

FAQ

The District has the unenviable task of making decisions based on ever changing information. The pandemic is a public health concern and the District will continue to provide an educational experience that allows our students to physically be in school with their teachers and peers in the safest manner possible.

Below you will find Frequently Asked Questions, some of which have been compiled directly from Pennsylvania Department of Education's Website.

1. How will the district be contract tracing?

Contact tracing is recommended to identify close contacts and to ensure that those close contacts meet the exceptions as defined in the PDE guidance (listed in question #1 and below). The exceptions do not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

- Schools should continue to work with DOH or county or municipal health departments (CMHD) to complete contact tracing for individuals diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19. As part of the contact tracing process, DOH and CMHDs will continue to work with schools to gather information about potential close contacts.
- The CDC guidance adds the following exception to the definition of close contact:
 - In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where:
 - both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks; and
 - other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.
- This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

In some cases, there will be no need to contact trace. In others there may be. The guidance and exceptions can be found on the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) resources page. Specifically, the Department of Education has provided guidance to schools regarding contact tracing. That guidance is listed on the PDE resource page and refers schools to the CDC guidance. The (PDE) page can be found [here](#). An excerpt from that page is listed in the paragraphs below. Information on contact tracing recommendations are highlighted:

“When a case of COVID-19 is identified in a school setting, schools should refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protocol outlining what to do if a student becomes sick or reports a new COVID-19 diagnosis at school, found [here](#). In addition to following the above CDC flowchart, schools should continue to work with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) or county or municipal health departments (CMHD) to complete contact tracing for individuals diagnosed or exposed to COVID-19. As part of the contact tracing process, DOH and CMHDs will continue to work with schools to gather information about potential close contacts.

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 - other K–12 school prevention strategies (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.
 - This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.”

2. When will students and staff need to quarantine if they have close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19?

Students do not need to quarantine, regardless of vaccination status, when universal face masking is used. When face masks are optional it is recommended that unvaccinated students quarantine for 10 days or for 7 days if a negative test result is received on or after day 5 of the quarantine. Vaccinated students do not need to quarantine but must wear a face mask, when face masking is optional, for 14 days from last exposure without testing or until receiving a negative test result collected on or after 3 days from last exposure. Families should monitor for any changes in their student’s health and contact a healthcare provider if changes do occur and keep the student home until cleared to return to school.

Unvaccinated staff must quarantine for 10 days without testing or for 7 days if a negative test result is received on or after day 5 of the quarantine. Vaccinated staff do not need to quarantine but must wear a face mask, when face masking is optional, for 14 days from last exposure without testing or until receiving a negative test result collected on or after 3 days from last exposure. Staff should monitor for any changes in their health and contact a healthcare provider if changes do occur and stay home until cleared to return to work.

2b. When will students and staff need to isolate?

Students and staff that receive a positive COVID-19 test must isolate for 10 days from symptom onset date or for 10 days from the test collection date for asymptomatic individuals and are cleared to return to school/work after 10 days so long as they have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication AND any other symptoms have improved/resolved. People who are in isolation should stay home and should stay away from anyone else in the home and avoid common use spaces (bathrooms, kitchen, etc.), whenever possible.

3. How will the district be communicating positive COVID cases with families?

The District will be transitioning to providing notice only to close contacts and is developing a Covid-19 page that will provide information on cases. This will provide transparency for those families who are interested in the information, while eliminating repeated calls to those who have children who may not have been a close contact.

4. What procedures will the nurses be following when sending children home?

The guidance for return to school can be found by clicking [here](#). The guidance provides for differences based on positive tests and negative tests.

If a child was not feeling well and was sent home without a fever and has not had a fever or has been fever free for 24 hours and does not exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, they may return to school.

5. How long will students need to wear masks?

The Order is effective 12:01 AM on Tuesday, September 7, 2021, and will remain in effect until the Acting Secretary of Health determines the public health risk is sufficiently reduced so that face coverings are no longer necessary as public health tools in school entities. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) will continue to provide updates as they continue to closely monitor the CDC guidance.

6. How will the district educate students who are isolated or quarantined?

In an effort to minimize the disruption to a students' instruction while quarantined or isolated, the administration and teachers will ensure that daily work assignments are posted in Google classroom. To assist students with understanding of new concepts taught, teachers will make themselves available to answer questions or to explain newly taught concepts.

7. How will the district be conducting physical education?

Outdoor activities will be encouraged, weather permitting. If weather events prohibit outdoor activity, students will have mask breaks and building administrators will ensure that instruction is appropriately modified.

The order issued by the acting Secretary of Health states that students are exempt from mask wearing when Engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking, or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering; or participating in high intensity aerobic or anerobic activities, including during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals. Additionally, a student is also exempt from wearing a mask when a child/student is participating in a sports practice activity or event, whether indoors or outdoors.

8. What types of masks will be acceptable?

The CDC Guidance on masks can be found [here](#). The guidance recommends the following 'look for's"

- Multiple layers of tightly woven, breathable fabric
- Nose wire
- Mask should block light when held up to bright light source

Nurses and Principals will look at masks and in instances of concern, will issue a new mask and speak to parents regarding any concerns. Students with specific health needs or other disabilities who require accommodations may work with the school nurse or principal.

According to the order issued by the acting Secretary of Health:

“Face covering” means covering of the nose and mouth with material that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A “face covering” can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen. A “face covering” may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or be improvised from household items, including, but not limited to, scarfs, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. While procedural and surgical masks intended for health care providers and first responders, such as N95 respirators, meet those requirements, these specialized masks should be reserved for appropriate occupational and health care personnel.

9. Will the district be providing masks?

Yes, the District will continue to provide masks for those who need them. The District will order additional masks as needed.

10. What will happen if students do not wear masks?

The Order, issued under the Disease Prevention and Control Law, establishes a legal mandate. School entities are expected to enforce the Order as they do other state laws and school rules and policies. Reasonable steps may include developing and implementing a policy, enforcing already existing policies, training staff on conflict management, and monitoring and taking corrective actions in instances of noncompliance among staff, students, or visitors. School entities should follow their local policies and procedures on managing student and staff misconduct.

First infraction, verbal warning.

Second infraction, note to parents.

Third infraction, phone call home.

Fourth infraction, conference with parents and building administration.

Fifth infraction, conference with acting superintendent.

11. Will there be mask breaks during the day?

**Can schools implement mask breaks indoors?*

Section 3D of the order permits individuals to remove masks indoors when working alone and isolated from contact with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interactions.

When face coverings are not being worn, additional prevention strategies, such as physical distancing and increased ventilation, become even more essential to protect children/students, teachers, and staff. School entities should establish processes for removing masks that are age appropriate and consistent with the Secretary's Order and current CDC guidance.

Mask breaks will be permitted; students should be properly socially distanced when mask breaks occur. The HSP applies to students and staff, which means masking applies to students and staff. We know that the SVSD staff is caring, compassionate and committed. However, the Acting Superintendent has been tasked to ensure that the Building Principals and Assistant Principals uphold and implement the very clear direction that has been provided from the Board of Directors. That direction affirms that while masking is indicated by the HSP at this time, the implementation of the masking should be done in a positive and compassionate way. Anything less will not be acceptable.

12. Will the district segregate vaccinated and non-vaccinated students?

No, the District will not be using vaccination status as a means of determining class assignment, or any other segregation. The District is following the PDE guidance on mitigation of socially distancing, when feasible.

13. Will the district be holding vaccine clinics?

Initially, many schools held vaccination clinics in an effort to provide access to community and staff who desired to participate. Vaccinations are easily accessed and there is no current need. However, the pandemic has taught us that things change quickly. Should an organization request facility use for a vaccination clinic for adults, the Board will review the request and make a decision at that time. The District has no current plans to hold vaccination clinics for children.

14. Will the district be testing for COVID on site?

No. The District is aware that the PDE and CDC are making allowances for screening and testing in schools. The District has no plans of participating.

15. Are the partitions still in use in the cafeterias?

Students are not wearing masks when they eat lunch. As such, Lunchroom partitions remain a part of the District's mitigation efforts.

16. Are lunches free for all?

Yes. Press [here](#) for the press release.

17. How much does it cost the district when a student chooses a cyber-charter school?

Charter costs change yearly based on the SVSD budget, but the current is as follows:

General Education Student	\$13,718.28
Special Education Student	\$29,260.81

Every single student that leaves for Charter negatively impacts the District Budget. Equally important, every student that leaves also misses out on the many great things our District has to offer. Without a doubt, the education that happens in our classrooms with SVSD teachers is a very special and excellent education. Our academic outcomes are unmatched in the charter arena. We value every family in the District and, despite these times, we will serve our children well.

18. What are the safety procedures regarding student early dismissal?

The safety and security of students is a foremost concern.

Below are our procedures:

Schuylkill Valley School District Student Early Dismissal Procedures

- When a parent/family member arrives at the school to pick up a child for early release, they are to report directly to the main office.
- Parents/family members are not permitted go to the student's classroom or any other secure areas of the building.
- Office staff will ask the parent/family member to present a government issued form of photo ID. If the individual does not have an ID in their possession, office staff should direct them to retrieve it.
- The photo on the ID must match the individual and the name on the ID must match the name listed on the student's Sapphire account or on the communication sent from the parents.
- All persons must be 18 years or older to sign-out a student.
- If the names and/or photo do not match, the student is not to be released.
- Once confirmed, office staff will make a copy of the person's photo ID and call the student from class to the office.
- Office staff will write the date and time on the copy of the ID.

- When the student arrives at the office, the parent/family member will sign the log book (name, signature, date, time, student name, reason for dismissal) and leave with the student.
- The office staff is expected to ask for identification from the parent/family member **each time** they come to school to pick up a child for early release.