



# Staff Q & A

*As preparations continue for the reopening of school this September, we have had many questions from staff regarding their return to work. And while challenges will continue to arise during this pandemic, we want to assure you that the health and safety of our staff and students is the highest priority as we move forward with our return plans. We remain committed to providing a safe, secure and healthy environment for everyone, where we can continue to Pursue Excellence, One Child at a Time.*

*While we have spoken with staff to answer questions specific to your individual concerns, we have compiled a list of the most frequently asked questions, and will continue to update it as more questions arise.*

*As always, we thank you for your commitment to Pemberton students, especially during these unprecedented times.*



## **Questions posted August, 2020:**

**Q: Can staff members wear scrubs to work?**

A: No, proper attire is required, following the established employee dress code. Proper attire protocol applies to both in-person and remote instruction.

**Q: How are we minimizing exposure for teachers who share classrooms? Will there be any effort made to give them their own space?**

A. Teachers who share classrooms will be 6 feet apart when possible and will be wearing masks. When staff are not able to sit 6 feet apart, we will look to create barriers. Every school building is unique and has different needs. As always, the building principal will determine the best utilization of space.

**Q: What accommodations are being made for staff with high risk health conditions or that live with people who are at high risk since remote instruction is only an option for students, not staff? Will you be willing to lessen their exposure by not requiring duties and at least allowing them to remain in their classrooms? Will you make sure to NOT use these people as emergency subs for a teacher showing symptoms similar to that of COVID?**

A: The district will make every effort to accommodate reasonable requests, while still providing a safe learning environment for the students we serve.

**Q: If a staff member has to leave early due to showing symptoms similar to that of COVID, who will then watch the class who have all possibly been exposed? How can you risk possibly exposing another staff member? Will the students be removed from the room? Where will they go for the remainder of the day?**

A: We will disinfect that teachers area and high touch areas as soon as possible, maintain 6 feet social distancing in the classroom, and wear masks. We can also provide gloves for a staff member, if necessary.

**Q: What insurance does the district have to cover both students and staff as a result of contracting COVID 19 via a school exposure?**

A: The employees' primary insurance coverage will be utilized if COVID-19 claims are submitted. For students, the parents/guardians primary insurance coverage will be utilized if COVID-19 claims are submitted. In addition, parents/guardians may submit a claim via the district's student accident insurance for any costs not covered by their primary insurance. All insurance carriers and employers in the state are bound to follow any additional benefits awarded by the State via Executive Order or legislative action.

**Q: Will shields be allowed to be worn for staff with claustrophobia issues?**

A: Shields are not a substitution for face masks. The recommendation is to wear a face covering that covers a person's nose and mouth. Face coverings catch droplets when a person talks. Droplets are the main way that COVID-19 is passed from person to person. A face shield does not offer the option to catch droplets, as the droplets may escape at the bottom of the face shield. Face shields do not offer the same level of protection as face coverings. If you have a documented medical condition that prevents you from wearing a face mask, please contact HR.

**Q: I know that they will be taking temps as the kids enter the school but how are we as bus drivers supposed to protect ourselves in the event that they have a fever boarding the buses in the mornings?**

A: All staff and students will be required to wear face coverings while riding the bus. Hand sanitizer will be provided on each bus, and buses will be disinfected and sanitized every night. In addition, staff may request a face shield to wear along with their facial covering, and/or gloves that can be worn during the work day.

### **Questions posted July 23, 2020**

**Q: Does an employee qualify for EFMLEA because he or she is worried or anxious to go to work due to the COVID-19 risk?**

A: No. EFMLEA is a 12 week leave for childcare. Please click here to read "Newly Enacted State and Federal Laws."

**Q: Can an employee take leave under the EFMLEA intermittently?**

A: Yes, but only if the school district and the employee agree.

**Q: Does an employee qualify for EFMLEA if they are uncomfortable sending their child to school?**

A: No. More information can be found by clicking here for the document "The FMLA and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act."

**Q: If an employee needs to take leave due to a need for childcare, what kind of documentation needs to be provided?**

A: Documentation is required. More information can be found by clicking here for the document "The FMLA and the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act."

**Q: What happens to employees' insurance benefits while on EFMLEA?**

A: Employees' medical benefits will continue while on EFMLEA.

**Q: What happens if employees cannot return to work after the 12 weeks allotted leave under EFMLEA?**

A: Employees that cannot return to work after the 12 weeks of leave must write a letter to the Superintendent requesting an unpaid personal leave of absence. Please note that your health insurance will be terminated once you go on an unpaid status.

**Q: If an employee is on maternity leave and expected to return on 9/1/20, can they apply for EFMLEA?**

A: No. Leave under the EFMLEA runs concurrently with FMLA leave.

**Q: Can hand sanitizer be mounted safely on every school bus?**

A: Yes, the district is working with NJDOT to determine the best location to mount hand sanitizer bottles.

**Q: Will Aides report every other day as the students? Or will we attend every day?**

A: All staff will be reporting each day.

**Q: Is there an option for me to work remotely if we are still in the building in September?**

A: All staff will report each day. Teachers that are selected to teach the remote students will do so from their respective classroom and respective school. This will allow these staff members to provide in-person support if needed during an emergency. As in any situation, we will always work with staff to make reasonable accommodations based on the job responsibilities.

**Q: How will immune compromised staff or students be accommodated? If people have conditions on the CDC 's list of higher risk factors is the district required to provide further accommodations?**

A: As in any situation, we will always work with staff to make reasonable accommodations based on the job responsibilities and doctor recommendations.

**Q: If we have to quarantine will we use our sick time?**

A: If an employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19, then the employee is entitled to the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act.

**Q: How will the district get substitutes during this time when there is already a shortage?**

A: The district has approved the list of substitutes for the 20-21 school year. Each school will continue to have permanent substitutes for this upcoming school year.

**Q: What will be done for children in our class that have parents that are exposed to COVID daily? Will the teachers be informed of those students?**

A: All students will have the opportunity to attend school via hybrid or remote. We will follow the CDC guidelines which include: frequent hand washing, social distancing and wearing face masks, to mitigate the risk.

**Q: What accommodations will be made for educators and their families? For example, many staff members have children and other districts may choose different models of school**

**with split schedules or hybrid learning. How will that be handled?**

A: As in any situation, we will always work with staff to make reasonable accommodations based on the job responsibilities; however, we are unable to assist with childcare.

**Q: Will we have virtual instruction for students that want it?**

A: That is our desire, pending county/state approval.

**Q: Is there a cap on sick day usage for staff?**

A: Staff will need to apply for FMLA. Staff can use their sick time if it is for their own medical reason. Please note that this is a 12 week leave during a 12 month period.

**Q: Can staff who have breathing issues use face shields instead of masks?**

A: Staff with a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask can wear a face shield. Staff may use their own mask, shield or both. For those staff members who require a face shield, the district will provide it.

**Q: Since masks protect others from the mask wearer, is it the district's position that teachers and staff do not need to be protected, but students need to be protected from us?**

A: All staff and students will be required to wear a mask.

**Q: Will the district attendance policies change so staff does not have to come to school sick? Also same for students?**

A: Attendance will still be tracked and monitored since it is imperative for everyone to come to work/school, when healthy.

**Q: Will we sign a waiver to return to work?**

A: No waivers will be signed.

**Q: Our toilets do not have lids—will this be remedied?**

A: The CDC does not require lids on toilets in any establishment. There will be additional cleaning of all bathrooms throughout the course of the school day.

**Q: What is the cleaning schedule and what are we using as cleaning agents?**

A: The facilities department is working to update cleaning checklists that will be used throughout the day in every building.

**Q: What will our lunch schedules be? Will the kids eat in the classroom?**

A: As of now, the lunch schedule should be similar to last year. Some students will eat in the classroom, but each building is working on plans to have students eat in the cafeteria as much as possible.

**Q: If we are expected to make videos daily, are we being paid per hour for the extra work?**

A: Creating short video mini lessons of 10-15 minutes will be required for many teachers as a part of their professional responsibilities. If we are in full remote, teachers will create all their own videos. If we are in a hybrid model, teachers will work collaboratively by dividing the workload, which will result in making approximately one instructional recorded mini lesson per day.

**Q: Will we be provided with more than hand sanitizer, as mentioned in the previous email?**

**Will we have PPE such as masks, face shields, gloves?**

A: Staff will be encouraged to supply their own face masks, and may also choose to wear their own face shield and gloves. The district will have masks and face shields available should staff members require them. Each teacher will be supplied with disinfectant, microfiber rags and gloves.

**Q: Is there a plan in place if my own children's schools do not reopen? I can't leave my 8-year-old home without an adult.**

A: As in any situation, we will always work with staff to make reasonable accommodations based on the job responsibilities; however, we are unable to assist with childcare.

**Q: I have a concern as an employee/parent with children in the district. Being employed by the district with a hybrid schedule especially on the days where my children will be home, who are in 7th, 5th and 3rd grade, will be a huge obstacle. How am I going to be in 2 places at once?**

A: As in any situation, we will always work with staff to make reasonable accommodations based on the job responsibilities; however, we are unable to assist with childcare.

**Q: I am currently employed within the food service department and wonder how will this service function during the year?**

A: The district will continue to serve students who are taking part in both the Hybrid and Remote models. The serving of meals will be different and there may be menu modifications, but the majority of the food service department will operate as it does during a normal school day.

**Q: Is the district providing hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes for the classrooms? Or will teachers be expected to provide these ourselves as we have in the past?**

A: The district will be providing hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, microfiber rags and gloves for each classroom. Disinfectant wipes are not available at this time, but the district is working with multiple vendors to secure wipes for September.

**Q: How is the district going to ensure that students have not been medicated to mask a fever as parents have done in the past?**

A: Students who demonstrate symptoms of illness other than a fever will be sent to the nurse for additional assessment.

**Q: The beginning of the school year with the youngest students means lots of comforting and contact. How will we be able to observe distancing rules at this level?**

A: Preschool staff will be provided face shields and gloves, if necessary. We will follow the guidance provided by the Department of Early Childhood Education.

**Q: Will PECEC be on the same schedule as the rest of the district?**

A: PECEC will also follow a hybrid schedule.

**Q: Will staff be working every day, or every other day along with students?**

A: Staff will report 5 days a week to school.

**Q: Will our insurance cover us if we don't have BOTH the mask and the shield on?**

A: The district has been in contact with its provider and is awaiting further guidance.

**Q: if a student comes to school without a mask will he/she be given one?**

A: Students that come to school without a mask will be given one to wear while at school. Students will not be allowed to board a bus without a mask, unless there is a history of a documented medical condition.

**Q: What about the amount of children on the bus? How do you expect drivers to watch the road and enforce wearing a mask?**

A: The district will attempt to assign support staff members to as many bus routes as possible to assist the driver. Students who do not follow the protocols in place will be referred to the building administrator.