccessible.

#### *School Facility Cleaning*

PPSD contracts with the Aramark company for custodial services. In accordance with recommended CDC guidelines, Aramark custodians will clean and disinfect all Providence school buildings daily. This will include disinfecting soiled and high-touch surfaces as noted below. Deeper cleanings will also be conducted in situations noted below (e.g., locations where an individual confirmed to have COVID-19 was present). Bottles of cleaning/disinfectant spray will be distributed to all classrooms and offices so that staff can spot clean and wipe down surfaces throughout the day.

There are three cleaning and disinfecting procedures to augment current practices for cleaning and disinfecting school facilities.

#### Daytime Specialized or Enhanced Cleaning

This cleaning protocol will be similar to what is normally done overnight with enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces that are soiled and disinfecting other surfaces that are high-touch points such as tables, desks, chairs, countertops, windowsills, cabinet handles and doorknobs, light switches, and telephones.

The district will work in partnership with school staff to develop regular cleaning and disinfecting of classroom electronics, such as tablets, touchscreens, keyboards, controls, books, and equipment.

The cleaning and disinfecting of handrails, cafeterias, and bathrooms will be done daily to ensure restrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels.

Hand sanitizer will be provided to areas where soap and water is not readily available.

#### Deep Cleaning

In accordance with CDC guidance, PPSD will provide deep cleaning for buildings, offices, classrooms, cafeterias and other common areas that have been unoccupied for more than seven days. The cleaning procedures may include:

- Use of recommended PPE and district-approved sprayers, foggers, sponges, applicators, mopheads and buckets, measured spray bottles, and trash liners.
- Use of the EPA's registered list of approved disinfectants or diluted household bleach or 70 percent of more alcohol solutions for what is considered normal routine cleaning.
- Disinfecting uncluttered flat surfaces; soft or porous materials such as carpeted floors, rugs, drapes, and seating; objects normally touched in buildings, offices, and classrooms such as desks, tables, phones, keyboards, touchscreens, toilets; and high-traffic areas such as front offices, gyms, locker rooms, lunchrooms, and multi-purpose rooms

- Sweeping, vacuuming, or mopping all floors; emptying all trash receptacles; and disposing of any trash, used items or equipment.

### Confidence Cleaning

These procedures apply when a person who has been in a facility is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. These procedures have been developed in conjunction with the CDC’s “Re-opening Guidance” and will take place under the direction of the health department and supervision of the district’s health services. The procedures include:

- When possible, opening windows to increase outside airflow for at least one and up to 24 hours; using equipment such as PPE face covering(masks), gowns, gloves, etc.; using spray bottles or electric sprayers; using HEPA vacuums, if available; and using cleaning cloths.
- Disinfecting hard, horizontal and frequently touched surfaces such as tables, desks, chairs, handrails, equipment, and door handles in buildings and rooms with a CDC-approved product rated for SARS-CoV-2, Rhinovirus, or Human Coronavirus.
- Appropriate removal of PPE and disposal of waste.

### **Visitors and Distancing**

Schools will be encouraged to limit visitors to the degree that this is feasible. For instance, schools may encourage only one parent/guardian to visit a building when possible and explore virtual options for communicating with families. PPSD’s protocols for visitors will vary depending on the learning scenario issued by the state.

- Full In-person Reopening Scenario: The expectation is that visitors may enter the school building, but limits should still be considered. A 30-day log of all visitors is expected to be maintained, and the expectation is that this log will document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times. All visitors will be expected to wear face coverings at all times.
- Partial and Limited In-person Reopening Scenario: To the greatest extent possible, visitors are not allowed to enter facilities. In addition to such an expectation, PPSD will maintain the following protocols:
  - Visitors necessary for drop off or pick up will be expected to wear face coverings.
  - Visitors are expected to enter and exit the school building via one location.
  - A 30-day log of all visitors is expected to be maintained, and the expectation is that this log will document the date, contact phone number, and arrival/departure times.
  - All visitors will be expected to wear face coverings at all times.

### **Student, Staff, and Visitor Health Screening**

#### *Screening for School-Level Staff*

Our school-level staff members will use a punch-card attestation system to indicate that neither they nor a member of their household has COVID-19 symptoms or the virus itself. With this system, we will notify staff members that, whenever they punch into work for the day, they are attesting to have none of the symptoms or risk factors detailed in RIDOH’s self-attestation form. We will include signs next to punch-in locations detailing this self-attestation expectation.

### *Screening for Students*

Students and families will be expected to attest to a student's ability to come to school in the following ways:

1. **At-Home Attestation:** Prior to the start of each school day, families will be expected to complete the RIDOH self-attestation form's checklist OR the My Symptom Checker portion of the Crush COVID App. This information will not be communicated to PPSD, but families should use it to determine whether a student may go to school. If students have risk factors or symptoms, then they may not come to school.
2. **Bus Pickup Screening:** As students board the yellow school bus, a bus monitor will screen them. PPSD will provide bus monitors with a checklist/visual aid to show students as they get on the bus. Monitors will ask the students to provide a thumbs up if they attest to not having any symptoms, or a thumbs down if they have any symptoms. If a parent or guardian is with the student at the bus pickup location, the parent or guardian may provide the thumbs-up or thumbs-down. If a parent or guardian is with the student and the student is exhibiting symptoms, then the student will be sent home with that person instead of brought to school. If a student provides a thumb's down and does not have a parent or guardian with them at the bus stop, the student will then be directed to his or her assigned seat by the monitor. Students sitting in the seats directly in front, behind, and to the side of the student will be directed to move to a vacant seat (if one is available) or to sit in the same seat as a classmate until the ride concludes. Once the bus arrives at school, the student will be required to go to an isolation space and return home from school without going to class. *Note:* Students will have assigned seats on the bus, with students picked up first assigned to the back rows of the bus to limit student passing.
3. **School Screening for Students Who Walk or Get Dropped Off:** All students who do not ride the school bus will be expected to walk through a checkpoint as they arrive at their school. At this checkpoint, a screener will be expected to screen each student in the same manner as a bus monitor – using the thumbs-up/thumbs-down system. If a student provides a thumbs-down, then the student will be required to go to an isolation space and return home from school without going to class.

### *Screening for Visitors*

To the greatest extent possible, visitors will not be allowed to enter PPSD schools. If visitors must enter the school, then schools will require them to sign-in. Under PPSD protocols, the act of signing in as a visitor will count as attesting that the visitor does not have symptoms or risk factors, as detailed in the RIDOH self-attestation form. To communicate this expectation, PPSD will include signs at all sign-in locations and will communicate the expectation with all PPSD families, staff, vendors, and students.

## **Responses to COVID-19 Symptoms or Positive Situations**

### *School Quarantine Protocol for Symptomatic Students and Staff*

#### Prior to School

If a student or staff member, or a member of the student's or staff member's household has COVID-19 symptoms, the expectation will be the following: They are expected to remain home until (a) they have tested negative for COVID-19 or (b) they have provided a doctor's note stating they have permission to come to the PPSD facility and/or are not contagious. They are expected to notify their school or office. The student or staff member's stable group will be assigned to use a flex space away from the stable group's normal space for 24 hours after the student or staff member first reports symptoms. A flex

space could include another space in the building that is not frequently used, such as a cafeteria or gymnasium.

#### During School

If a student experiences symptoms while at school, the district will coordinate closely with the Department of Health and RIDE on response. Guidance from the state is expected to be forthcoming soon on response to students with positive symptoms.

#### *Protocols for Situations with Positive COVID-19 Tests*

If a school receives notice that a student or staff member has tested positive, or if a member of the household of a student or staff member has tested positive, then the expectation is as follows:

- The student or staff member must remain home until they test negative, have quarantined for 14 days, OR have a doctor's note with permission to attend school.
- We or public health officials will notify all people who have had close contact with the person. Close contact is defined as follows: Being within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the infected person is isolated.
- All people in the school community who have had close contact with the COVID-19 positive person must also remain home until they test negative, have quarantined for 14 days, OR have a doctor's note with permission to attend school. The positive person's classroom should be left unattended for 24 hours. After 24 hours, the classroom should receive a deep clean.
- We will coordinate with RIDE to determine when schools should be fully closed in the case of COVID-19 positive situations.