

Wellness Protocols

Q: What steps is the district taking to mitigate the effects of COVID-19?

A: The district continues to practice layered mitigation strategies recommended by our medical advisory group including:

- social distancing to the greatest extent possible
- upgraded ventilation/air filtering
- enhanced facility cleaning and sanitation practices
- masks and hand sanitizer available and encouraged in all schools
- reminders regarding handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- a full-time nurse in every school
- a separate clinic space for anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
- water fountains will remain closed
- regular reminders to stay home if not feeling well
- maintenance of the district's COVID Team to support the Department of Health's contact tracing and quarantine efforts

Q: Will masks be required in schools?

A: Per a recent state order, masks/face coverings will be strongly recommended but not required for staff and students. Masks will be available in all schools and district facilities for anyone in need.

Q: Will teachers or other staff monitor or enforce the use of masks?

A: School district personnel will not monitor nor enforce the use of face coverings for staff or students; however, face coverings will continue to be available at school sites for students, staff and visitors.

Q: Will students with symptoms be allowed on campus?

A: Students displaying symptoms of COVID-19 while at school will be screened by the school nurse and sent home until they can provide written clearance from a healthcare provider or a negative COVID-19 test. We urge all students and staff to stay home if not feeling well. Families and staff will receive regular communication reminding them to remain home or keep their student home if not well.

Q: What happens if my student has to quarantine due to illness or exposure to a positive case?

A: Students who are absent (for COVID, quarantine, or any other illness) will be given the opportunity to make up their work. Teachers are encouraged to post all lessons on Canvas, so that students can have access to lessons during their absence. Teachers will provide assignments and resources as needed.

Q: What happens if my student's teacher must quarantine due to illness or exposure to a positive case?

A: A qualified substitute teacher will be provided for all teacher absences, regardless of cause.

Q: Who decides which students and staff members have to quarantine and for how long?

A: The Department of Health-Pinellas (DOH-Pinellas) makes all quarantine decisions. Quarantine decisions for fully-vaccinated people will be in accordance with the current government-issued guidance regarding public health.

Q: How will I know if there is a positive case at my school?

A: If your student was exposed to a confirmed positive case, you will be directly contacted by the school and/or the Department of Health-Pinellas. For all others, confirmed positive cases will be posted regularly on the district's [COVID-19 Dashboard](#).

Q: Will the COVID-19 vaccine be mandatory for eligible students?

A: Immunization requirements for school attendance are mandated by the state legislature and not individual school districts. At this time, a COVID-19 vaccine is not required as students under the age of 12 are not currently eligible for vaccination.

Instruction

Q: Do all students have to return to in-person learning this year?

A: Generally speaking, all 2021-22 school year programming will be delivered via in-person instruction for all students. While studies and experience show that in-person learning is best for students, we understand that there are some students and families who need virtual learning due to medical conditions or concerns. For those instances, we offer a full and robust [Pinellas Virtual School](#) including [PVS Live! K-5](#), a new model of instruction for elementary school students.

Q: If I sign my student up for Pinellas Virtual School (PVS), will they lose their seat in their District Application Program or zoned school?

A: *For students who are not able to be vaccinated (under 12):* your student will not lose their seat. Some families may want to have their child attend [PVS Live! K-5](#) or traditional [PVS](#) in grade 6 until an opportunity exists for their child to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Once vaccinations are readily available, Pinellas County Schools will no longer hold seats for students in District Application Programs. If you choose this option, [after applying](#), please notify the District Application Program Coordinator at your school.

For students who are eligible for vaccination (12 and over) – yes, by signing up for Pinellas Virtual School, your student's seat in a District Application Program will not be saved.

Students 12 and over who cannot be vaccinated due to a documented medical condition should contact their District Application Program Coordinator to discuss individual accommodations.

Q: Why isn't MyPCS Online being offered this year?

A: The Florida Department of Education issued an emergency order in July 2020 that allowed school districts to provide an "innovative learning option" for students and provided full funding for the year. MyPCS Online was the Pinellas County Schools option. That order is no longer in effect, so districts will no longer receive funding for this option.

Technology

Q: Will students still receive laptops this year, even if learning in-person?

A: Yes, devices will be available. The district will expand its PCS Connects initiative, providing one-to-one student devices to all students in grades 3 to 10. Schools and teachers will leverage the PCS Connects Initiative, Level Up activities and digital platforms to extend learning both within classrooms and beyond the school day.

Q: Will teachers continue to use some of the online applications and platforms introduced last year?

A: Yes, the district, schools and teachers will continue the use of digital learning applications and platforms within classrooms including, but not limited to, the use of: Canvas, Nearpod, IXL, iStation, Dreambox, and similar digital platforms.

Visitors, Volunteers and Extracurricular Activities

Q: Will visitors and volunteers be allowed on campus?

A: Visitors and volunteers will be allowed on campus, approved on a case-by-case basis, and will need to follow all district wellness practices and approval processes (e.g. check-in procedures, Level II clearance, etc.).

Q: Will extracurricular activities and field trips take place this year?

A: At this time, extracurricular, performing arts and athletic activities for the 2021-22 school year will resume to regular operations to support student engagement and will follow district and/or organization (e.g. Florida High School Athletic Association- FHSAA) guidelines, review, permission and wellness protocols. Activities and/or field trips will resume and follow the regular district review, permission and wellness protocols. Any field trip to a non-district location must follow the wellness practices of both the district and the field trip location.