

# Back to School 2021

# FAMILY GUIDE



# Welcome Message from Superintendent Guadalupe Guerrero

---

## Dear Families and Students,

After more than 18 months, we will finally be back together in our classrooms, playgrounds and gyms. I recognize that we may be feeling a bit anxious, nervous, and excited...perhaps feeling many of these sentiments at the same time.

But here is what I know: We are ready. Our students are ready. And we are excited to create many new moments of joyful learning.

As a former classroom teacher and school principal, the ritual of back to school brings back wonderful memories. I remember students eager to share stories of their summer adventures, show off their new backpack, and, running to see their friends, now a bit taller. This annual tradition is always an opportunity to spark new friendships and build connections between students and our educators -- and we cherish that.

The global pandemic has been hard on all of us. Some of us got sick, lost family members, or continue to be hesitant to go out in public -- all valid and real fears. Yet, our students -- your children -- need us now to show up for them. To teach them. To see them.

As we come back to school in-person, we know that the coronavirus continues to be a threat to our community. Throughout the summer, we have partnered with public health experts to implement a range of health and safety measures, including improvements to our schools' ventilation systems. We've developed comprehensive health and safety plans, including bolstering our preparations in response to the rise of the delta variant.

Each layer of safety we've planned for in our schools works together. We know that the combination of our layered safety measures helps to better ensure a healthy learning environment. And that it takes each of us doing our part, wearing our masks, washing our hands, keeping our distance, and getting a vaccine shot when eligible, to keep ourselves, our classmates, colleagues, and school communities safe.

As we welcome your family back to school, and I commence my fifth year as Superintendent, I want to share an appreciation: Thank you for trusting us to create engaging and safe learning environments for your students.

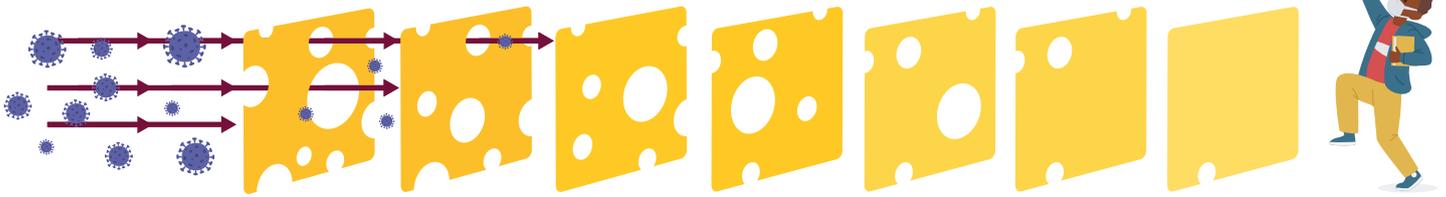
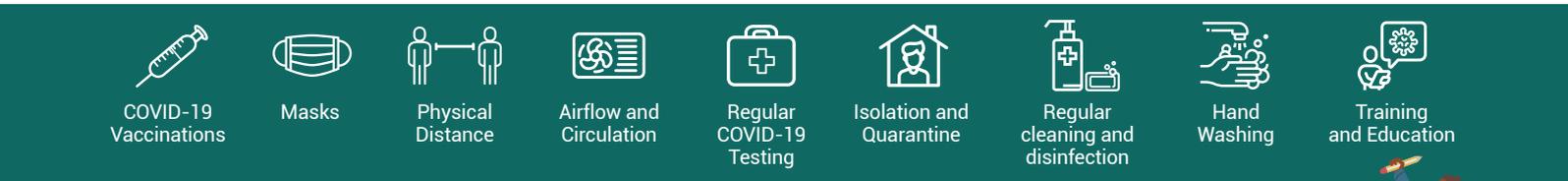
**I look forward to an incredible year creating an abundance of joyful moments together.**



**Guadalupe Guerrero**  
Superintendent of Portland Public Schools



We believe--guided by public health experts--that our layered health and safety measures will help us minimize disruptions to full in-person learning at your school this year.



Each layer of health and safety is working in conjunction with the others. We recognize that **no one layer is perfect** and the strength of each layer is realized when multiple layers work together.

### 1. COVID-19 Vaccinations



Vaccinations are one of the most important layers of protection against COVID-19.

We are proud to have been the first K-12 school district in the state of Oregon to announce vaccine requirements for all PPS staff. As a result, all PPS staff, contractors and volunteers will be **required** to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by October 18, 2021.

To date, over 95 percent of PPS staff have indicated that they are vaccinated ahead of the first day of school.

PPS will continue to promote, create and host opportunities for students, families, staff and community partners to get vaccinated this Fall. This will include for children under 12, as soon as they are eligible.

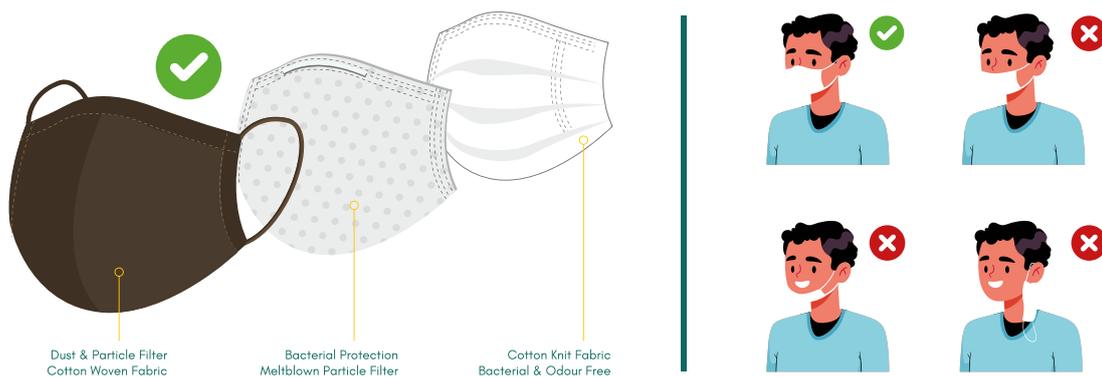
Learn More: [PPS.net/COVID-19Vaccination](https://PPS.net/COVID-19Vaccination)

### 2. Masks



All adults and students will be required to wear masks at all times, across every PPS school regardless of vaccination status. Whether indoor, outdoor or on school buses, except when eating, drinking, outdoor athletic competition or playing a musical wind instrument, everyone will wear masks. We will adapt as public health guidance evolves throughout the Fall months.

At a minimum, face masks must be made of cloth and should be multiple layers of tightly-woven, breathable fabric that blocks light from coming through the fabric.



### In The Bubble with Andy Slavitt: Toolkit - Kids, School and Delta

Andy Slavitts, President Biden's former Senior Advisor on COVID-19, poses your top questions about sending kids back to school to pediatrician and vaccinologist Peter Hotez and indoor air quality expert and Dean of the College of Engineering and Computer Science at Portland State University, Richard Corsi. They've got you covered on how Delta affects kids' risk of infection, wearing masks, staying safe while eating lunch, and much, much more.

Listen: [LemonadaMedia.com/podcast/toolkit-kids-school-and-delta](https://LemonadaMedia.com/podcast/toolkit-kids-school-and-delta)



## 3.

### 3 Feet Physical Distancing

Three (3) feet physical distancing for students and staff will be maintained to the extent possible.



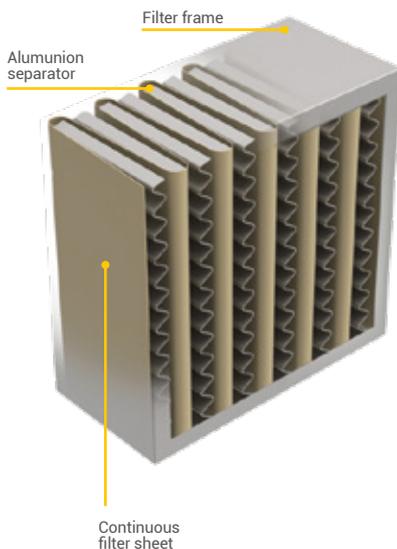
While the overwhelming majority of our 3,000+ classrooms will comfortably maintain 3-feet of physical distance between each student, we realize that we will have a few "to the extent possible" classrooms, and will work with each school leader to maximize distancing and the other layers of health and safety.

It is important to view each layer of safety as working in conjunction with all the other layers. While we focus on strengthening each layer and continue to find solutions to the multitude of challenges for each, **none is perfect**. The strength of our health and safety plan is ensuring that each layer is at its maximum capability in each space.

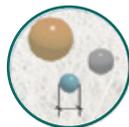
## 4.

### Airflow and Ventilation

All summer, our facilities team (thank you!) upgraded each PPS school's ventilation system. In doing so, there will be much improved indoor air quality as a result of:



Filter sheet fibres randomly arrange



Microparticle filtration

- **HEPA filters in every classroom and school buses**

HEPA, which stands for High Efficiency Particulate Air, is a designation used to describe filters that are able to trap 99.97 percent of particles that are 0.3 microns. Scientists have found that particles of that size evade most air filters more than larger or smaller particles.

- **Central air filters to MERV 13 standards across our schools**

MERV 13 standard filters proactively capture even the most microscopic particles from the air, capturing unwanted allergens including bacteria and harmful virus carriers.

### 5. Regular COVID-19 Testing



Thanks to the Oregon Health Authority, we plan to support free weekly COVID-19 screening testing to PPS students and unvaccinated staff. Screening testing is for individuals who are not showing symptoms or have a known exposure to COVID-19.\*

We will continue to offer symptomatic testing to students and staff who display symptoms of COVID-19 during the school day and will follow the quarantining process immediately.

### 6. Isolation and Quarantine



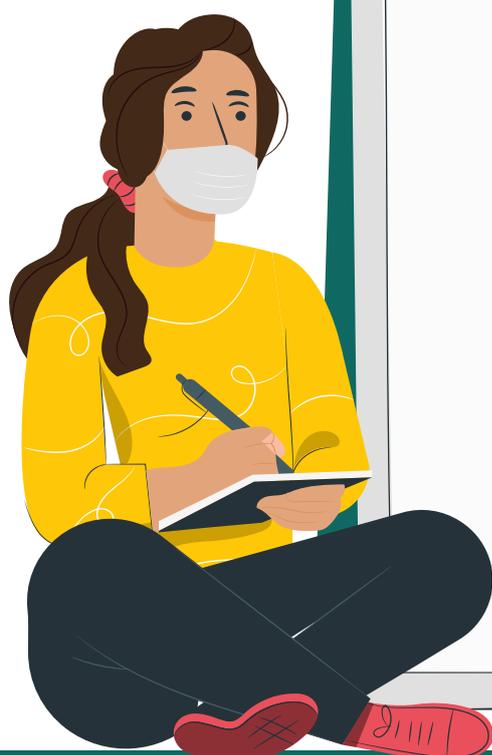
In an attempt to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure, prior to bringing your child to school **each** day, please screen for symptoms of COVID-19 (see page 7 for the checklist). If your child is showing COVID-19 primary symptoms, please stay home, contact your school and consult with your primary care provider.

If there is a COVID-19 case identified in one of our schools, we will follow local public health (Multnomah County Health Department and MESD School Health Services) guidance and requirements on isolating and quarantining individuals. If there is a case of COVID-19 at your school, we will follow MESD and Multnomah County Health Department's contact tracing procedures. Affected staff and families of any quarantining and isolation requirements will be notified.



#### How will schools limit public health's definition of "exposure" to COVID-19?

- Seating charts will help identify those who come into close contact.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks at all times.
- Regular physical distancing (3 feet to the extent possible).
- Breakfast and Lunch will be eaten outside for at least the first six weeks of school, with students maintaining 3 feet of distance.
- Limited indoor assemblies, field trips or indoor large gatherings for the first few months of school.
- Each case is unique, and each exposure will be determined by Multnomah County Public Health.



\* Details of the screening testing option are forthcoming from the Oregon Health Authority. PPS is ready to provide screening testing as soon as the Oregon Health Authority is able to provide the tests.



### 7. Cleaning and Disinfection

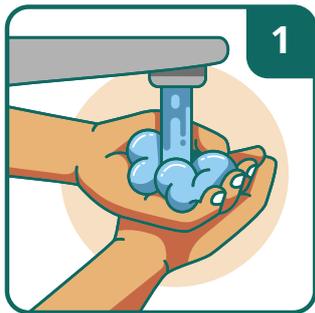
Thanks to the work of more than 340 custodial staff across our schools, we will regularly clean high-touch surfaces throughout the day. In addition, we will ensure each school has cleaning wipes readily available for use at all times.

If the Multnomah County Health Department determines there is a positive case of COVID-19 in a classroom, we will follow comprehensive disinfection protocols per local and CDC guidance.



### 8. Handwashing

Every student and staff will regularly have access to soap, water and alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol across every classroom and school in PPS.



WET YOUR HANDS



APPLY THE SOAP



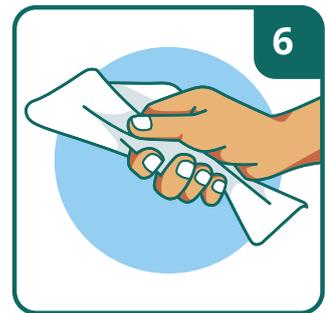
SCRUB YOUR HANDS



CLEAN YOUR THUMBS



RINSE YOUR HANDS



DRY WITH SINGLE USE TOWEL



### 9. Community Education

We love that our schools serve as learning hubs for our entire community. We will partner with public health to educate and promote COVID-19 vaccinations and other health and safety measures to protect against COVID-19. As guidance evolves, we will keep you, our families, up to date on the latest information.

# A Typical School Day This Fall

Spending a day at school will look and feel very similar to what school was like before our schools closed, but with a few extra precautions to make sure students can learn and play safely and comfortably.

**What supports and resources are available at my school to support the learning experience of my students?**  
Please visit: [PPSfamilysupports.com](https://PPSfamilysupports.com)

## Transportation

School bus transportation to and from school will be available for eligible students. All of our school buses are equipped with HEPA filters and will be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Need Help? Call us at 503-916-6901 or email us at [transportation@pps.net](mailto:transportation@pps.net)



**Did you know?** PPS students grades 9-12 can use their school ID card as a pass for TriMet services (valid through school year).

## Recess/Playground

Students will be able to use playground equipment and enjoy outdoor activity during recess. Students will be required to wear masks at all times, regardless of vaccination status, whether indoor or outdoor activity. We expect this requirement to be updated during the school year.

## Breakfast and Lunch

All PPS students will be able to get breakfast and lunch at **no charge**.



**We are prioritizing our students to eat outside. Public Health agrees, when unmasked, being outside is the safest option.**

- Students will maintain a 3 feet of distance while the mask is off and they are eating
- Students will pick up their meals from the cafeteria before going outside. This will help manage allergen safety protocols and ensure safe food handling.
- We are encouraging and normalizing sitting and eating on the ground when outside. If your student cannot sit on the ground, please contact your school to find alternative options.



**Did you Know?** Each school will have available outdoor seating items (blankets, cushions, etc.) for students. In Portland, outdoor eating is not always an option due to a variety of reasons, therefore each school will develop a "Meal Service Safety Plan" that will be put in place when eating outside is not available. Visit: [PPS.net/BacktoSchool2021](https://PPS.net/BacktoSchool2021) to view your school's unique Meal Service Safety plan.

## Special Education Services

For students with disabilities, we provide a continuum of special education services through an individualized education plan (IEP) in the least restrictive environment possible, consistent with state and federal rules.

This year, to address the impacts of COVID-19 on student learning, each family with an IEP will participate in a Back to School conversation with educators to identify possible additional supports your child might need to accelerate learning and overall progress. You will receive a letter explaining more specifics around this. And due to the continued health-related risks associated with COVID-19, each IEP meeting will give us an opportunity to review and make appropriate health and safety accommodations.

## Mental Health Supports

We know this pandemic, local community violence, and the continued physical and verbal violence against communities of color and LGBTQIA+ communities impacts each of our mental health and wellness. PPS is staffed with a number of school counselors, psychologists, social workers, nurses and other specialized supports, including our community-based racial equity and social justice partners.

Together, this support team is able to help you, your family or your student with identifying and providing mental health and/or substance use support or other important family resources. Contact your school counselor for support. To learn more please visit our website: [PPS.net/StudentHealth](https://pps.net/StudentHealth).

## Culturally-specific Community-Based School Supports

We partner with culturally specific and multiracial community organizations to provide academic and emotional support, enrichment and mentoring to Black, Native American and students of color.

To learn more: [PPS.net/RESJPartners](https://pps.net/RESJPartners)

## SUN Community Schools

Our SUN Community Schools is a collective effort of youth, parents, businesses, faith communities, libraries, and community organizations to offer students and our families support towards your child's success. To find your local SUN Community School and services like food and energy assistance, visit: [multco.us/sun/sun-community-schools](https://multco.us/sun/sun-community-schools)

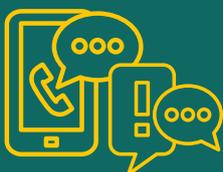
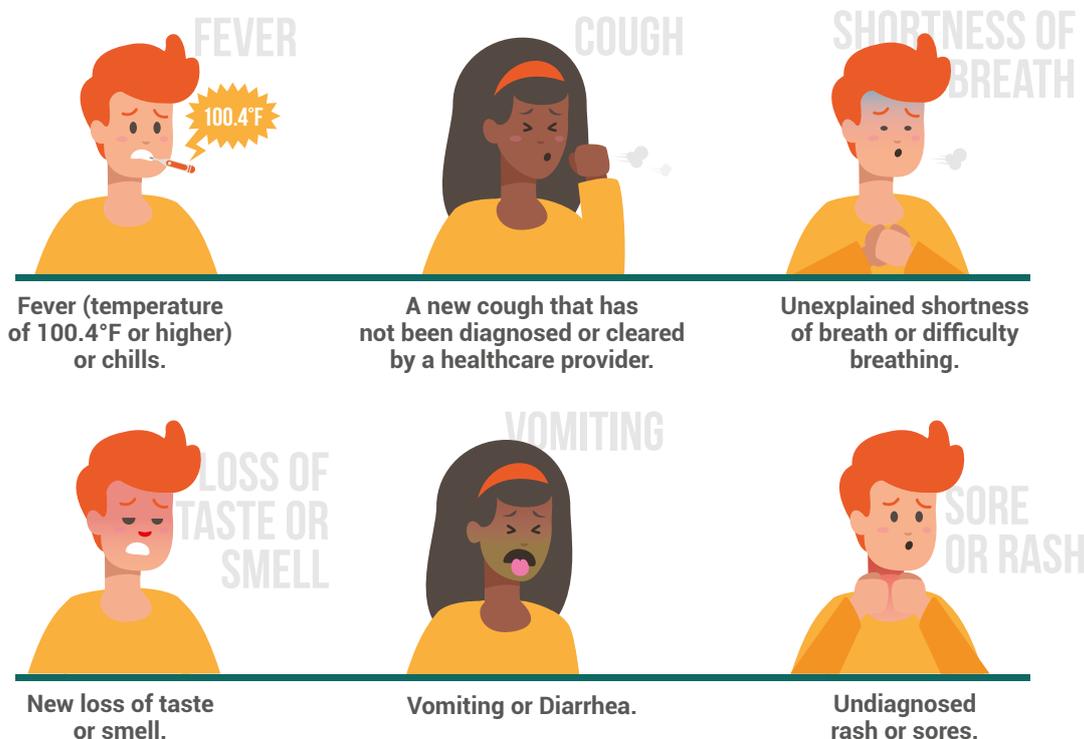
## Athletics and Performing Arts

We are excited to return to our normal athletic schedule and performing arts across our schools.

PIL Schedule: [PILathletics.com](https://pilathletics.com) | Performing Arts Events: [PPSArts.com](https://ppsarts.com)

# Daily Illness Self-Screening Checklist

In an attempt to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure, prior to bringing your child to school **each** day, please screen for symptoms of COVID-19:



Please do not send your child to school and contact your school if your child is ill or is showing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19.

If your child was at school and then began developing symptoms, please contact the school immediately so we can determine if additional isolation / quarantine is necessary.

# Our Commitment to Health and Safety

We've established a set of layered health and safety measures against COVID-19, which will help maximize uninterrupted in-person learning experiences for our students.



## Guided by Public Health

We will continue to be guided and adhering to the most current COVID-19 public health guidelines issued by the Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSHA), Multnomah County Health Department and the State of Oregon. We will continue to review our safety plans and the latest research and information on COVID with our independent public and pediatric health experts on our Health Advisory Panel.



## Robust Safety Protocols

Robust safety protocols are in place at all schools, including required masking, vaccination of school staff, regular cleaning and disinfecting, hand washing, among others.



## Upgraded Air-Filtration Systems

We've upgraded all of our air filtration systems to MERV-13 standards and will have HEPA filters in every classroom and school buses.



## Hygiene

Restrooms and handwashing sinks in classrooms are stocked with soap and paper towels. Hand sanitizer will be available for every classroom and throughout school buildings.



## COVID-19 Testing

We utilize a COVID-19 testing and contact tracing program in partnership with the Oregon Health Authority, Multnomah Education Service District and Multnomah Health Department.



## Vaccinations

Students ages 12 and older and their families are eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at our school-based student health centers. You don't need to attend the school where the center is located: [multco.us/health/student-health-centers](https://multco.us/health/student-health-centers).



**PPS will continue to promote, create and host opportunities for students, families, staff and community partners to get vaccinated this Fall. This will include for children under 12, as soon as they are eligible.**

For the most up-to-date information  
and answers to more common questions:  
[PPS.net/BacktoSchool2021](https://pps.net/BacktoSchool2021)

# We are excited to see our students and families for the first day of school!

