

Putnam County information on schools reopening

On July 2 Governor Mike DeWine released the Reset & Restart Planning Guide for Schools and this Joint Re-Opening Agreement was created with those recommendations in mind. This Agreement is the initial result of collaboration among the Putnam County School Superintendents and the Putnam County Health Department. The recommendations and requirements set forth herein are subject to change and in all likelihood will evolve as the situation progresses.

Each school district will implement safety protocols tailored to their respective buildings

- Each school district will continuously work with the Putnam County Health Department to promote safety in each school building guiding principles
- Each school district will be transparent with all stakeholders that some level of risk will always be present when children and school district employees occupy school district facilities.
- School districts acknowledge the need for consistency in areas of operations, while also acknowledging that individual differences in classroom spaces, school facilities and overall building operations may lead to some inconsistencies.
- School districts are planning to maintain their previously-approved school calendars with some potential adjustments due to staff training and preparedness.

- Each of these general guiding principles will be common to all Putnam County School districts.

Daily health assessments

- District personnel are expected to take their own temperature before reporting to the school building.
- Students who are able are expected to take their own temperature before reporting to the school building.
- Parents or guardians of students who are unable to take their own temperature are expected to conduct temperature checks on their son(s) and/or daughter(s) before reporting to the school building.
- Students must stay home if they have a temperature in excess of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and/or experiencing any or all of the following symptoms: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea.

Communications when a student/staff member has been diagnosed COVID-19 positive.

- Communication will be developed by the Putnam County Health Department and shared with each Putnam County school district.

- Communication will be shared based on the protocol set forth by the Putnam County Health Department.
- School districts will cooperate with the Putnam County Health Department's work in contact tracing and quarantine requirements.
- The Putnam County Health Department, consistent with statewide protocols, will define what is considered "exposure" to COVID-19.
- The Putnam County Health Department will determine the quarantine protocol.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings are required for all staff members.
- Face coverings are required for students in Grades 3-12.
- Face coverings are strongly suggested for Grades K-2.
- Any requirement may be waived for individual students or staff with medical conditions that prohibit them from wearing a face covering. In that instance, proper documentation must be provided to the district.
- Parents are advised that any current recommendations on face coverings may become mandates.
- Changes to any face-covering policy may be made at either a county or district level.

Classrooms

- Safety protocols for all learning spaces will be in place.
- However, as stated in the general guiding principles above, some level of risk will always be present when children and school district employees occupy school district facilities.
- Classroom occupancy will be determined based on each individual circumstance with the maximum amount of safety considerations possible.

Food service/cafeteria use

- All districts will offer food service.
- Logistics will be determined by individual districts in compliance with the Putnam County Health Department.
- Additionally, the following measures will be implemented: no self-service of any kind; individual condiment packages will be distributed to students by kitchen staff; socially-distanced seating in the cafeteria and adjacent eating spaces; encouragement for students to wash their hands before and after eating lunch; sanitization of the cafeteria and adjacent eating spaces between each lunch cycle.

Transportation

- Strict loading and unloading procedures will be developed by each district.

- Drivers will create strict and specific seating arrangements for each bus route that students must adhere to.
- Districts will allow two students to a seat in normal circumstances.
- Special circumstances that may lead to three students in a seat include the following: three siblings; smaller students who can safely fit three to a seat.
- Face coverings are required for all drivers and riders to and from the school building.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided for use as students enter and exit the school bus.
- In the event state policies require school districts to use alternative schedules, districts may adopt minimum requirements for transportation to reduce the number of students who are eligible for school district transportation.
- Parents who are uncomfortable regarding the ability of the district to successfully maintain a safe and healthy setting on the school bus are encouraged to personally transport their son(s) and/or daughter(s) to and from school.

Playground/recess

- Districts will make every effort to maintain consistency with other safety procedures.
- Hand sanitization/washing of hands must take place prior to and after use of school playground equipment.

- Districts may be flexible with recess scheduling to limit amount of students on the playground area(s) at the same time.

Start of day/end of day

- Measures will be taken to prevent students from congregating before and after school.
- Measures will be taken to improve the flow of student traffic entering and exiting the building before and after the school day.

Visitors/volunteers

- Visitors to any district building can include any number of reasons. Therefore, each district will make decisions to allow visitors based on a case-by-case basis.
- That being said, the following guidelines for school visitors will be observed: visitors are generally discouraged from being inside the building during the school day; safety protocols, such as a temperature screening upon arrival, may be required prior to granting entry into the building.

Risk-level guidelines as per Governor DeWine's Orders from July 2, 2020

The state has created a color-coded system of guidelines to assess the amount of spread of COVID-19 per county (yellow, orange, red, and purple). School officials will collaborate regularly with the Putnam County Health Department to review Putnam County's rating and determine what adjustments, if any, need to be made to daily school operations throughout the school year.

Therefore, we strongly urge parents, students and staff members to practice the ongoing and strongly recommended safety measures to further prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Physical and social distancing
- Wearing a face covering
- Good hand hygiene