

Prince George's County Public Schools

Reopening of Schools Guide for Parents and Guardians



Spring 2021

Board of Education

Juanita Miller, Ed.D., Chair

Sonya Williams, Vice-Chair, District 9

David Murray – District 1

Joshua M. Thomas – District 2

Pamela Boozer- Strother – District 3

Shayla Adams-Stafford – District 4

Raaheela Ahmed – District 5

Belinda Queen – District 6

Kenneth Harris, II – District 7

Edward Burroughs III, Vice-Chair, District 8

D. Paul Monteiro, Jr., Member-At-Large

Sandra D. Shephard, Member-At-Large

Curtis Valentine, M.P.P., Member-At-Large

Ninah Jackson – Student Board Member

Monica E. Goldson, Ed.D., Secretary/Treasurer, and Chief Executive Officer

OVERVIEW

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has developed a reopening guide for parents and guardians in preparation for the reopening of schools. The information in this guide will focus on all of the aspects specific to students returning to an in-person hybrid model of instruction. The guide includes the protocols, procedures, and processes to ensure the health and safety of students as we mitigate and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PURPOSE

To provide a reopening guide for parents and guardians in PGCPS's effort to effectively and efficiently reopen schools for students. The following information is included in this guide:

- [Student Procedures](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [School and Classroom Design](#)
- [Student Materials](#)
- [Hybrid Teaching](#)
- [Attendance](#)
- [Dress Code and Uniform Expectations](#)
- [Food Services](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Social, Emotional, and Mental Health](#)

The following timeline has been developed for the reopening of schools for students.

Timeline:

Dates	Action
February 17, 2021	Announce steps for moving forward/reopening.
February 17, 2021 – February 28, 2021	The Department of Research, Testing, and Evaluation will release and collect PGCPS surveys to parents and guardians.
March 10, 2021	Fall coaches can conduct in-person conditioning/skill-based workouts after school outdoors with a pod of 10 student-athletes maximum to prepare for the postsecondary athletic experience.
March 29, 2021 - April 5, 2021	Spring Break
April 6, 2021	Spring sports season practice begins.
April 8, 2021	<p>Phase 1 (48 days of instruction)</p> <p>PGCPS will continue to adhere to the Matrix for Safe School Reopening Based on COVID-19 Indicators and will begin hybrid learning (2 days of in-person learning) per week for families that selected this option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Special Education (Grades PreK-12) ● PreK- Grade 6 students ● 12th Grade students
April 15, 2021	<p>Phase 2 (41 days of instruction) <i>Contingent on the successful implementation of Phase 1</i></p> <p>PGCPS will continue to adhere to the Matrix for Safe School Reopening Based on COVID-19 Indicators and will begin hybrid learning (2 days of in-person learning) per week for families that selected this option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Middle School (Grades 7 and 8) ● High School (Grades 9, 10, and 11)
June 15, 2021	Last Day for Students

DEFINITIONS

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) released the [COVID-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#) in August 2020 and updated the document in November 2020. The following definitions are from the MSDE COVID-19 Guidance document:

- **Isolation** is used to separate people *infected* with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it is safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific “sick room” or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).
- **Quarantine** is used to keep someone who might have been *exposed* to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur *before a person knows they* are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.
- **Close contact** relates to exposure to individuals with COVID-19 and is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, regardless of whether face coverings are being worn.
- **COVID-19-like illness** is when a person has **Any 1** of the following: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell; **OR At least 2 of the following:** fever of 100.4° or higher (measured or subjective), chills or shaking chills, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, and congestion or runny nose. Identification of persons with COVID-19-like illness is used to exclude persons from school, to identify who should be tested for COVID-19, and to identify persons who may need close contacts quarantined.

STUDENT PROCEDURES FOR ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL, ENTERING/EXITING, AND FACE COVERINGS

Prior to Student Arrival

Parents and guardians, please monitor your child/children's health daily prior to sending them to school. If your child has a temperature or if your child has one of the symptoms on the following list [Symptoms of Coronavirus](#), you **must** keep your child at home. If your child becomes ill at school and displays one of these symptoms you **must** pick up your child from school within 1 hour. Students will be isolated in the health room until picked up. [MDH Guidance for Temperature and Symptom Screening](#)

Face Coverings for Children

All students **must** wear face coverings while inside PGCPS facilities and while being transported by PGCPS Department of Transportation. Face coverings are required by all adults and students, worn throughout the school day and as feasible for students with disabilities or a medical reason from their physician. Please refer to the Maryland Health Department [Guidance for Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools](#). Face coverings may be cloth or disposable. Face coverings must be properly covering their mouth and nose fully before entry and while in any PGCPS facility. Compliance is expected of all on PGCPS grounds. Exceptions to this requirement include:

- while students are eating, drinking, or exercising outside;
- students with a health condition, a communication or impairment, or disability that prevents them from wearing a face covering.

If a student refuses to wear a face mask and was not approved by their physician to be excluded from this safety provision, the student will be assigned to the daily distance learning model.

Personal Protection Equipment Requirements

All students are asked to bring their own face coverings each day.

Entering/Exiting of Building Students

Directional signage regarding entrance and exit, standing placement, and distance has been designated throughout each PGCPS facility and must be adhered to while on any PGCPS facility. Each school will develop a plan for arrival and dismissal of students two weeks prior to the reopening of school. Principals need to designate school personnel to be assigned to supervise and manage the entrances and hallways to ensure a safe transition and compliance with the 6 feet social distancing rule within the building and throughout the school day.



Students should wash their hands as soon as they arrive at school *if possible*, if not, hand sanitizer should be used immediately. A handwashing schedule will be developed by school teams for students to wash their hands every two hours thereafter.

Parents and guardians are required to make an appointment with the school prior to arrival. Face coverings and social distancing are requirements for entry. Early dismissal/late arrivals must be conducted at the main entrance door--not in the main office.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Room and C.A.R.E Room

In addition to the Health Room, each school will have a *COVID, Assessment, Response, Evaluation/Exam* (C.A.R.E) room that will be used solely for the medical management of the student body.

General Social and Health Room Distancing

Signs will be placed on the health room doors and walls to remind and reinforce the importance of face coverings and being 6 feet away from one another whether sitting, standing, or laying on a cot. Seating/desks spacing will be at least 6 feet apart; in areas where it is difficult to remain at least 6 feet apart tape/signs will be placed on the floor to show spacing.

COVID Testing of Students

PGCPS will conduct COVID testing of students. Information on the process for testing students will be shared with parents and guardians prior to students returning to school.

Standard Protocol for Notification of Probable or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

The principal and school nurse are responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. The school will provide written notification to staff or families who have had a possible exposure to anyone with COVID-like illness symptoms or a positive case of COVID-19. The written notification should follow the guidelines of MSDE ([MSDE Guidance Document](#)) with a consultation with the County Health Department. Students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be immediately separated from others. Should a student have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher and/or any respiratory signs/symptoms, they will be placed in the C.A.R.E. room until they can leave the building (i.e., family members can pick up the student). Areas used by the sick person will be closed off and will not be used until after cleaning and disinfecting by custodial staff. Students who test positive for COVID-19 must stay home until cleared by the primary care provider and have tested negative. Students who have had close contact ([Maryland Department of Health: Interim Definition of Close Contact](#)) with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. In the event that the school is informed of a case of COVID-19 or possible COVID-19 exposure, the school nurse and/or principal will immediately notify the PGCPS' Office of Health Services and the principal's

Instructional Director. The school will follow the guidance of PGCPs for notification of staff and families, quarantines, closures, reopening, and any other requirements.



SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM DESIGN

Classroom Configuration

Each PGCPSS school building is a different size and shape and has differing amenities. Depending on the grade configuration, academic programs, wraparound supports, as well as student and staff space needs, the following serves as guidance for each school.

CDC Recommendations

	Early Childhood Centers	Elementary	Middle	High
Face Coverings *Required at all times.	Required <i>(per CDC - [if 2 years of age or older] when in public and when around people who do not live in child's household)</i>	PreK-1: Required Gr. 2-6: Required	Required	Required
Capacity	10 students (max)	PreK 10 students (max) Grades K-6 15 students (max)	15 students (max)	15 students (max)
Distance	Space seating/desks at least 6 feet apart when feasible.			
Location of Desks	Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart. Students will work predominantly in their personal, designated spaces at least 6 feet apart.			
Visuals:	Guides: Install guides, such as tape on floors and signs on walls to ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart			
Facility Use	Gymnasiums, media centers, etc, possibly may not be used for their traditional functions if needed as alternative learning spaces. Each school will need to determine how best to utilize the space available within their building.			

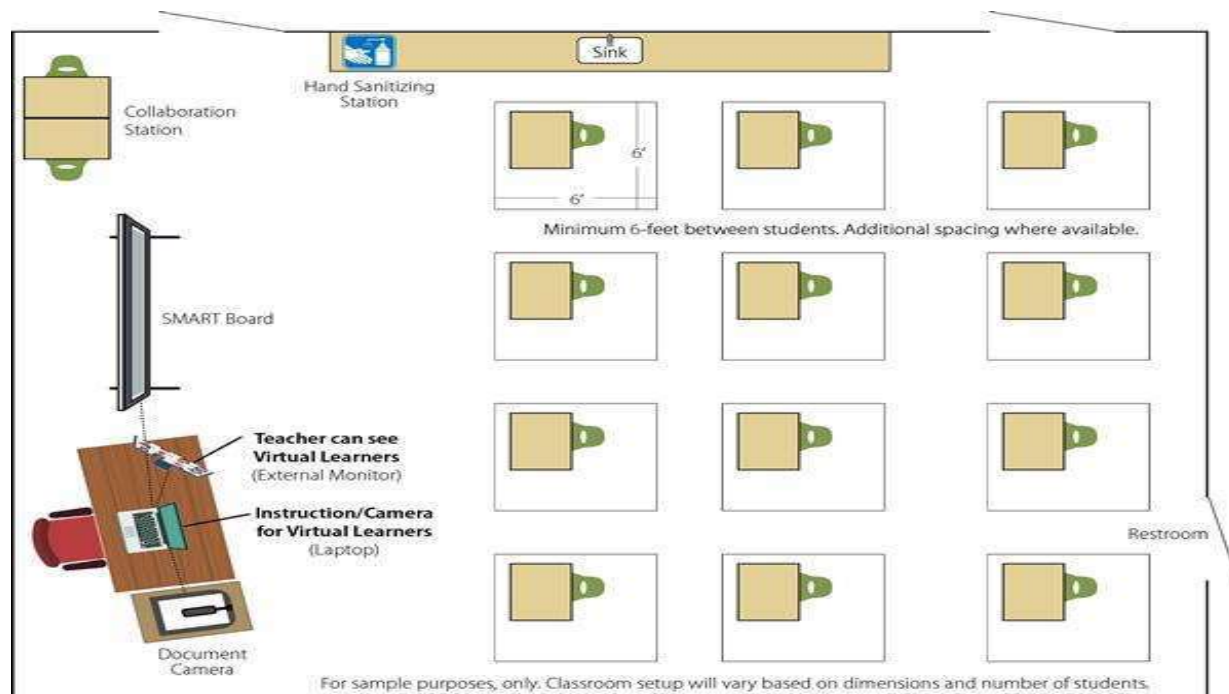
Processes and Procedures

As students enter the classroom, the teacher will inform the student which desk to go to, desks will be numbered. Desks will be forward-facing and staged to maintain social distancing at least 6 feet apart (see samples below). Teaching station (teacher desk) will be staged to allow staff to visually monitor in-person students along with engaging distance learners. Classroom vents will not be covered to allow for airflow; windows are encouraged to be open as deemed appropriate. Locations will be designated within the classroom for students' personal belongings (backpack, jacket, etc). **The use of lockers and/or cubbies and coat racks will be prohibited.** Students will use the back of the chair or additional side-by-side desks (see sample below).

Classroom Setup

Student desks/tables will be set up with an optimum configuration within each classroom. Building supervisors will place an "X" on each desk that will not be utilized in the classroom. The desks utilized by students will minimize the distance based on the separation of the desk (every other desk, every other row).

Classroom Configuration - Sample 1



Classroom Configuration - Sample 2



Storage Areas/Locker Use

Locker use will not be permitted to decrease social interaction in the hallways. Backpacks, coats, and belongings will remain with students *i.e.*, back of students' chairs, proximity to desks, etc. Elementary students will not utilize cubby or storage areas. Items not in use should remain in the students' backpacks and stored on the back of students' chairs, or in close proximity to their desk. Students should bring limited supplies such as electronic devices, paper, and pencil/pen.

Outside Classroom Space

School-based personnel will consider holding classes outdoors where circumstances allow by repurposing outdoor locations to serve as alternative instructional spaces such as courtyards and fields. Masks must be worn and students should be distanced at least 6 feet between one another.



Playground Procedures

School-based personnel will designate zones to help students identify how to safely comply with physical distancing guidelines and to provide sufficient opportunities for free choice when outdoors.



Restrooms

Signage will be posted on the main door of the restroom and next to the sinks. The signs will encourage students to stand 6 feet away from others and to wash their hands.



STUDENT MATERIALS

Shared Materials

During the hybrid model, all efforts will be made to limit the sharing of materials. Please consult with your child's teacher(s) and school administration for any concerns for the sharing of materials.



HYBRID TEACHING

Hybrid Teaching in PGCPs

The use of a hybrid model provides students with access to face-to-face instruction two days a week and three days of distance learning. Given this structure, students will attend school on back-to-back days each week, either Monday and Tuesday (Cohort 1) or Thursday and Friday (Cohort 2).

Cohort 1/Cohort 2: The cohort structure ensures a healthy, safe, and secure environment by scheduling the same group of students to attend school two days in a row.

50% Enrollment Model – Cohort 1/Cohort 2

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Students with Last Names beginning with A - J (In School)	Students with Last Names beginning with A - J (In School)	Live Access to Teachers * Small Groups * Interventions * Re-engagement lessons * Enrichment Teacher Office Hours Teacher and/or Grade-Level/Content Planning	Students with Last Names beginning with K - Z (In School)	Students with Last Names beginning with K - Z (In School)
Students with Last Names beginning with K - Z (In Distance Learning)	Students with Last Names beginning with K - Z (In Distance Learning)		Students with Last Names beginning with A - J (In Distance Learning)	Students with Last Names beginning with A - J (In Distance Learning)

Please note, interventions and related services may also be provided Monday-Friday based on established schedules.

Please note: All hybrid students will attend school on a two-day face-to-face instruction and three-day distance learning sessions weekly (*students will still follow their regular school schedule if attending in person or remaining on distance learning*). The two-day rotation hybrid model allows for a 50% split by last names*:

- A-J
- K-Z

*Consideration for same-day attendance will be given to parents/guardians who have children in the same household with different last names outside of the A-J and K-Z breakdown.

Students are only to report to school on their designated days (Monday and Tuesdays OR Thursdays and Fridays). Any student that attends on their non-designated day parents/guardians will be required to pick up their child.



ATTENDANCE

Attendance for Students During Face-to-Face Hybrid

For face-to-face hybrid model of instruction, teachers will take daily/period attendance of face-to-face learners in SchoolMax on days students are scheduled to physically attend school.

For days students are scheduled for distance learning, instruction will be achieved through live instruction via camera in the classroom. Teachers will take daily/period attendance of distance learners in SchoolMax by taking roll to assess each student's attendance or using the Zoom report to validate the student's attendance. For additional information on PGCPs' attendance procedures, please see [Administrative Procedure AP 5113](#).



DRESS CODE AND UNIFORM EXPECTATIONS

During the hybrid model of instruction, students **are not** expected to wear a school uniform. Students must adhere to the system-wide dress code which requires students to dress appropriately. Further details can be found in the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

FOOD SERVICES

Outside Lunch (if possible)

Principals will assess their building and develop procedures based on space availability where possible. When weather permits and space is evaluated for safety, students may be able to eat meals outside.

Meal Service

Meal Service for Hybrid Model

The goal is to ensure that all students participating in in-person learning receive school meals in a safe and comfortable environment. All food items will be prepackaged in single-serve units. Meals will be served and eaten in the classroom, cafeterias, or other areas designated by the school administration. Staff will receive support to ensure that everyone is following CDC guidelines during mealtime.

Students participating in hybrid learning will be offered breakfast, lunch, and supper at no cost to the students. Take-home meals will be available and offered to students for the days they are not on campus.

Breakfast

Students will pick up a pre-packaged breakfast as they enter the building and consume the meal in the classroom or areas designated by school administration. Students should not share food items. All leftover items must be discarded.

Lunch

Food services will coordinate with individual school administration on the method of distribution, location in the building and meal service times. Food service will utilize a variety of different delivery options. Prepackaged meals will be delivered to classrooms by food service staff, if possible. Mobile carts will be available for individual students to pick up meals and return to the classroom or designated areas to eat. The serving line will be used for distribution as needed and if requested by the individual school administration.

End of the School Day

Students will be offered a take-home supper meal at the end of the school day.



TRANSPORTATION

Bus Configuration

Maximum number of students per bus will be one student per seat near the window on each row with **mandatory** masks which will result in approximately 21 students per run. The seat behind the driver will remain empty during every trip unless they are in the same household as the driver. To ensure physical distancing, the seat immediately behind the driver will always be left vacant to distance the driver from the students. That seat will be marked or blocked. Visual reminders will be posted for students regarding social distancing. To increase/improve airflow whenever possible, windows may be open to the maximum extent possible when weather permits. Roof hatches and three windows on each side of the bus will be partially opened to increase airflow. Driver side window may be open, and fans should be utilized to increase the airflow.

Safety Measures for Students on the Bus:

The seat immediately behind the driver will always be left vacant to distance the driver from the students. That seat will be marked off to indicate it should not be used by students in order to maintain social distancing. There will be 21 students MAX on a bus. Face coverings will be required for all students while riding the school bus. Students may have medical exemptions from wearing a face-covering on the school bus. Face coverings and proper physical distancing are recommended while waiting at the bus stop. While waiting to exit the bus, students will remain seated and will not congregate in the aisle. Adhere to all directives provided by the driver and will follow all Transportation Bus Rules. **If a student refuses to wear a mask and does not have a medical note requiring exemption or documentation in the specialized transportation section of the IEP, the student will no longer be allowed to ride the bus to and from school.**

Arrival to and Departure from Schools for Implementation During Hybrid Model

Each School-based team will determine procedures for arrival and drop-off locations and/or times. Protocols will be in place to adhere to social distancing when parents or caregivers are dropping off students. Parents will be asked to wait until after dismissal to pick up students or park off the property to meet their students.

Special Education Transportation

The Transportation Department anticipates that there may be circumstances in which a student may not wear his or her face mask or face shield. In this case, staff members working directly with those students will wear face masks, face shields, and gowns if necessary. On routes that service Non-Public Schools, Special Centers, and Early Childhood Centers, bus capacity may be reduced for further social distancing for special needs students.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Social and Emotional Supports and Resources for Students, Staff, and Parents

After prolonged closure due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, students, staff, and parents/guardians will require support to assist them in transitioning back to school. The Department of Student Service identified and compiled supports focused on social-emotional learning both in-person and through distance learning for students, staff, and parents. The following link provides mental health supports and resources for students, staff, and parents.

[PGCPS on Mental Health Supports](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the personnel in the following divisions, departments, and offices who contributed to the development of this guide for the reopening of schools:

Office of Communications and Community Engagement

Division of Academics

- Department of Curriculum and Instruction
- Department of Special Education

Division of School Support and School Leadership

- Area Offices
- Department of Student Services

Division of Supporting Services

- Department of Building Services
- Department of Food & Nutrition Services
- Department of Transportation

Division of Information Technology

- Department of Instructional Technology & Support

Labor Partner Leaders

- ACE-AFSCME
- ASASP
- PGCEA
- SEIU

A special thank you to Dr. Kasandra Lassiter, Associate Superintendent for Elementary Schools, Mr. Sam Stefanelli, Director of Building Services, and Ms. Karen Bates, Supervisor of Office of School Health.

For questions pertaining to this Reopening Guide, please contact Dr. Kara Libby, Strategic Initiatives Officer, at klibby@pgcps.org.



Education