

Propel Schools Health and Safety Plan for School Closure, Recovery and Safe Return 2021-2022

School District	Propel Charter Schools
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Pandemic Coordinator and Team

Pandemic Coordinator: Dr. Tina Chekan - CEO/Superintendent

Pandemic Team Responsible for Health and Safety Plan Development and Pandemic Crisis Response

- Jaclyn Hoover - Senior Director of Human Resources
- Sonya Meadows - Senior Director of Strategic Communication and Enrollment
- Danielle Parson - Senior Director of Community Affairs
- Richard Snyder - Senior Director of School Operations
- Sandra Madden - Senior Director of Data, Reporting and Compliance

Input has been gathered from all stakeholders through a variety of methods including surveys, focus groups and public comment.

Health and Safety Plan Inspection Team

In order to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety steps below, Propel's Safety Team will conduct inspections once a trimester. The Pandemic Team will use the inspection reports to support and ensure all items in this plan are in compliance.

Propel's Commitment to Physical, Mental, and Emotional Wellness

Propel Schools remain committed to the physical, mental and emotional health of our staff and our scholars. We are accountable for following best practices in workplace and educational space safety, when planning for staff and scholars to return to school. These best practices will include, but

not be limited to:

- Maintaining social distance
- Sanitizing and cleaning
- Utilizing and providing safety equipment access including face coverings and gloves
- Conducting routine, regular health checks including processes for ensuring safety and wellness
- Maintaining medical privacy while following CDC guidelines for pandemics

Additional supports as school buildings and administrative offices reopen may include:

- Addressing concerns, fears, and anxieties
- Managing refusals to return
- Professional development and virtual Absorb courses regarding health and wellness

Core Response Protocol

Propel will continue to closely align whenever possible with PDE's [School Guidance and Resources](#) and CDC guidance during the 2021-22 school year. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies will be made.

Communication

Propel is committed to keeping all members of our school community informed in a timely manner. The Propel Schools website has a devoted pandemic news and information section linked on the homepage that will include all updated procedures that address the pandemic. Principals will be notified of confirmed cases in a building, and Principals will distribute that information to school staff.

Face Coverings in School Entities

General Masking Requirement

Face coverings are optional in all Propel School buildings and offices. Each educator, scholar, staff, or visitor working, attending, or visiting a school building or office has the option to wear a face covering should they so choose.

In addition, any scholars who present symptoms of COVID-19 after arrival at school may be given a face covering to wear either until a family member picks them up or throughout the remainder of the day.

Public Transportation and School Buses

Scholars are expected to follow the face covering guidelines as indicated on public transportation or their resident district school buses.

Social Distancing

According to the CDC, social distancing means "keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household." Propel staff and scholars will use social distancing following [CDC guidance](#) to the maximum extent feasible. Social distancing in cafeterias may not be feasible.

Scholar and Staff Hygiene and Disease Prevention

Members of the Propel community are to follow the below essential steps to help prevent the spread of this (and other) respiratory viruses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home. Practice social distancing.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth or disposable face covering or mask while in public.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Stay home when sick. Staff members must follow policies in the Employee Handbook.

Wellness for Scholars, Families and Staff

This pandemic may have been a traumatic event for some scholars, families and staff. We must assure that our scholars and staff are feeling safe and supported to return to school and work.

Propel is partnering with UPMC to make vaccinations, including the flu vaccine, easier and more accessible through Propel Northside Community Wellness Center and UPMC mobile. Wellness checks will also be available for scholars, staff, families and community members at the Propel Northside Community Wellness Center. Dental services will be made available via a mobile dental center through partnerships with UPMC and Pittsburgh Pirates.

Scholars: Propel is committed to whole-scholar wellness, and the Propel Partners in Wellness (PPIW) program and Crew classes will be leveraged to ensure that scholars are receiving the supports that they need. PPIW classroom lessons will be delivered by Prevention Specialists at all grade levels. The existing backpack feeding program is being evaluated for expansion beyond elementary school scholars to ensure that all scholars have access to nutritious meals. Additional partners are being identified to build a uniform stockpile at all schools with the awareness that families may experience economic challenges as a result of the pandemic that prevents them from purchasing scholar uniforms.

Families and Community: Family and community engagement will continue to occur through both in-person and virtual events, including School Community Council (SCC) meetings.

Staff: Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services are available. All staff have access to Life Solutions which allows for up to 6 sessions for each concern the staff member, or any member of their household, has. In addition to individual sessions, Life Solutions has many courses available online for staff covering over 40 different topics. The telephone number and information to access Life Solutions can be found on this document: [Life Solutions](#). Staff can also access Life Solutions programming through the Northside Wellness Center. Propel will be offering a "Propel Your Health!" Wellness Initiative during the 2021-22 school year that will focus on both activity and mental health.

Privacy Protection

Propel will continue to follow existing policies regarding Privacy Protection including the Personally



Identifiable Information Policy, FERPA requirements as outlined in the Scholar and Family Handbooks and [HIPAA Medical Privacy Policy](#).

Athletics Health and Safety

Propel will follow PIAA guidance regarding health and safety protocols for the 2021-22 school year. At this time, face coverings are not required for those participating in athletic games, practices and training sessions. Propel will require that all scholars participating in Propel sports teams complete the PIAA CIPPE packet, which includes a "SUPPLEMENTAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, WAIVER AND RELEASE: COVID-19" section.

COVID-19 Vaccines and Boosters

Propel **has collaborated** with community partners to provide COVID-19 vaccination and booster clinics at our school communities. **This enabled** Propel staff, families and eligible scholars to be vaccinated.

Essential Staff

Essential staff ensure the equitable provision of multiple life-sustaining services to scholars and families. Propel defines the following as essential staff: Operations including Food Service and Custodial staff, Information Technology, Senior Leaders, Directors, School Leadership Teams and other designated staff as approved by the Pandemic Response Team. If Propel is required to transition to remote or hybrid learning due to changing circumstances, essential staff may be called to work a full schedule on-site depending on the circumstances to support scholar nutrition, facility maintenance, remote instruction, and other critically required functions.

Technology Devices

Propel will again have 1:1 devices during the 2021-22 school year with chromebooks for 3rd-12th graders and tablets for KG-2nd graders. Families with scholars in 3rd-12th will be required to agree to the Chromebook Lending Agreement and sign off digitally using Script. KG-2nd families will have a separate iPad Agreement that will be signed digitally using Script. Electronic signature can be completed on a smartphone in the event that the family lacks access to a computer. If the family is unable to access a smartphone, the family will be connected with a member of the Technology Team for next steps. Signed Technology Loan Agreements will be saved by the Director of Technology with viewable access for school staff members.

Device expectations will be outlined in the Chromebook Lending Agreement and iPad Agreement. All scholars grades KG through 12th grade will be expected to take their devices home after school every day for charging. Those scholars will be expected to arrive at school the next day with a fully charged device.

Flexible Instructional Days

Propel has received PDE approval for the use of Flexible Instructional Days (FIDs). These days may be used for unplanned school closure reasons such as weather.

Building Operations, Logistics and Social Distancing

Ventilation

Propel's school building ventilation systems utilize fresh air recirculation in the use of our HVAC systems. Propel meets all national building code requirements for HVAC systems in public schools.

Entering the School or Administrative Office Premises

Everyone, including staff and scholars, entering a Propel building will have completed the [COVID-19 Screening Questions](#) prior to entering the building (scholars should complete the COVID-19 Screening Questions verbally with their family prior to boarding the school bus or other school transportation). Propel has installed thermal imaging cameras.

[COVID-19 Screening Questions](#) should be posted near the entrance of each building, and they should be visible to all staff. Individuals, including school visitors, should be 'silently' answering those questions prior to entering the building. It is up to each individual to support the overall health and safety collectively.

In the event that a scholar or family member on a scholar's behalf receives the "Stay Home" response as a result of the [COVID-19 Screening Questions](#), that family member is expected to call the administrative assistant at their school and that scholar must remain at home. The administrative assistant will ask several follow up questions, and then alert the Principal. Any families who contact an educator or other staff member should be directed to immediately contact the administrative assistant.

In the event that a staff member receives the "Stay Home" response as a result of the [COVID-19 Screening Questions](#), that staff member should contact their HR representative and Principal and should stay home following the policies in the Employee Handbook.

In the event that a scholar, staff member, or visitor answers "yes" to any of the COVID-19 Screening Questions or in the event that a scholar is identified as having a fever at the nurse's office:

- Scholar: Moved immediately to the isolation room with all of his or her belongings. Reference the additional steps in the [Isolation Room for Scholars and Staff Section](#).
- Staff: Must not enter the building any further and must return home immediately following policies outlined in the Employee Handbook. If the staff member is unable to get themselves home, the staff member should be moved immediately to the [Isolation Room for Scholars and Staff](#).
- Visitor: Must not enter the building any further and must leave immediately.

All employees must swipe their individual badge when they enter the building. Staff should not hold the door, even for a fellow coworker. Propel will use the swipes at the door and in the UltiPro time clock to assist with any contract tracing, should that be necessary.

Visitor Policy

Propel will be permitting limited visitor access during the 2021-22 school year in accordance with the Building Visitation Policy outlined in the Scholar and Family Handbooks. All visitors must follow processes outlined in the [Face Coverings](#) and [Entering the School or Administrative Office Premises](#)

sections.

Field Trips

Propel recognizes that closing the experience gap is a key aspect of programming, and to that end, field trips will be permitted during the 2021-22 school year, provided that scholars and school staff follow the Health and Safety requirements outlined in this plan and the health and safety requirements at the field trip venue.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Cleaning Procedures at School and Administrative Office Facilities

The Propel Operations Team has implemented an updated and robust custodial cleaning/sanitizing program to ensure that our buildings are ready to receive scholars each day in a safe and nurturing environment. This updated plan is based on CDC guidance for "[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility.](#)"

Custodial Staff will use hospital grade, CDC-approved disinfectants and color coded cleaning tool systems to prevent cross contamination when cleaning. Custodial Staff will ensure:

- All restroom soap dispensers are in good working condition and are supplied - [Restroom Cleaning Log template](#)
- All hand sanitizer units are full
- All high-touch areas such as door knobs, railings, restrooms and others will be cleaned every 2 hours
- Cleaning checklist is completed and signed - [School Custodian's Job Description/Duties](#) are outlined here and include cleaning frequency by room

Classroom educators and other Propel staff will be provided with disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. Commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) will be wiped down twice per school day or more often as needed by educators and staff.

3rd party custodial staff may be hired as needed to support increased cleaning and sanitization methods.

Safety and Cleaning Supplies

Propel Schools will ensure that a three months supply of all cleaning materials and PPE will be kept in stock and available for distribution to every Propel building. The school supplies form is linked [here](#). A stockpile of hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves and face coverings including masks and shields has been ordered and distributed among the school buildings and administrative office.

Hands-free drinking water stations (with foot pumps) have been installed in every school building eliminating the need to distribute bottled water daily.

Restroom hand dryers have been reactivated. Paper towel dispensers have been installed in all restrooms, but will not be stocked until necessary.

Plexiglass shield barriers will be available and stored in classrooms for use at educator discretion.

Scholar Training

The school nursing team will visit all classrooms to conduct training on proper hand hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes, and other important health topics. The lesson plan is [linked here](#).

Staff and Scholar Illness and Quarantine

Isolation Room for Scholars and Staff

The nurse's office will be used as the isolation room to be used by scholars or staff presenting symptoms of COVID-19. Where the nurse's office is not large enough to safely distance individuals, a separate isolation room will be set up. Any scholar exhibiting the symptoms indicated in the table below and any other unvaccinated scholars residing at the same household will be sent to the isolation room separate from other scholars and staff members.

Group A - 1 or more symptoms	Group B - 2 or more symptoms
Fever (100.4 or higher)	Cough
Shortness of breath	Chills
Difficulty breathing	Rigors (feeling cold and shivery)
New olfactory disorder	Myalgia (muscle pain)
New taste disorder	Headache
Nausea or vomiting	Sore throat
Diarrhea	Fatigue
	Congestion or runny nose

The scholar's family member will be called for immediate pickup. Family members will be allotted 90 minutes from the time of initial call to pick up their child. In the event that the family member does not show up at the school in 90 minutes and does not provide a satisfactory reason, an ambulance will be called to transport the student to the hospital.

Staff will be directed to return home immediately upon identification of fever. If the staff member is unable to drive home on their own or must wait for a ride, the staff member will stay in the isolation room.

Staff and Scholar Illness and Expectations Regarding Staying Home

The Scholar and Family Handbook provides guidance on "When to Keep Your Child Home from School." Both staff and scholars are expected to follow this guidance.

The Allegheny County Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have provided the following guidelines:

- Your child should not be sent to school hoping that he or she will feel better after arriving.
- Your child should be kept home following an overnight bout of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea and watched for further symptoms.
- Your child should remain home if he/she has had a temperature of 100 degrees or higher. A child should have a normal temperature for 24 hours or as long as outlined in current CDC guidance without fever reducing medicines before returning to school.

If a school building has a high number of staff absences and is unable to staff the building to safely accept scholars, the CEO/Superintendent will make a decision about a building closure and the

length of the closure.

Additionally, staff and scholars are required to have completed the [COVID-19 Screening Questions](#) prior to boarding school transportation or entering the building.

Responding to Confirmed or Probable COVID-19 Cases

Propel Staff and scholars with positive COVID-19 tests should report to Allegheny County using the ["ACHD COVID-19 Self-Test Reporting" website](#). Propel will continue to track positive COVID-19 cases internally.

Deep Cleaning

Propel Operations Staff sanitizes buildings with a 100% botanical fog once a week. Spot cleaning with the botanical fog is used to treat areas with staff or scholars with positive COVID-19 cases.

Returning to School After Exhibiting Symptoms of or Having a Confirmed Case of COVID-19

Staff and scholars with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions before returning to school. Staff and scholars with fever or symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19 and no known direct exposure to a person with COVID-19 may return to school when they are asymptomatic and have been fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine or have confirmation of an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider that explains the COVID-19-like symptom(s).

Propel Schools will follow the latest [guidance on release from isolation](#) for both staff and scholars. Test results and/or doctor's notes for scholars must be shared with the school nurse, and the school nurse will communicate with the Principal. Test results and/or doctor's notes for staff members must be shared with the appropriate HR representative. If a family or scholar refuses to visit a doctor and receive a COVID-19 test, that scholar must stay at home for 5 days since symptom onset. That scholar will participate in Temporary Remote Learning Protocol during that time.

Learning Schedule for 2021-22

All Propel Schools will follow a 5-day per week, in-person learning schedule for all scholars and staff. We know that scholars experience maximum learning and growth when they engage with in-person, in-school instruction.

100% Remote Learning Protocol or Hybrid Learning Protocol **will not be offered as a choice for families** in the upcoming school year. This protocol will **only** be utilized in cases of weather-related or other emergency conditions, including guidance received from the Governor of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Department of Health or the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). If these conditions should ever occur, you will receive notification from us regarding specific details and processes.

Any scholars who quarantine based on the guidance above or by doctor's order or who are ill will participate in **Temporary Remote Learning Protocol** - which is asynchronous remote learning.