



WILLIAM J. GRETZULA, Ed.D.
Superintendent

PENNSBURY SCHOOL DISTRICT

134 Yardley Avenue • Post Office Box 338
Fallsington, Pennsylvania 19058-0338
Telephone: (215) 428-4111
Fax: (215) 428-4270
www.pennsburysd.org

December 4, 2020

Dear Pennsbury School District Parents/Guardians,

Let me begin by thanking everyone in the Pennsbury School District and community for your flexibility following the Thanksgiving holiday. While it was likely different from previous years for many, I still hope the holiday provided a time to take stock of those things for which you are grateful. When we returned for teaching and learning this week, it was in a remote model for all. The intention was to minimize the impact of the virus due to potential travel and family gatherings. I believe we were successful in doing so despite our positive case counts going up.

Now, we approach a new week with mixed emotions. While we closely monitor the reality concerning the volume of positive cases and positive test rates in Bucks County, I will be excited to see the children's joy with the **return of students in Phase 1 and Phase 2 beginning Monday, December 7th**. As a reminder, those phases include the following student populations:

Phase I: Grades Pre-K -2 Students & Students in Specialized Learning Classrooms

- Hybrid A/B for students in Pre-K -2
- 4 Days a week for students in Specialized Learning Classrooms
- 100% Remote instruction option continues

Phase II : All Grade 3-5 and 6-8

- Hybrid A/B for students in Grades 3-8
- 100% Remote instruction option continues

As previously stated, students in Phase 3 will not report for in-person instruction until the start of the second semester. This includes high school students in Grades 9-12 unless part of the invited specialized learning populations.

I also wanted to inform the community of the new guidance issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH).

MISSION

Recognizing our proud traditions and diverse community, the Pennsbury School District prepares all students to become creative, ethical, and critical thinkers for lifelong success in a global society.

On November 30, 2020, the Board President and I signed an attestation form which was required by PDE affirming two points:

1. The District will comply with the PADOH order requiring universal face coverings in accordance with the order of the Secretary of Health updated November 18, 2020; and
2. The District agrees to follow the newly-released "Recommendations for PreK-12 Schools Following the Identification of Cases of COVID-19."

Simply stated, this means that while schools are open for in-person instruction, we will follow the masking order as stated in our District's Health and Safety Plan. If we would consider moving individual schools to full remote instruction, we would follow the guidance of the matrix provided by PDE which can be referenced in the chart below.

The data points for consideration include the risk level for the county, the total student enrollment for a school, and the number of positive cases confirmed on a rolling 14-day basis. When considering the chart below, recognize that Bucks County is in the "substantial" risk category. Additionally, the size of our schools based upon current student enrollment is as follows:

Small: Edgewood, Fallsington, Manor, Makefield, Oxford Valley, Penn Valley, Quarry Hill, Village Park, Walt Disney

Medium: Afton, Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Boehm, Pennwood

Large: Pennsbury High School, William Penn

After taking into consideration the size of a school, look at the "Transmission Level," or number of cases, per location. This is the total number of cases which combines all student and staff cases on that location. You can see in the chart below, that the size of a school and the number of cases determines the mitigation strategies required for the District to respond to the incident(s). Most strategies include efforts the District already completes routinely, such as cleaning and disinfecting locations, as well as collaborating with our county Health Department. The most important strategy to note is the point at which a school may need to close for a range of days from 3-5 days, 3-7 days or 14 days. This will be determined on an individual school basis and will require the flexibility of all staff, students and families in order to comply with the state's recommendations.

Transmission Level	Cases in Rolling 14-Day Period: Small: 1 student/staff Medium: 1-3 students/staff Large: 1-5 students/staff	Cases in Rolling 14-Day Period: Small: 2-4 student/staff Medium: 4-6 students/staff Large: 6-10 students/staff	Cases in Rolling 14-Day Period: Small: 5+ student/staff Medium: 7+ students/staff Large: 11+ students/staff
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School does not need to close Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 3-5 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 14 days* Clean entire school(s) Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School does not need to close Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 3-7 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close school(s) for 14 days* Clean entire school(s) Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine
Substantial†	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Clean area(s) where case spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Close school for 3-7 days* Clean area(s) where cases spent time Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School should consider altering schedule to significantly decrease number of students on site Close school for 14 days* Clean entire school Public health staff will direct close contacts to quarantine

Also note that PDE’s guidance states “if case investigations, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfecting can be accomplished in a faster time frame, the length of closure time may be shortened.” All districts in Bucks County are seeking further interpretation to see whether or not schools have to move to remote instruction at all if the District can complete case investigations, contact tracing, and cleaning and disinfecting overnight. We will factor in the response to our protocol when considering whether to remain open for hybrid instruction or move to full remote instruction for a school population.

Last, I’d like to ask the community to recognize that staffing challenges persist and will likely increase in the coming days and weeks ahead. Positive cases and close contacts will lead to quarantining. This will burden colleagues who will be asked to “cover” classes for their peers. While this is possible sometimes, it may not always be possible. In those cases, the District may need to inform a school community on a daily basis that instruction for a given day will be delivered through a full remote model due to staffing shortages. This information will be updated on the [District’s home webpage](#) early each morning in the red banner atop the page, and each building administrator will inform his or her school community respectively using all typical means of communication.

As the month progresses and students and staff return, we will monitor our ability to offer consistent instructional opportunities for those students who select in-person instruction. I am hopefully optimistic that we will be able to move forward successfully,

yet I am realistic in knowing the data surrounding the pandemic is worsening daily and may lead to a need for the District to reconsider in-person instruction at a later date. In the meantime, join me in welcoming back students in Grades 3-8, who have opted for in-person instruction, for the first time in nearly 9 months. Thank you to all who are sacrificing professionally to make it possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Gretzula". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and "G".

William J. Gretzula, Ed.D.
District Superintendent
Pennsbury School District