



To: ALL PPS

Subject: Returning from Winter Break

Dear PPS Community,

We hope that you had a restful and joyful winter break. As we welcome students and staff back to campus tomorrow, we know that the surge in COVID-19 cases as a result of the Omicron variant is at the top of many minds. We continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 in our region and on the latest Omicron variant impact on schools. We are working with our local and state public health authorities, as well as the Oregon Department of Education, to modify, as necessary, our health and safety protocols in order to keep students and staff healthy and safe, while keeping students learning in-person all school year.

As we come back to school tomorrow, each one of us will have to do our part: wear our masks, wash our hands, keep our distance, and get a vaccine shot and/or booster, to keep ourselves, our classmates, colleagues, and school communities safe.

Here are important health and safety reminders for you to know:

Daily Illness Self-Screening Checklist

In an attempt to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure, prior to coming to school each day, please screen for symptoms of COVID-19. Here is a link to our [self-screening checklist](#) for your reference.

If an employee or student has any of the symptoms in the self-screening checklist, they should stay home and report their absence and symptoms to the school or appropriate supervisor.

If you have tested positive, please remember to call your school and if you are an employee, notify your supervisor.

Get Vaccinated and Boosted

Vaccination remains the most effective way to keep students and staff safe from COVID-19 and we urge all to be vaccinated or get boosted against the virus. We are proud that here in Multnomah County, our community continues to respond positively to public health recommendations, with over 44 percent of children 5 to 11 having received their first dose to date, 81 percent of students ages 12 to 17, and over 85 percent of adults vaccinated against COVID-19.

If you are still looking for a COVID-19 vaccine, here are a number of ways to locate a vaccine conveniently and free:

- Use [this easy tool](#) developed by OHSU to find a vaccine or booster shot. If you prefer, you can also schedule an appointment or ask questions by calling the OHSU hotline at 833-647-8222, weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The Multnomah County Student Health Centers on five PPS high school campuses, as well those at four non-PPS high schools, are now offering COVID-19 vaccines for students ages 5-11. Each clinic is setting aside specific times for vaccinations. [See the hours and how to schedule.](#)
- Multnomah County is holding regular vaccine clinics at Lloyd Center on Tuesdays from 2 to 8 p.m. and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The clinics are held on the second floor of the old Sears location. [See more information.](#)
- Those looking to get vaccinated or receive a booster can use the Oregon Health Authority's [Get Vaccinated Oregon](#) The tool also helps you find sites to receive a COVID-19 test.

Wear Masks

PPS continues to implement the statewide requirement that all adults and students must wear a mask at all times, regardless of vaccination status. To limit the spread of the omicron variant, PPS will continue to require masks outdoors and on school buses at all times. PPS has purchased over 1 million age-appropriate masks and continues to deliver masks to schools as needed.

Student COVID-19 Testing and Test to Stay Program

Oregon Health Authority's **school-based COVID testing programs** are another tool to support a safe return to school. Students have had the opportunity to sign up for regular **screening tests through OHSU**. If you are also interested in participating, please see this [screening testing program](#) link and work with your school to complete the necessary releases. Screening testing provides early detection of COVID-19, even when individuals have no apparent COVID-19-like symptoms.

For students who are not vaccinated, we will be starting the **Test To Stay program** this Wednesday, January 5, which will reduce the time a student is out of school to quarantine. You can help expedite the process by signing the consent form for the BinaxNOW test, which we have been offering for symptomatic students and staff in our schools since spring. PPS will participate in the Test to Stay program being implemented per OHA and ODE in collaboration with MESD (Multnomah Educational Service District). You can get the consent form from your school, or download it at the links below, then sign it and return it to the school.

- [Consent form for students 15 and older](#)
- [Consent form for parents and guardians of students under 15](#)

The test to stay program is intended for unvaccinated, asymptomatic individuals in a school setting where universal masking is fully in place. In the Test to Stay program, students who are

exposed to COVID-19 at school can continue to come to school and will receive onsite testing on specified days during the subsequent two weeks. Students who remain asymptomatic and have negative test results will not need to quarantine.

Learn more about COVID-19 testing from our local public health partners at Multnomah County [here](#).

Lastly, here are answers to a few common questions you might have about the start of school:

With COVID-19 cases on the rise, why not transition all schools to remote learning?

Data has shown over and over again that our schools are among the safest places for students - with universal masking, social distancing, vaccination and testing. Most of the time, COVID-19 is spread in informal, community and household settings outside of school in which fewer protections are in place — playdates, family gatherings, community events, shopping outings, public transportation, etc. We want to keep as many of our students in school as possible, as nearly two years of research shows that school is the best place for them to be academically, socially, mentally, physically, and emotionally. We are asking each of you, our staff and students to follow closely the COVID safety protocols, which is our best method of limiting the spread of the disease and the overall impact of the pandemic.

Will PPS modify quarantine procedures to reflect updated guidance from the CDC?

On December 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released updated guidance that shortened the isolation timeline. At this time, we are maintaining a 10-day quarantine for all PPS staff members and students. We will be following the direction of our state and county health authorities and the Oregon Department of Education on how this updated guidance impacts schools. We plan to provide updated guidelines to our staff and families as soon as possible.

My child was recently vaccinated. How do I submit proof of their vaccination status?

You can help your school to register your student's COVID-19 vaccinations through ParentVue. Here is the communication that was shared on 12/16/21: [Registering COVID 19 Vaccinations](#). This information helps us to communicate quarantine requirements should students be exposed to COVID 19 at school. If you have not yet done so, please consider registering your students' COVID 19 vaccinations; you will need their vaccination cards and access to ParentVue. Here are the directions for updating this information: [ParentVue directions](#). You can also have your student take a copy of their vaccination card to your school's office if you prefer.

Thank you for trusting the Portland public schools to create engaging and safe learning environments for your students. We will see you tomorrow.