

Purpose: This set of frequently asked questions is intended to be read with the Perry Community School District Return to Learn Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. This document may be updated with additional questions or guidance, if the Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Education or Perry Community School District release new recommendations in the future.

It is important to note that this guidance is applicable, effective July 13, 2020. As the situation surrounding COVID-19 changes within the Perry community, across the state of Iowa, or throughout the country, guidance and plans may change. Please be advised that staff, students, and families will be made aware of any changes or updates as soon as those changes are known. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a fluid situation since it began in March 2020, and it is possible that plans may change as this pandemic continues to evolve.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What is the plan for PCSD's return to learn plan in August?

At this time, Perry Community Schools is planning for all students and staff to return to on-site learning, with the first day of school for students grades 1-12 scheduled for Wednesday August 19, 2020. Kindergarten and TK are scheduled to begin Thursday August 20 or Friday August 21. Please refer to the letter you will receive in August with your TK or KG student's teacher's name and start date. Preschool is scheduled to begin on August 27.

2. Will there be back to school activities such as open house?

No, due to COVID-19, there will be no open house and back to school night activities for the 2020-2021 school year. Staff will be calling all students and their families before the start of the school year to answer questions and share back to school information prior to August 19. Freshman Orientation will be scheduled on August 18 from 1-3pm for 9th grade students only.

3. If a teacher or student tests positive for COVID-19, how will staff and parents be notified and what measures will be taken to reduce the spread?

For staff members, Mr. Wicks will send a message to all staff that a positive COVID-19 case has been confirmed in the district. For students who are confirmed with a positive COVID-19 case the procedure will be: Principal or designee will notify the students who may have had close contact for 15 continuous minutes with the infected student. We will utilize a communication template to communicate to appropriate individuals.

4. Why are students required to stay home for 72 hours (3 days) when they have a fever, or any flu-like symptoms when the requirement used to be 24 hours?

PCSD is following CDC guidelines, which states that if a student or staff member had COVID-19 or had COVID symptoms, they may return to school when they are 72 hours fever free without fever reducing medication, respiratory symptoms have resolved, and it has been at least 10 days since symptoms began, or the student has evidence of a negative COVID-19 test.

5. Why is PCSD not willing to take student and staff temperatures when they arrive at school each day?

The CDC does not recommend that schools screen students and staff upon entering the building. One symptom is not necessarily indicative of communicable disease. Some individuals may be ill and have no symptoms. (IDOE guidance for reopening schools, June 25th, 2020)

6. If a parent or emergency contact is unable to be contacted or unable to pick their child up from school within 1 hour of being notified that their child is sick, what will happen to that child?

We will continue to monitor the child until the family arrives. The child will be in the isolation room and will be required to wear a mask or face covering while waiting to be picked up.

7. Why is PCSD not requiring masks throughout the school day?

Requiring face coverings for all staff and students is not recommended. (IDOE guidance for reopening schools, June 25th, 2020). While cloth face coverings can reduce the spread of COVID-19 when worn properly and when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, the Department of Education, in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health, does not recommend that districts and nonpublic schools require face coverings for all students and staff because of the considerable health and safety, legal and training implications for such a policy. Some individuals might not be able to use cloth face coverings due to a health or safety concern including but not limited to age, developmental disability, underlying condition, or mental concern. Numerous considerations must be examined at the local level, if face coverings were to be required, including what type of face coverings will be allowed? Who is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate type of face covering is worn? Who is responsible for providing face coverings and what measures are taken to ensure they are sanitary? Who is responsible for tracking the appropriate use and storage of face coverings during lunch/snack/PE/recess etc? In addition, the CDC states, "Cloth face coverings should be washed after each use. It is important to always remove face coverings correctly and wash your hands after handling or touching a used face covering" (IDOE Reopening Guidance for Schools: FAQs, June 30, 2020). Because of the complexity and monitoring required to ensure face coverings are used appropriately and meet the needs of all students, PCSD is not requiring the use of face coverings during the school day. Students and staff who wish to wear face coverings are welcome to do so, and the use of face coverings is highly recommended especially in high-density areas where social distancing can not be maintained.

8. Why are elementary students not having outdoor recess before school?

Given the number of students attending Perry Elementary, there could be as many as 700-800 students from all different grade levels on the playground or blacktop area before school daily. Due to the number of students, and limited supervision available before teacher contract times, it is impossible to ensure adequate social distancing and supervision at that time. Students will be spaced throughout the building in the hallways to allow for more adequate distancing. Students will be highly encouraged to arrive at school at 8:10 a.m. or later.

9. Who will supervise students before school begins (after breakfast) in classrooms or hallways?

Elementary administration and paraeducators will be responsible for supervising students before school in the classrooms and in the hallways, until teacher contracted time begins at 8:00 a.m at Perry Elementary. Students will be highly encouraged to arrive at or after 8:10.

At Perry Middle School, students will be spread out upon arrival to school beginning at 7:35. Exact locations TBD. Supervision will be provided by Middle School staff based on assigned duty schedules.

At Perry High School, supervision will be provided by High School staff based on assigned duty schedules.

10. Will class sizes be reduced to allow for more social distancing in the classrooms?

Class sizes will be reviewed and every effort will be made to keep class sizes as small as possible to allow for adequate distancing. It is important to remember that students will still need to be in class somewhere, with the number of staff and classrooms that we currently have available, so reducing class sizes in all settings may not be possible.

11. Who will be providing cleaning supplies and how will we know that rooms are cleaned on a daily basis?

Perry Schools will provide appropriate cleaning materials for all classrooms. Teachers along with custodial staff will be expected to clean rooms on a daily basis to help ensure a clean and sanitized area. Students may be asked to help wipe down their shared tools or equipment or desks/tables as well.

12. How will the number of students in the hallway or bathrooms be limited or monitored?

The method of monitoring students in bathrooms is left up to each building administrator in order to ensure that it is appropriate for the age of the students. Make sure you know and understand the plan that will be shared with you.

13. How will more porous shared items be sanitized (books from classroom or school libraries, etc)

Sharing books and materials will be limited, to the extent possible. The school district will provide cleaning supplies for students and staff to wipe down equipment and materials that are shared after each use and throughout the day. The school librarian will be following the direction of the Perry Public Library regarding sanitization of reading materials. Books that are checked out and returned will be sanitized by spraying one side of the book, allowing time for the side to dry, then spraying the other side and allowing it to dry. Teachers may use a similar product and plan for sanitization of classroom books/materials.

14. How will students store their personal belongings (coats, backpacks etc) in lockers and coat rooms and allow for adequate distancing?

Students will be encouraged to visit lockers only as needed throughout the day, including the possibility of bringing backpacks to class to limit congregation at lockers during passing periods.

For elementary coat rooms, grade level sections will need to schedule times at the beginning and end of day for coatroom visits. Teachers may choose to have students keep bags/coats in the classroom. This will be revisited before winter.

However, it is important to remember that schools may not be able to guarantee that physical distancing can be met in all school settings throughout the school day, during school activities, or with transportation. This is similar to when children congregate in their community (IDOE guidance for reopening schools, June 25th, 2020).

15. If water fountains are not permitted, how will students and staff have access to water throughout the day? The water fountains are closed; however, the stations for refilling water bottles are available.

Students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles to minimize the use and touching of the water fountains. The water fountains will be regularly cleaned and sanitized, for use of filling water bottles. Drinking filling stations can also be utilized to refill water bottles.

16. How will students maintain social distance in the hallways during passing periods at PMS and PHS?

Schools may not be able to guarantee that physical distancing can be met in all school settings throughout the school day, during school activities, or with transportation. This is similar to when children congregate in their community (IDOE guidance for reopening schools, June 25th, 2020). Building Leadership Teams are continuing to meet to develop building-specific strategies to promote as much social distancing as possible.

17. How will social distancing be enforced in the lunch rooms and common areas?

Schools may not be able to guarantee that physical distancing can be met in all school settings throughout the school day, during school activities, or with transportation. This is similar to when children congregate in their community (IDOE guidance for reopening schools, June 25th, 2020).

18. Can dismissal be staggered to allow for more social distancing at each building?

Yes it could but this will not alleviate any of the other issues, such as crowded school busses and waiting areas since we are running one bus route. Building leadership teams are continuing to meet and develop plans to promote as much social distancing as possible.

19. Can additional busses or bus routes be made available to limit the number of students on each bus?

Unfortunately, PCSD does not have the personnel or resources to add additional drivers or busses to reduce the number of students on each route. Parents are encouraged to drive

students to school or allow students to walk when possible so that students whose only way to arrive at school is by bus have access to bussing and reduce the overall number of riders, if possible.

20. How will parents/students be notified in the event that school is closed and the district transitions to online learning?

Much like the transition to online learning in the Spring of 2020, there may be very limited advanced notice in the event of a school closure. Students are encouraged to bring their computers home daily so that they are prepared in the event school buildings are closed and the district transitions to online learning. Parents and the community will be notified through various means including text message alerts, news outlets, emails from teachers and staff, Facebook or other social media sites.

21. If I don't feel safe to send my child to school and want online learning instead of on-site learning, what are my options?

The Perry Return to Learn plan is designed for all students to return to on-campus learning. Unless directed by the Iowa Department of Education or the Governor of Iowa, Perry does not have a 100% online option available at this time. Should you choose, you have the option to consider homeschooling or virtual schooling options for your child.

[Perry Schools is exploring the option of a potential online option for those families who feel on-site learning is not feasible for their child or for students who have medical needs. This plan is in the beginning stages and more information will be shared in the coming weeks.](#)

22. What accommodations will be made for students, staff, and families who have compromised immune systems and it is not safe for them to be in the school setting?

Students, staff, and families who have documented medical conditions which may cause a compromised immune system will be reviewed individually by the administrators of each building. For students with documented medical conditions, PCSD will work with those students and families to make alternative arrangements when learning on-site or in larger groups is not appropriate, given their medical need.

FAQs for Staff:

- 1. If a staff member is diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19 will they be required to quarantine? If so, will staff be required to use sick days or are there other COVID-19 days they may use?**

If a staff member has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, they will be required to quarantine for 10 days, and at least 72 hours fever-free, before returning to work. For an absence for COVID-19 related circumstances, full time employees will be entitled to 80 hours (two weeks) of COVID-19 Leave (Correspondence from Drew Bracken, Ahlers & Cooney, P.C., May 29, 2020).

2. If a staff member has been notified that they have been exposed to COVID-19, what should they do?

Work rules require that the employee must report the exposure to their supervisor as soon as possible. The employee should complete the survey at <https://www.testiowa.com/en>, to find out if they need to be tested, and follow the instructions provided on the website. Employees may be required to disclose the results of the Test Iowa survey to their supervisor and report their compliance with the recommendations (Correspondence from Dew Bracken, Ahlers & Cooney, P.C., May 29, 2020).

3. If a staff member needs to quarantine due to COVID-19 and they do not have sick leave available, will that leave be unpaid?

Per COVID-19 Pandemic Temporary Supplemental Policy Provisions: Employees shall be entitled to paid leave in the following amounts when it is COVID-19 related: for full-time employees, 80 hours; for part-time employees, a number of hours equal to the number of hours that such employee works on average, over a two-week period; there are caps on the amount of money an employee taking this leave may be compensated. The District will enforce these legally required caps.

4. Can a staff member require face masks in their classroom, even though facemasks are not required by Perry Community Schools?

No, face masks and face coverings can not be required. Staff members may highly encourage or recommend face coverings in their classrooms, however, they can not be required.

5. If a staff member's daycare (or resident district school) closes due to COVID-19, what accommodations will be made for child care for staff members who need to care for their children, while Perry continues with on-site learning?

Through the passage of the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act, the federal government temporarily expanded the FMLA to include a new qualifying reason for FMLA leave related to the public health emergency. A qualifying need related to a public health emergency means the employee is unable to work to care for a son or daughter under age 18 if the school or place of care for their son or daughter has been closed, or if the care provider is unavailable, due to a public health emergency.

In addition to the district's FMLA policy, the following guidelines apply to this new qualifying reason:

- The only eligibility requirement for employees to be eligible for this leave is that the employee has been employed for 30 calendar days prior to taking the leave.
- The employee shall be paid for this leave as follows

- Employees will be paid $\frac{2}{3}$ of the regular rate of pay, and not more than \$200 per day. If the rate of pay as explained above is less than the employer's regular rate of pay, the employee may use other available leave to supplement the difference between the payments described above.

Requests for FMLA Expansion leave should be made directly to the business office.

6. If Perry Community Schools transitions to online learning, what accommodations will be made for staff members who need child care for their school-age children (who would traditionally be in school)?

Perry schools is considering several options pertaining to this question, including providing rooms for these students to log on to their attendance centers and allowing these children to be in their parents classroom as they teach.

7. If a staff member is not comfortable teaching with the provisions outlined in the plan, what course of action does the staff member have in regards to a leave of absence due to personal preference?

An employee may use personal days and/or available vacation days to cover their absence from work. Thereafter, the employee should be expected to return to work. If the employee continues to be apprehensive, then a dialogue between the employer/supervisor and employee should occur to address the employee's concerns and determine: (a) whether there are reasonable measures that can be taken to reassure the employee or, (b) if no other reasonable measures are available to satisfy the employee, whether the employee should tender a resignation (Correspondence from Drew Bracken, Ahlers & Cooney, P.C., May 29, 2020).