

## Pillar Schools Updated COVID-19 Related Policies, 2021-2022

1. **General Health and Safety Guidelines:** In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, schools must comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local guidelines.
  - a) The Pillar Elementary School is committed to:
    - i. Promoting healthy hygiene practices.
    - ii. Teaching and reinforcing washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
    - iii. Teaching and reinforcing use of approved face coverings among all staff. Particularly when social distancing is not possible. Staff will be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information will be provided to all staff on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
    - iv. Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), and tissues.
    - v. Performing ongoing monitoring of students, staff and visitors including:
      1. Students, staff and visitors will be required to monitor temperature upon arrival and complete daily screenings to ensure any symptomatic individuals do not enter.
      2. Encouraging staff and visitors to stay home if they are sick and encourage parents to keep sick children home.
    - vi. Providing staff with training related to General Health and Safety:
      1. American Red Cross: Returning to Work
        - a. Infection Control
        - b. Blood Borne Pathogens
        - c. Hand Washing
        - d. PPE
        - e. COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms
      2. CPR/First Aid/AED
    - vii. Physical Intervention and Restraint Protocols
      1. Limiting Risk of Infection Prior To a Physical Restraint
        - a. Whenever possible, staff should put on PPE prior to a physical restraint-disposable masks, face shields, and long sleeves should be used as appropriate to reduce direct contact.
        - b. Only staff required for safely restraining a student should be involved; one additional staff member should monitor and address protective equipment needs for those staff who are involved in the restraint if protective equipment needs to be altered or adjusted.
      2. Limiting Risk of Infection During a Physical Restraint
        - a. Keep hands clear of eyes, mouth, and nose of self and others.

- b. Initial staff members involved should be relieved as soon as possible if not wearing appropriate protective equipment.
  - c. Staff should implement established protocols for relieving colleagues involved in restraints.
3. Limiting Risk of Infection After a Physical Restraint
- a. Remove and dispose of and/or clean protective equipment immediately in the manner that you were trained.
  - b. Avoid touching your face and limit contact with hard surfaces before immediately washing hands.
  - c. To minimize exposure, it is recommended that staff have a change of clothes available in cases where their clothes become contaminated.
  - d. Once all health and safety issues have been addressed, follow debriefing and reporting procedures for the restraint.

**2. Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms**

- a) Pillar Elementary School will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable.
- b) In the event we are unable to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be considered. These include using physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other).
- c) Ensuring social distancing throughout campus
  - i. Pillar School will hold any mixed cohort group events outdoors.
- d) Visitor Policy
  - i. All visitors are welcome into the building after clearing a COVID screening procedure.
  - ii. All visitors are required to wear a face covering composed of two or more layers and in accordance with CDC guidelines. Masks with exhalation valves will not be permitted. Exceptions can be made for those who cannot wear a mask, or cannot safely wear a mask, because of a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - iii. Families, nonessential visitors, volunteers, and district representatives who present a valid vaccination card demonstrating full vaccination may be in a setting where students are congregated (i.e., classrooms, clinics, special events)
  - iv. Unvaccinated visitors may meet with students on an individual basis in a non-congregate setting. When visiting multiple students on the same day, administrators will provide guidance to minimize contact within multiple cohorts.
- e) Limit sharing
  - i. Discourage sharing of items, especially those that are difficult to clean or disinfect. If items are shared, limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
  - ii. Prevent risk of transmitting COVID-19 by avoiding immediate contact (such as shaking or holding hands, hugging, or kissing), as well as by mediated contact.

- f) Pillar School will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance and exit of every room and communal space and will adopt a “clean-in/ clean-out” policy where staff and students should clean their hand prior to entering and after exiting each room.
- g) Pillar School will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol):
  - i. At entrances and exits of buildings.
  - ii. Near lunchrooms and toilets.
  - iii. Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer. For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations will be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
  - iv. Staff will assist students to wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals:
    - 1. including before eating
    - 2. after using the bathroom
    - 3. after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
    - 4. Staff will assist students to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.
- h) Heightened monitoring and frequent handwashing which will often require hand-over-hand assistance.
- i) Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors.
- j) Windows and doors will not remain open if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to children using the facility.
- k) Each room will be equipped with a Honeywell HPA300 True HEPA Air Purifier. The air purifier helps capture up to 99.97% of airborne particles as small as 0.3 microns.
- l) Classes will remain together to include the same group of children each day (cohorts) to the greatest extent possible
- m) Minimal mixing between groups/cohorts will be permitted.
  - i. Students and Staff within the same cohort may occupy bathroom spaces; best attempts should be made to refrain from congregating, and to maintain social distancing.
  - ii. When students and staff are not within the same cohort, bathroom spaces will only be permitted to accommodate two students and the necessary staff to safely support the student in the bathroom setting
  - iii. Therapy spaces will limit the number of students so that social distancing can be maintained.
  - iv. The Pool area will be limited to students and staff within the same cohort. There should be a maximum of 8 people in the pool area at one time (3, students, 3 support staff, two on deck if personal nurse is needed).
- n) Classes will remain together to include the same group of children each day (cohorts) to the greatest extent possible.

### 3. Transportation

- a) Pillar Elementary School will reinstate field trips and community outings under the guidance of the DOH and DOE. Students will only be transported by Pillar Elementary School with other students within the same cohort. All staff members will be required to wear an approved facial covering on the bus.
- b) We encourage parents and families to contact their districts to determine what the district policies are in regard to transportation to and from school.
- c) Students may be transported to and from school by parents.

### 4. Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas

- a) Student Flow
  - i. Upon arrival, buses will be triaged to two designated entrances by Pillar School traffic control team to reduce bottlenecking of students at points of entry. Pillar School traffic control team will then alert a classroom staff member to retrieve students from the screening area once they are cleared and bring the student directly to the classroom.
  - ii. At dismissal time, students will remain in their classrooms until the classroom staff is alerted that their transportation has arrived, and the student will depart through the designated exit.
  - iii. The elevator will be limited to individuals within the same classroom.

### 5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms

#### Screening and Admittance

- a) Pillar Schools will follow all current guidance related to screening and admittance as provided by:
  - i) [NJDOH related to COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools](#)
  - ii) [New Jersey Department COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Operating Child Care Centers](#)
  - iii) [NJDOE](#)
  - iv) Executive Orders
    - (1) [251](#)
    - (2) [253](#)
- b) A designated staff member will meet students/staff at a designated space outside of the building to take temperatures, and screen for symptoms as referenced above.
- c) Once screened, students will be met at the screening station by a designated Pillar staff member (paraprofessional) who will take the student to their classroom.
- d) Personal nurses will be allowed in following staff screening protocols.

#### PPE

- a) Face masks will be available for those who are not able to provide their own.
- b) Students unable to wear a face covering must provide medical documentation or have a related medical condition documented in the IEP.

#### Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms

- c) Pillar School will plan for when a staff member, child, or visitor on-site becomes sick.
  - i) Identify an area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms during hours of operation and ensure that children are not left without adult supervision.
  - ii) We encourage parents to arrive within a timely manner to pick up a sick child at school. If a student is determined to have any COVID-19 like symptoms during the school day, we will not send them home on a bus and guardians are responsible for picking their child from the school nursing office or isolation room. If the student is not picked up within one hour, 911 will be called and the student will be transported to Saint Barnabas Medical Center unless otherwise indicated by the parent.
  - iii) Pillar Schools will adhere to the most up to date NJDOH policies regarding COVID-19 diagnosis or symptoms.
  - iv) Notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of any possible case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
  - v) Close off areas used by any sick person and do not use them until they have been cleaned.
  - vi) Wait 24 hours before cleaning or disinfecting to reduce risk to individuals cleaning. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible.
  - vii) Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
- d) Maintain healthy operations
  - i) Mary Pfister, nursing coordinator will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.
  - ii) The community will be notified if a student or teacher has tested positive for COVID-19 following a strict protocol for confidentiality that adheres to health department contact tracing guidelines.

## 2) Contact Tracing

- a) Upon notification that a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, as appropriate a local health department official or the school nurse will call to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus.
- b) All school administrators have completed a credit certified Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing course.
  - i) Contact tracing will be conducted for [close contacts](#) (as defined by the CDC) of **laboratory-confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases**
  - ii) Information regarding potential contact will be communicated via e-mail or phone.
  - iii) [Testing is recommended for all close contacts of confirmed or probable COVID-19 cases](#)
  - iv) Those contacts who test positive (symptomatic or asymptomatic) will be managed as a confirmed COVID-19 case.
  - v) [Asymptomatic contacts should adhere to the most current guidelines as outlines by the NJDOH and will vary depending on vaccination status.](#)

### **3) Facilities Cleaning Practices**

- a) Pillar will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise.
- b) Pillar has instituted a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
  - i) Pillar School staff will routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched using EPA-registered household disinfectants.
    - (1) Classroom desks and chairs
    - (2) Lunchroom tables and chairs
    - (3) Door handles and push plates
    - (4) Handrails
    - (5) Kitchens and bathrooms
    - (6) Changing Tables
    - (7) Light switches
    - (8) Therapeutic equipment
    - (9) Buttons on elevators
    - (10) Shared telephones
    - (11) Shared desktops
    - (12) Shared computer keyboards and mice
  - ii) Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible.
- c) Cleaning and disinfecting a school building after a person have been identified as COVID-19 positive:
  - i) Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24 hours before you clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible.
  - ii) Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
  - iii) Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

### **4) Meals**

- a) Both breakfast and lunch options will continue to be available to students.
- b) Pillar School will discontinue family style, self-service, and buffet style meals.
- c) All meals will be served in the classroom or outside when possible, and students will remain in their cohorts during mealtimes.
- d) All tables will be cleaned and sanitized before each meal service.
- e) Students will be spaced at least three feet apart and attempts will be made to have students facing away from one another.
- f) Staff must wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- g) Students will be served individually plated meals.
- h) Student will not share dishware or cutlery.
  - i) Individualized mealtime equipment will be stored separately in labeled plastic bags or bins.

- ii) Any non-disposable food service items will be handled with gloves and washed with antibacterial dish soap and hot water.
- i) When appropriate, students will use disposable food service items.
- j) Students will engage in proper handwashing before meals.

**5) Recess/ Physical Education**

- a) Students' hands will be washed before and after recess periods.

**SCHEDULING**

As per the guidelines of Governor Murphy and the and the DOE, Pillar School families will no longer have the option to choose virtual instruction. Remote learning will be available for students, group of students, a class, or multiple classes in the event quarantine is required based on a COVID-19 exposure or if a student tests positive for COVID-19.

- a) If a student wakes up with COVID compatible symptoms,
  - i. Parents should prioritize getting their child a COVID-19 test, and the student should not be sent to school. Parents are requested to inform the school's administration or nursing department if their child is experiencing any COVID-19 compatible symptoms.
  - ii. Pillar's nursing department will be in contact to determine when the student is eligible to return to school based on NJDOH guidelines.
  - iii. Remote learning will not be available on the first day of a student's absence from school.

For longer term illnesses and quarantine related to COVID-19, remote learning remains an option.

- b) To instate remote learning for a student who must quarantine due to illness, parents must provide evidence of a scheduled COVID-19 test to the Pillar School nursing office. Subsequent results must be provided within one week in order for students to remain in a remote learning model.
- c) To instate remote learning in the event of close contact outside of school parents must provide evidence of a scheduled COVID-19 test to the Pillar School nursing office.
- d) Parents should be in contact with Pillar School's nursing department to determine guidance as to the length of the student's quarantine period and subsequent remote instruction period.
- e) Instruction and Related Services will not be provided to students who are out-of-state or out of the country.
- f) Notification that parents would like their child to engage in remote learning must be provided to the school principal, Hetty Kintiroglou, hkintiroglou@pillarnj.org or to the Supervisor of Therapies, Jaimie Pasterick, jpasterick@pillarnj.org and to the student's district.

*\*Requests made to teachers, paraprofessionals or therapists will not be honored.*

- g) The days/times of therapy will remain consistent with the student's on-campus schedule. Links and assignments will be provided via Microsoft Teams unless noted otherwise by your child's Instructional and Related Service Team members.
- h) All students who attend Pillar School will have the opportunity to use a school-issued iPad. It is not mandatory however, and students may use their own device. If you need a device, please notify school administration. At this time, you will be required to pick-up the device from the school if it cannot be sent home with your child.

### Mandated Cohort Quarantine

- If your child's Pillar School Cohort has been told to quarantine, the days/time of instruction and therapy will remain consistent with the student's on-campus schedule. Remote Learning will begin on the next full school day after you were notified to quarantine. The minimum hours of instruction for a virtual or remote day is four hours excluding lunch and recess. This time period includes both synchronous and asynchronous formats.
  1. Remote Learning Schedule
    - a) Students are offered the opportunity to participate in instruction between the hours of 8:25AM and 2:40PM and instructional time is based on a tailored schedule to each classroom's collective needs.
    - b) Students participating in our remote learning model will engage in live lessons in the classroom to which they are assigned at the teacher's discretion.
      - i. All Pillar School students are given access to Microsoft Teams, a virtual learning platform, where they can connect with their teachers, classmates, and related service providers.
      - ii. Students are provided with opportunities for synchronous (live) class offerings as well as asynchronous (unscheduled) activities in-line with grade appropriate CCCS that address the core subjects (Math, Language Arts, Social Studies and Science).
        1. These opportunities will differ depending on your child's assigned classroom. Parents will be updated by their child's teacher and related service providers with relevant classroom schedules.

**In accordance with the NJ DOH and CDC Guidelines, all unvaccinated students and staff identified as a close contact will not be permitted on campus during the quarantine period. Pillar's nursing department will work with the local DOH to determine as appropriate to determine a return date.**

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts\\_K12Schools.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

1. Communication
  - a) Pillar School will continue to communicate frequently with Parents and Families via e-mail, and through webinars on Microsoft Teams or Zoom. We believe that clear and consistent communications with stakeholders are vital to successful implementation. We plan to share strategies and rationale with parents and families to provide them with relevant information for decision making.
2. Attendance during Mandated Quarantine Periods
  - a) Attendance is considered on an individualized basis. While we hope and expect that students will log on and complete both synchronous and asynchronous instructional opportunities, we recognize that some families are not available during instructional hours due to other commitments.
  - b) Students are considered present when they participate in synchronous lessons or related services. Students are also considered present when parents or caregivers have acknowledged receipt of instructional materials and communicate those activities are being completed (via e-mail, phone call, or chat). If assignments are turned in or marked as viewed within the virtual platforms offered a student is considered present.
  - c) Any significant lapses in attendance will be reported to the student's sending district through a required 5-day absence letter which is sent to the student's case manager via e-mail. We will work in conjunction with the student's family and sending district to determine if these lapses in attendance should influence promotion, retention, or graduation.
3. Access to Technology
  - a) Pillar Schools have worked closely with families to determine the delivery of instruction that best meets individual needs. This includes but is not limited to daily e-mails, virtual chats, mailing instructional materials to students' homes and individual consultations at times that are best suited.
  - b) Progress toward goals
  - c) Access to Technology
  - d) Surveys (both digital and paper) have been sent to families to determine the technology that was available within their homes and any additional technology needs.
  - e) Pillar School students have access to a school issued iPad with the appropriate apps/software to participate in remote learning.
  - f) A continued effort is also being made to work together with districts to provide internet access to students who do not currently have access.
  - g) Pillar Schools have designated staff members in addition to the agency's IT department to offer remote support to families to work through technical issues.
  - h) All our teachers, therapists, related service providers and educational staff have a school issued laptop computer.
  - i) All of Pillar's staff and students' families received trainings and/or instructions on Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
  - j) All students have been assigned a Pillar School email account and password for Microsoft Team assignments and virtual meeting access.

- k) All classrooms have been equipped with a Promethean Board to assist students and teachers in both the on-campus and remote learning model.
- 4. Assessment During the quarantine period
  - a) Assessment of remote student learning is determined to the greatest extent possible through participation, performance in synchronous lessons and parent report.
  - b) For asynchronous activities assessment is determined through teacher's observation, teacher's review of turned in assignments, parent report and progress toward IEP goals during the quarantine period

**MEALS DURING A MANDATED QUARANTINE PERIOD**

1. Meals will be continued to be offered to students during a classroom quarantine period.
2. Parents and Caregivers must let school administration know, who will prepare boxed meals for pickup.