



**Date:** August 18, 2022

**To:** PPS School Board

**From:** Jonathan Garcia, Chief of Staff  
Dr. Jon Franco, Chief of Schools

**Subject:** **Stay Home When Sick: Healthy measures to limit the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19 and the flu in PPS schools**

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As we get ready to welcome students and staff to a new school year, we are committed to creating a culture of care and expressing a shared responsibility for one another. Our expectation is that school will remain open for full-time, in-person learning, every school day this year. We will remain flexible and agile based on evolving public health conditions and expect to manage communicable diseases in sustainable and adaptive ways.

From the beginning of this global pandemic, we've been guided by advice from public health experts, made adjustments based on new data and updated science, and applied what we've learned to guide our response to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases (i.e. hMPXV, or "monkeypox"). As a result, we are in a better place today as a community with more ways to protect ourselves and each other from COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, including vaccinations, boosters, access to testing, availability of high-quality masks and improved ventilation. **Therefore, this school year, at all COVID-19 Community Levels, PPS plans to use layered health and safety measures and strategies that also promote public health recommendations for individuals and households (see below for details).**

We expect to follow all local and state rules for health services and communicable disease control, and implement best practices to mitigate the impact on school communities.

We thank our communities in advance for doing their part to keep themselves and others healthy. As communicable diseases continue to impact communities nationwide, here at PPS, it will take all of us—students, families and staff—to foster a culture of care for one another.



## Managing Communicable Diseases

As we welcome students and staff into our buildings, we want to be cognizant of public health guidance and national expert perspectives. We will maintain our close relationship with Multnomah County Public Health and meet with our Health Advisory Panel regularly to stay abreast of any and all communicable diseases in our community and how they impact our students, staff, and families. At this time we have been informed that hMPXV (“monkeypox”) is a low risk for most of our students and that schools should be prepared for higher rates of flu than in the last couple of years.

### “Schools will be low-risk settings” - Monkeypox

You may have heard about hMPXV (“monkeypox”) and may have concerns about how it may impact our school communities. As of today, we do not have cases among children and there have been only a small number of cases in children across the country. Of course, we understand parents may be concerned, especially with our collective heightened attention and emotional reaction to communicable and infectious diseases.

According to Multnomah County Public Health (MCPH), “we believe schools will be low-risk settings for transmission.” Please read the latest information from MCPH [here](#). We will continue to monitor and share the latest updates on this and other public health issues, as and if they arise.

## Mitigation Efforts Against COVID-19

We are in a better place today as a community with more ways to protect ourselves and each other from COVID-19, including vaccinations, boosters, access to testing, availability of high-quality masks and improved ventilation. **Therefore, this school year, at all COVID-19 Community Levels, PPS plans to use layered health and safety measures and strategies that also promote public health recommendations for individuals and households:**

### COVID-19 Vaccination

PPS will require all staff and volunteers to be vaccinated against COVID-19, per [ORS 333-019-1030](#).

PPS will promote and amplify via its communication channels community-based opportunities to access vaccinations, including boosters.

PPS will also offer three centrally located COVID-19 vaccination/booster clinics for students and PPS staff:

- Back to School Clinic (August 29 2022, 10:00AM to 4:00PM, 501 N Dixon Street);
- Winter Clinic (November/December 2022);
- Spring Clinic (March 2023).



The Multnomah County School-Based Health Centers will also offer regular access to COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters for students.

### Face Coverings

Across all PPS schools and buildings and across COVID-19 community levels, students, staff, volunteers, and visitors may choose to wear masks based on their individual risk assessment (e.g., increased risk for severe disease or family or community members at increased risk for severe disease). Masking will be normalized and welcomed within every school community at PPS. Masking will be strongly encouraged, but not required, during high community transmission. Due to the nature of COVID-19, PPS guidelines are subject to change based on public health directives.

Masks will be required in school health rooms, isolation spaces, offices where mental health counseling services are delivered, school-based health centers, and other areas where healthcare is routinely delivered, per [OAR 333-019-1011](#).

Each school will have readily available standard non-surgical/medical masks, child masks and adult KN95 masks for individuals who want or need a mask.

### Communicable Disease Control

#### *Symptom Screening*

**All individuals should stay home if they are sick.** Students with symptoms requiring exclusion will be separated into the dedicated symptom/isolation space until they are released to go home. Building Administrators will continue to follow the [Communicable Disease Guidance](#) for symptom-based exclusion.

PPS will share the [Self-Screening Checklist](#) in our 6 supported languages with the PPS community. This tool is a resource for staff and students to use before entering district property or using district transportation. Individuals are expected to promptly report to their supervisor or school if they develop excludable symptoms or test positive for COVID-19.

#### *COVID-19 Isolation*

Consistent with public health and state law, students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate at home for 5 days and may return after symptoms are improving and they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. It is the expectation that individuals wear a well-fitting mask around others for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of the 5-day isolation period. As part of our communication and education plan, we expect school communities to establish a culture of care where this expectation is supported by all in the school community.



All school buildings that provide in-person instruction will maintain a separate isolation space for unwell individuals, apart from those receiving well-care and others, per [OAR 581-022-2220](#).

### *Communication about Communicable Disease*

PPS central office and individual schools will communicate recommendations and resources to families regularly, based on CDC and local public health recommendations. Families are encouraged to utilize the PPS Communicable Disease Dashboard (formerly COVID-19 Dashboard) to observe reported communicable disease in PPS buildings. This resource will be available in its updated format at the start of school. In the event that student absence due to illness reaches outbreak levels (as defined by Multnomah County Health Department), schools will share additional information, including public health directives, with their communities. PPS central office will prepare communication templates in all supported languages for individual schools to leverage as needed.

### COVID-19 Testing

PPS, in collaboration with OHA, will continue to offer free COVID-19 testing options for staff and students. Consent is required to participate in any of the following optional programs:

- Diagnostic Testing for staff and students who develop symptoms or were exposed onsite.
- Screening Tests through OHSU for students
- Mail-in Staff Screening Test through WVT Laboratory for K-12 staff.

### Airflow and Circulation

PPS understands that airflow and circulation are critical components that support everyday health in our buildings and will communicate clearly with families and staff [our efforts to improve air quality in schools](#), including spending more than \$5.8 million to improve ventilation. PPS meets all standards for air quality.

PPS facilities staff perform regular inspections of all HVAC systems in accordance with ASHRAE Standard 180-2018 “Standard Practice for the Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial HVAC Systems” and use a PPS standardized field form to document them. All mechanical system filters are a minimum of Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values (MERV) 13 and are replaced twice annually.

PPS will continue to utilize non-mechanical methods such as opening doors and windows where reasonable to increase air circulation. Staff is trained to avoid propping open doors that can pose a safety or security risk to students and staff (e.g., exterior doors and fire doors that must remain closed). Symptom spaces, classrooms/instruction spaces, and other selected rooms also have portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) room ventilators. These HEPA filters provide ultrafine-particle filtration.



### Physical Distance

In accordance with state guidance, physical distancing will be encouraged and promoted in school communities.

### Handwashing

Handwashing is a key component of basic hygiene, and it is the expectation that all students and staff use this sanitation method to prevent the spread of disease. All PPS buildings are supplied with instructional handwashing posters in supported languages. Building Administrators periodically communicate proper hand hygiene to students and staff.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

PPS will continue its protocols for regular cleaning and disinfecting of schools and vehicles. Sanitation practices outlined in SOPs have been integrated into standard practice.

### Training and Public Health Education

#### *Communications*

Portland Public Schools operates in partnership with MESD to ensure students, staff and families have access to critical public health guidance. PPS will schedule and provide regular communication about updated public health guidance and enhanced communicable disease mitigation efforts, if necessary, to students, families, and staff through a variety of channels, including email, website, social media and news media.

If and when information is time-sensitive or urgent, PPS will also use text messages and robocalls to reach the community.

PPS's materials and messages will be made available to the community in all district-supported languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Somali).

A year-long communications plan will be developed.

#### *Training*

There are resources and training available as well to support public health in our schools, including a [Health & Safety training for all employees](#) to view at the beginning of the school year and on-demand. Resources are curated for students, families/parents, school-based staff, administrators and specialized teams (ie. secretaries, custodians).

#### *Education*

The Office of Student Support Services (MTSS) will develop and share with educators [age-appropriate lessons on COVID-19 health and safety](#).