Letter to Students and Families: What to Expect - Health & Safety in our School(s) for the 2022-23 School Year

*Use this letter and fact sheet to help build* ***awareness*** *and understanding about the health and safety protocols your school(s) will put in place for the upcoming school year. Let students, parents and families know how they can support these efforts and where to go for more information.*

Dear Students & Families,

We are excited to welcome students and staff back to school this fall and want to share some updates about what to expect.

**School Days & Instructional Time**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School {School District} will operate \_\_\_\_\_ days each week, serving all students full-time, in-person this fall. Our district will provide remote learning for students who may need [Insert local details].

**Health & Safety in Our Schools**

As our schools plan for the fall, it is important to remember our communities will be experiencing outbreaks of respiratory disease, including COVID-19, now and into the future. COVID-19 continues to change with new variants, and our knowledge of mitigation efforts grows over time.

Right now, the best tools to protect ourselves and one another are vaccination and boosting when eligible, face coverings, physical distancing, ventilation and airflow, hand hygiene, and staying home when you feel sick.

State guidance empowers school district leaders - in partnership with local public health - to make local decisions about how to implement health and safety protocols that serve our community best.

We want to share the health and safety protocols we will have in place in our schools, along with steps we plan to take in response to respiratory disease outbreaks during the 2022-23 school year.

We encourage you to review the information below and talk with your student(s) about what to expect. The transition back to school may prompt a range of emotions for you and/or your child - from anxiety and uncertainty to excitement and opportunity. We want you to know it is a priority to create a space where your child feels safe, cared for, and connected to the learning environment. [Insert link or details around Centering Safety and Belonging resources offered] Working together, we can harness this opportunity to rekindle joy and learning in the classrooms, auditoriums, and playgrounds.

You can find more information on our webpage at [Insert local details].

The best person to contact should you have questions is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**What to Expect Fact Sheet**

**Health & Safety Protocols**

Nearly all health and safety protocols are locally determinedfor the 2022-23 school year. School districts and public charter schools continue to determine how to implement health and safety protocols like face coverings and physical distancing.

There are a few requirements from the state that each school district must follow. Within state rule **all teachers, school staff and volunteers must be full vaccinated or have provided documentation of a medical or religious exception in order to teach, work, learn, study, assist, observe, or volunteer at a school. This is also true for school-based program staff and volunteers**.  Other key measures that remain required in federal or state law or rule include: maintaining a school-level COVID-19 management plan, a communicable disease plan, excluding students and staff with certain symptoms or illnesses, and maintaining an isolation space in schools.

**Vaccination**: Our schools bring together people who are fully vaccinated and people who are not fully vaccinated. Everyone age 6 months and older is now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccination of children under 15 years old requires parental or guardian consent. Vaccination of students and staff is [insert local details (i.e.. encouraged / optional)] and not required to come to school. Vaccination supports a student’s access to in-person learning, sports and extracurricular activities. When as many eligible students and staff are vaccinated as possible, our school is better able to serve students and families without interruption and to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

**Face Coverings**: Face coverings are [insert local details (i.e.. required / encouraged / welcome)]for students and staff. [Insert local details]

**Physical Distancing:** We will support physical distancing in all daily activities and instruction, maintaining at least [insert] feet between students to the extent possible. Our schools will have signs and visuals to remind students, staff and visitors.

**Cohorting**: [Insert local details]

**Ventilation and Airflow:** [Insert local details]

**Handwashing:** Hand washing will be taught and encouraged. Students and staff will have access to soap and water and hand sanitizer. [Insert local details]

**Responding to Respiratory Disease Outbreaks including COVID-19**

We want you to know it is a priority for our school district to create a learning environment where your child feels safe, cared for, and connected to peers and school staff.

**When staff and students show symptoms of being ill:** if the student or staff member feels ill prior to coming to school, they should stay home. If a student or staff member becomes ill at school, we will have a separate location for people with symptoms of COVID-19 to rest. Our school [insert local details, i.e., will / will not] offer COVID-19 diagnostic testing. Parents/guardians will need to provide a consent form in order for their student to participate in COVID-19 testing at school.  [Insert local details]

**When a staff member or a student tests positive for COVID-19**: Our school will work with you by providing the date you may return to school based on guidance from our local public health authority. [Insert local details]