

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – version date August 23, 2020

Note – this includes questions from the FAQ in the Comprehensive Plan dated August 17, 2020 but this is a living document so it includes additional questions which are added as they arise. As such, please check the FAQ version date as it changes.

Learning Models

Q: What learning model is PVCICS preparing for fall 2020?

A: We are offering an all remote only model for reopening in fall 2020. This is due to the regional nature of our school and having students from many communities. We are basing this decision on health data and guidance on health metrics received from DESE on August 11, 2020. We are prepared to offer three models (all in person, hybrid (in person and remote) and all remote models) however for fall 2020, the all remote model has been selected.

Q: Regardless of the learning model offered, can siblings on the same schedule? Will carpooling students be on the same schedule.

A: If there were a hybrid model that had an alternating week schedule, yes, we would plan on keeping siblings on the same schedule (unless the parent requests otherwise). We would also try to keep carpools together although if that proved too difficult, we'd let parents/guardians know..

Q: If the learning model offered was a hybrid model, will parents be allowed to opt into an all remote learning model?

A: Yes, parents would be given an opt into all remote learning from a hybrid model.

Q: If the learning model offered was a hybrid model, can parents start their child in hybrid, then switch to an all remote model (and vice versa)? And if so, when would the switch occur?

A: If the school were offering a hybrid model and the student had started in the opt in all remote model, then we would take the request to switch to the hybrid model and see if there was an available seat in the in person class,. If so, we'd do the switch on a quarterly boundary (mid semester or end of semester). We can't just add a student to the in person class since we need to first see if there is enough space to add a student while maintaining physical distancing. If the student had started in the hybrid model and later wanted to opt into an all remote model, that could occur shortly after the request to switch was approved on a rolling basis.

Educational Program

Q: What will the daily schedules be?

A: The daily schedules in all learning models will be similar to an in person daily schedule with classes every school day. For any in person portion of the hybrid or all in person learning models, the in person portion would have additional breaks for handwashing, mask breaks and outdoor fresh air time. For any remote portion of the hybrid or all remote models, there will be synchronous online sessions with the teacher and asynchronous work that is self-paced. All models will use Google Classroom for assignments. *Note: the sample schedules in the Comprehensive Re-opening Plan dated August 17, 2020 are subject to change.*

Q: Will student attendance be taken?

A: Yes, we are required to take attendance in all learning models.

Q: Will grades be given?

A: Yes, we are required to issue regular grades in all learning models. In K-5, regular grades are standards-based grades. In middle and high school, regular grades are letter grades for core subjects (English, Chinese, Math, Science, Social Studies/History) and pass/fail for specials (art, music, PE) and high school electives.

Q: Will the regular curriculum be used this year?

A: Yes, we will be following our regular curriculum regardless of the model used. We will not be using an “abbreviated” set of curriculum standards as allowed by DESE in the spring 2020 closure.

Q: Will MCAS be given this school year?

A: Yes, MCAS is planned as in a normal year in grades 3-10. If DESE changes this, we will notify parents/guardians. DESE has said there will be an extra test administration date in the winter for the 11th graders to take their mandatory “10th grade MCAS” in ELA and Math that they missed in spring 2020 due to the statewide closure.

Q: Will high school students in 11th and 12th grades still get the IB courses they selected?

A: Yes.

Q: Will 12th graders be given the IB Exams this spring 2021?

A: Yes, IB Exams are planned as in a normal year. If the IBO changes this, we will notify 12th grade parents and students.

Meals

Q: If students are in school, how far apart do students need to be when eating meals?

A: Students must be six feet apart in any eating space, as it is assumed that masks/face coverings will not be worn during meals.

Q: If students are in school, how will elementary school snack work?

A: In K=5, there is a mid-morning snack period. Snacks from home are allowed. Students will eat them at the scheduled time in their classroom and be at least 6 feet apart.

Q: If students are in school, how will lunch work?

A: Since students had been eating in classrooms prior to covid-19, lunch routines will feel similar to students. Our school lunch was always a sealed school lunches (no cafeteria buffet style meals) so when you order a school lunch it'll be delivered to the classroom where the student is eating. If a student brings a lunch from home, they will eat in their lunch classroom as usual. All students must be least 6 feet apart. They must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet since they need to remove their mask to eat.

Transportation

Q: If students are in school, will the buses run?

A: Yes, if students are in school, our regular buses will be running. Normal bus registration procedures will apply and that information would be sent to parents in advance.

Q: What health precautions will apply to the buses?

A: Our bus company and our school will comply with any covid health precautions related to busing. We would provide bus rosters, assign seats and make sure only the correct number of students was assigned to each bus. Covid precautions include reducing the number of students on a bus.

Q: How does my high school student driver get a parking spot at school?

A: There is a HS driver parking request form that we're revising to meet the hybrid model. Last year it was for 180 in school days. We charged \$1/day for a total of \$180 and we're changing it to half time in

school \$90/year. Because parking is limited, preference is for seniors, then juniors. The request form will be ready later this month before school starts. It does require insurance information too.

--- *Note: the following questions are excerpt from the FAQ in the Comprehensive Re-opening Plan, dated August 17, 2020*

Will my child have to wear a face mask to school?

All students K-12 will be required to wear a face mask in the school building. Students should wear a mask from home. Face coverings are key to reducing the spread of COVID-19, and are effective, especially when used in combination with physical distancing and proper hand washing. Some people are infected with COVID-19 and don't have symptoms (asymptomatic); face coverings help reduce the spread by containing the infected person's respiratory droplets from traveling to other people.

More about masks:

- [Tips for Creating and Washing Masks](#)
- While at home practice with your child wearing a mask for longer periods of time before returning to school.
- Put your child's name on their mask.
- Pack an extra mask that you child can use during school if their mask needs to be changed. We will have extra masks but your child may feel more comfortable wearing a mask from home.
- Pack a brown paper bag with your child's name on it in order to put mask in while eating.
- Bandanas and gaiter face coverings are not allowed because they do not seal the face and tend to be touched and adjusted more frequently by the user.
- Extra masks will be available at school.

Can my child wear a face shield instead of a face mask?

Face shields alone do not provide the same level of protection, so a face mask must be worn in addition to the face shield. If you send your child in with only a face shield, the school will provide a face mask for that day for your child to wear.

Can my child wear a N95 mask?

N95 or other masks with a front valve/vent will not be allowed. These types of masks pass droplets/potential contaminants into the air.

What if my child's mask breaks or gets soiled?

Extra masks will be available in case a replacement is needed

What if my child is unable to wear a face mask?

Parents/guardians should work with their child to practice wearing a mask at home so they are comfortable wearing a mask at school. Here are some **strategies for assisting students with wearing a mask:** [Seven Ways to Introduce Your Child to Wearing a Mask](#) / [Wearing a Mask to School](#) (Social Story)

Any student not able to wear a mask will need a note from their physician. Please provide the school nurse with the doctor's note prior to entry into the building. If there are questions, please consult with the school nurse for additional information and guidance.

Will there be mask breaks during the school day?

All students will be provided mask breaks throughout the school day. Students will need to be 6 feet

apart and preferably outside while this takes place.

What will the protocol be for washing hands throughout the school day?

Students and staff will be required to wash hands:

- when they enter the building
- when they change class
- before and after eating
- after using the restroom
- after recess
- at the end of the day
- anytime they remove or put on a face mask

Students will be encouraged to use soap and water when possible. Hand sanitizer stations are being installed in every classroom as well as strategic locations in each building. *If you do not want your child to use hand sanitizer, please notify your school nurse.*

Should my child get the flu vaccine this year?

Due to the similarity of symptoms between COVID-19 and the flu, PVCICS recommends getting a flu vaccine this year. Please see consult with you physician for this. **NOTE: as of August 19, 2020 a flu vaccine is now required, see <https://www.mass.gov/news/flu-vaccine-now-required-for-all-massachusetts-school-students-enrolled-in-child-care-pre>**

How will bathrooms be handled at school?

Students using the bathrooms will need to maintain physical distancing. Alternate stalls and sinks will be blocked off to help the students keep a safe distance from each other. Bathrooms will be cleaned periodically throughout the school day

What if my child gets ill on the bus?

PVCICS and its bus company, Five Star, will follow DESE's July 22, 2020 Transportation Guidance. A summary of the procedure is:

- Bus driver will call dispatch and dispatch will notify the school nurse.
- School nurse will meet the bus, the ill student will exit the bus first and accompany the school nurse for assessment.
- Bus will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Student will be evaluated by the school nurse.

IF NO SYMPTOMS: If the evaluation shows that the student does not have symptoms, the student will be sent to class.

IF ANY SYMPTOMS: The student will be placed in the medical waiting room. You will be notified that your child must be dismissed from school **immediately**.

The student must wear a mask at all times.

WHEN YOU PICK UP YOUR CHILD

Parent/guardian will be given the following information:

- Call your pediatrician.
- Massachusetts DPH guidelines require that all symptomatic individuals, even with mild symptoms, should be tested.
- Your child should get tested at one of the Massachusetts's test sites: [COVID-19 Test Site Locator](#)

- The student should isolate at home until test results are received.
- An individual who does not wish to be tested must self-quarantine at home for 14 days and until asymptomatic.

TEST RESULTS

IF NEGATIVE: The student stays home until asymptomatic for 24 hours.

IF POSITIVE: The student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify close personal contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts and work with the local Board of Health. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self quarantine for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement of symptoms.

What if my child gets sick in school?

The teacher will call the school nurse for direction if a student presents ill in the classroom. *The student must keep a mask on.* School nurse will evaluate the student for symptoms.

IF ANY SYMPTOMS: The student will be placed in the medical waiting room. Parent/guardian will be notified that their child must be dismissed from school **immediately**. *The student must wear a mask at all times.*

WHEN YOU PICK UP YOUR CHILD

Parent/guardian will be given the following information:

- Call your pediatrician.
- Massachusetts DPH guidelines require that all symptomatic individuals, even with mild symptoms, should be tested.
- Your child should get tested at one of the Massachusetts's test sites: [COVID-19 Test Site Locator](#)
- The student should isolate at home until test results are received.
- An individual who does not wish to be tested must self-quarantine at home for 14 days and until asymptomatic.

TEST RESULTS

IF NEGATIVE: The student stays home until asymptomatic for 24 hours.

IF POSITIVE: The student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify close personal contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts and work with the local Board of Health. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self quarantine for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement of symptoms.

What if my child was a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Current Massachusetts DPH guidelines indicate that all close contacts of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 should be tested. The student who was in close contact with a positive individual should be tested at one of Massachusetts's test sites: [COVID-19 Test Site Locator](#)

- Anyone not wanting to be tested **must** quarantine for 14 days and until asymptomatic.
- Close contacts should isolate at home prior to testing and while awaiting test results.
- In order to return to school, close contacts need to have one negative test result and not be showing any COVID-19 symptoms, or if they do not wish to be tested, quarantine at home for 14 days. Because tests performed too early can be falsely negative, ideally the test should be performed

no sooner than 4 or 5 days after contact with the person who tested positive.

IF POSITIVE TEST:

The student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify close personal contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts and work with the local Board of Health. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement of symptoms.

What if my child has any of the COVID-19 symptoms?

Do not send your child to school.

- Call the school and report your child’s absence and indicate symptoms.
- Call your pediatrician.
- Massachusetts DPH guidelines require that all symptomatic individuals, even with mild symptoms, should be tested.
- The student should get tested at one of the Massachusetts’s test site:
- [COVID-19 Test Site Locator](#)
- Student should isolate at home until test results are received.
- An individual who does not wish to be tested should instead isolate for 14 days and until asymptomatic.

TEST RESULTS

IF NEGATIVE: The student stays home until asymptomatic for 24 hours.

IF POSITIVE: The student should remain at home (except to get medical care), monitor their symptoms, notify the school, notify close personal contacts, assist the school in contact tracing efforts and work with the local Board of Health. Most people who have relatively mild illness will need to stay in self isolation for at least 10 days and until at least 3 days have passed with no fever and improvement of symptoms.

How will I know if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child’s classroom/school?

The school nurses will be working in conjunction with the local Board of Health in order to monitor illness, potential COVID-19 cases as well as any positive cases. Recognizing the importance of protecting confidentiality *and* following the MDPH guidelines for close contact management, parents/guardians will be notified if their child is considered a close contact.

How will you identify which children have been exposed?

The local Board of Health Public Health and/or school nurses will work with the individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 to identify their close contacts, and will do contact tracing and notify the families of those children who were exposed.

If my child is diagnosed with COVID-19, will his/her/their privacy be maintained?

Your child’s name will not be revealed if diagnosed with COVID-19. Close contacts will be notified and told that they have been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, and will be provided with information about quarantine and given further instructions. *No personal identification will be given to others.*

If my child becomes sick at school, why do I have to pick him/her/them up as soon as possible?

If a student is assessed and found to have symptoms that are suspicious of COVID-19, it is very important to have that student picked up as soon as possible so that other students and staff aren’t exposed, and potential spread can be contained. In addition, ill students will be monitored in a designated Medical Waiting Room, and that room will need to be cleaned thoroughly and made available for other students.

Why is it important for me to call my child's school nurse when they are home sick?

Communication with the school nurse about illness is very important so that nurses can track illnesses in the school and community, maximize the health and safety of all students and staff, and provide updated information.

Please note that these guidelines are subject to change according to updated data that we receive from CDC, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the local Board of Health.

--- end of excerpt from the Comprehensive Reopening Plan, August 17, 2020

*****End of FAQ*****