

Panama Central School

COVID-19 Reopening Plan



The purpose of this plan is to ensure a smooth re-entry for staff and students during the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan will follow the guidelines & recommendations set forth by the New York State Health Department and New York State Department of Education. District-wide initiatives and plans are set forth for in-person learning, hybrid learning, and remote learning depending on the need.

2022-23

Revised: Aug 24, 2022

***This plan is subject to change as new guidance from the NYS and Local health departments may require adjustments as we continue to navigate this pandemic**

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Introduction

In response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Panama Central School has developed a shared-decision making committee to provide guidance for the reopening of Panama Central School for the 2020-21 school year. Taking into consideration the fluid health crisis, the committee has prepared and planned for multiple scenarios including in-person learning, hybrid learning compliant with social distancing guidelines, and remote learning. As required by the New York State Education Department, this plan addresses the following assurances:

- Family Communication and Community Engagement
- Health and Safety
- Facilities
- Child Nutrition
- Transportation
- Social Emotional Well-Being
- School Schedules
- Attendance
- Technology
- Training & Learning
- Special Education
- Bilingual Education
- Teacher/Principal Evaluation and Certification

The safety of our students, staff and community are of the utmost importance. The Panama Central School COVID-19 Reopening Plan establishes and explains the procedures, practices and safeguards needed to meet the recommendations and guidance outlined by the following governmental agencies:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)(updated) [CDC Guidelines for K-12 Schools](#)
- Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration ([OSHA](#))
- New York State Department of Health ([NYSDOH](#))
- New York State Education Department ([NYSED - Coronavirus](#))
- New York State's [“New York Forward” Guidelines](#)

Based on the aforementioned guidance, district-wide initiatives and plans are set forth for in-person learning, hybrid learning, and remote learning depending on the need.

This plan was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders from all constituent groups, including:

- Administrators
- Teacher Representatives
- School Related Professional Association Members
- School Health Office Representative
- Parent Input via survey
- Board of Education
- Student Services Team Representatives

Important Contact Information

For questions about...	Contact Information
A course assignment or resource	The assigned teacher Email addresses - first initial last name @pancent.org (ex. eharvey@pancent.org)
Technology-related problem or question	Brynne Hinsdale, Technology Director bhinsdale@pancent.org (716)782-4456
Social-emotional personal or academic concern	Dane Simmons, 7-12 Guidance Counselor dsimmons@pancent.org (716)782-4422 Laura Myers, School Psychologist lmyers@pancent.org (716)782-4448 Nichole Brunecz, Social Worker nbrunecz@pancent.org (716)782-4761
Free Breakfast & Lunch	Genevieve Jordan, District Clerk gjordan@pancent.org (716)782-2445

Role	Contact Information
Superintendent (COVID-19 Safety Coordinator)	Bert Lictus bllictus@pancent.org (716)782-2455
Director of Instruction & Special Education	Emily Harvey eharvey@pancent.org (716)782-4469
Secondary Principal	Scott Costantini scostantini@pancent.org (716)782-4469
Elementary Principal	Lauren Harper lharp@pancent.org (716)782-4414

Communication/Family and Community Engagement

The Superintendent of Schools and Building Principals will provide regular communication to families, responsive to recent changes/developments. Communication regarding academic instructional outlines, support for free breakfast/lunch, technological assistance, and mental health support are the foundation of these communications. Additionally, logistics of the closure and its implications on instructional delivery, grading, graduation requirements, etc. are communicated to families. The district utilizes mailed letters, the school website, Power Messenger parent broadcasting system, and social media as it applies to the documentation.

Teachers will communicate with families via email and telephone communications. Additionally, some teachers use Bloomz, Remind, and other communication tools. Google Classroom (our Learning Management System) and PowerSchool (our student management system) are also used to provide insight into student engagement with assignments.

Panama Central School may host a virtual or socially-distanced Open House, Parent Teacher Conferences, and Parent Information Series as additional opportunities for Communication and Family and Community Engagement.

Health and Safety

Panama Central School Employees are required to review [Safety Procedures](#) created in July of 2020. Communication of this expectation has been set forth through an employee mailing and email communication. Additionally, all school and staff members will be required to complete Utica National's Coronavirus Review training in order to ensure that all individuals who are regularly scheduled to be in the building to be aware of the impacts of COVID-19 and the mandated safety protocols.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)-updated August 2022

In accordance to the CDC & Chautauqua County Health Department guidance regarding face coverings, we will communicate and enforce expectations for the wearing of face coverings as follows:

- In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics, the New York State Department of Health, and the Chautauqua County Health Department, Panama CSD will NOT require universal indoor masking for all students, staff, teachers, and visitors.
- Students returning from their 5 day quarantine should wear a mask from days 6-10
- Disposable face coverings will be available at each school
- Students with special needs or students who are medically fragile may not be able to maintain social distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene, or wear a face covering or mask. It is important for parents/ guardians to work with their child's healthcare providers so that an informed decision can be made on how best to meet the child's needs at school while protecting their health and safety.
- School personnel will assist students who have difficulty in adapting to wearing a face covering.
- The District will provide training to students, faculty, staff and families on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE, including but not limited to appropriate face coverings. This training will extend to contractors and vendors, if the District will be supplying the contractors and vendors with PPE.

Social Distancing/Exposed Individuals Information-Updated August 2022

- Students and staff are no longer required to keep a minimum physical distance from others. School staff will encourage physical distancing when applicable.
- The school will not be conducting contact tracing of exposed individuals.
- COVID positive Individuals
 - Must quarantine for 5 days
 - Should mask-for 10 days
 - Should test
 - May attend school and extracurricular activities starting on day 6

Health Screenings-As of December 2021

Daily Screenings:

- Schools are no longer required to document or conduct daily temperature checks and wellness screenings.
- Please continue to screen your children for symptoms of illness before sending them to school and keep them home if they are ill.
- If a student develops symptoms during the school day, the child should be evaluated by the school nurse and sent home if necessary.
 - A student with symptoms may be offered a rapid COVID test to be administered by the school nurse with parental consent; a decision of whether a student can stay in school will depend on the result of the test and the presenting symptoms. If the test result is negative, regular health office procedures will be followed.
- The district will display age appropriate posters as reminders of proper hand washing, proper utilization of face masks, how to stop the spread of COVID and how to protect yourself and others. Resources, including those are listed below:

[Handwashing is Your Superpower](#) (Elementary School)

[Help Protect Yourself and Others](#) (Elementary School)

[Stop the Spread of Germs](#) (Elementary School)

[Wear a Cloth Face Covering to Protect You and Your Friends](#) (Secondary School)

[Do it for Yourself and Your Friends](#) (Secondary School)

[Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#) (Secondary School)

[Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19](#) (Secondary School)

Isolation & Screening of Individuals Exhibiting Symptoms of COVID-19

A staff member will be assigned to supervise students until a parent/guardian arrives to pick them up. The staff member will maintain social distance and be provided appropriate PPE equipment that may include a face shield, face covering, gown, gloves.

Return to School-Updated August 2022

If a child is sent home with COVID-19 symptoms, the nurse will give the parent/guardian information from the Chautauqua County Health Department. This includes information on return to school procedures for both students or staff members.

- Positive cases will be required to isolate for 5 days and may return on day 6 to school/extracurricular activities and should mask for 5 additional days.

Students or staff members who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 **should** return to in-person school contingent on the following conditions:

- It has been at least 24 hours since the individual has had a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine); and
- The individual's symptoms have improved
- OR: An alternate diagnosis has been provided by the child's doctor and,
 - It has been at least 24 hours since the individual has had a fever (without the use of fever reducing medicine); and
 - The individual's symptoms have improved
- Upon return to school/extracurricular activities the individual should mask for 5 additional days.

Testing

COVID-19 testing sites, including free sites run by the New York State Department of Health, can be located by calling the NYS COVID-19 hotline, 1-888-364-3065, or visiting <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you>. Persons seeking testing are advised to check with the testing site and person's insurer in advance of being tested to confirm no patient responsibility for any fees associated with COVID-19 testing.

Panama Central School has a supply of at-home antigen testing kits and are available upon request.

As of July 1st, 2022, staff at Panama CSD no longer need to provide proof of COVID vaccination or submit to weekly COVID testing.

Facilities

To prepare for the arrival of students, teachers and staff, the following safety enhancements will be completed in each school building prior to the first day of teacher attendance:

- Signage will be displayed throughout the building to inform and remind occupants of proper hygiene recommendation
- Provide hand sanitizer in all classrooms as well as common areas. Hand washing with soap and water should be taught and encouraged especially when hands are visibly soiled. Hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water is not available. *Alcohol based hand sanitizer should only be used by children under adult supervision*
- Review all HVAC settings to ensure all spaces are provided adequate ventilation
- HVAC filters will continue to be changed at recommended regular intervals with MERV rated or greater filters

Spaces (communal spaces, gathering spaces)

Panama Central School has identified instructional spaces to provide greater social distancing and/or smaller class sizes when possible.

Visitors to the Building

- Building procedures

- Communication to parents and community regarding limitation of visitor access when necessary

Special considerations

- Water bottle filling stations will be available and staff and students will be encouraged to bring a water bottle.
- Hand sanitizer will be available near high-touch surfaces.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Procedures

School Maintenance Staff will hold the primary role of cleaning and disinfecting the school building in accordance with the NY Department of Health [Interim Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfection of Public & Private Facilities for COVID-19](#).

Child Nutrition

Panama Central School enlists Personal Touch Food Services to address all applicable health and safety guidelines, Child Nutrition Program requirements, and students' personal needs, including but not limited to food allergies.

In-Person Child Nutrition

All students will have access to the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch. Students will be able to obtain breakfast & lunch from the cafeteria. Students will be directed to stop at a wash station to wash their hands prior to eating their breakfast or going to lunch. Lunchroom monitors will be present to deter students from sharing food and beverages.

Transportation

Transportation Planning and Bus Capacity

All families will be contacted to determine the number of student riders for the 2022-23 school year. Students will be encouraged to walk to/from school and to encourage parents to drop off/pick up students. This will allow for the district to reduce density on district provided Transportation.

Daily Transportation Procedures and Health & Safety Procedures

- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis
- All professional drivers, monitors, attendants, and mechanics will be provided personal protective equipment, including but not limited to masks and face shields (when requested).
- Every transportation driver, monitor and attendant will have access to a set of gloves in the event that they will be required to make physical contact with a child.

Arrival/Dismissal Changes for Parent Drop off and Pick up

Traffic flow patterns and procedures for drop off and pick up have been developed to ensure density control. Specific procedures will be shared prior to the start of the school year with all constituent groups.

Out of District Transportation

Any student attending a nonpublic, parochial, private, or students whose Individualized Education Program have placed them out of district will be provided transportation when those facilities are open for in-person learning even when the home district is not open.

Social Emotional Well-Being

Panama Central School will follow the District-Wide [Comprehensive School Guidance, Mental Health Education, and Foster Care Plan](#). This plan enlists the expertise of the School Administration Team, School Counselor, School Psychologist, Social Worker, and Certified Health Teachers to ensure a multi-tiered approach to ensure that all students in grades UPK-12 are provided support in attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

In an effort to provide support to families and to increase participation and engagement, we will utilize support personnel. This may be teacher aides, teaching assistants, teachers &/or members of our student services team (School Counselor, School Psychologist, School Social Worker & Administrators) who support a student and their family to increase engagement and participation/attendance.

Students identified by the building principal will be provided support to assist students and families in removing barriers to education. This could include technology support, time management support, motivation/encouragement, opportunities for connections with a school staff member for social-emotional benefits, and academic support. If a student is in a required quarantine, they will be expected to participate in classes via Google Classroom to the extent possible.

Technology and Connectivity

All students & teachers are provided with a district iPad. A survey was sent to parents to assess availability of reliable internet. Any family who does not have reliable internet access will be contacted by the district technology staff to perform a needs assessment. Installation of community Wi-Fi hotspots will be researched as well as the possibility of Mi-Fi units distributed to families if necessary.

School Schedules

100% In-Person (2022-23 Opening Model)

Panama Central School will return to a traditional schedule with 100% building capacity. This will only take place with the approval of the New York State Department of Education and Department of Health.

Hybrid-only if needed

Panama Central School has developed a Hybrid Learning Schedule that decreases the building capacity to approximately 75% in order to allow for proper social distancing.

Elementary Schedule

All students in grades UPK-6 are scheduled to participate in learning in-person. UPK will remain in two sections in the morning and afternoon. Cleaning and disinfection will take place in between the scheduled sections. Students in grades K-6 will be broken from two sections into three sections in order to decrease the room capacity and allow for all students to be seated 6 feet apart while in the classroom.

While seated 6 feet apart, students will be allowed to remove their face coverings, if they choose to do so. If students need to move about the classroom or transition into the hallways or common areas, they will then be required to wear a face covering. Instructions on when students will need to wear a face covering will be provided to students by their classroom teacher.

A modified schedule has been developed to ensure that all students receive instruction that aligns with the New York State Learning Standards by a certified teacher.

Secondary Schedule

Courses and teachers will follow the traditional master schedule. All students in grades 7-12 will be broken into two groups by administration. These groups will be communicated prior to the start of the school year. Both groups will participate in their courses simultaneously. One group will participate in-person and one group will participate remotely. This will decrease the in-person attendance each period to approximately 50% on a daily basis. On a student's remote scheduled day, they will be required to participate remotely in their four core courses (ELA, Math, Science, & Social Studies) and Spanish. All other courses will only follow an in-person schedule.

When students are in-person, they will be seated 6 feet away from one another. While seated 6 feet apart, students will be allowed to remove their face coverings, if they choose to do so. If students need to move about the classroom or transition into the hallways or common areas, they will then be required to wear a face covering. Instructions on when students will need to wear a face covering will be provided to students by their classroom teacher.

The students and teachers will utilize the district Learning Management System, Google Classroom for posting and submitting all assignments to ensure clear communication of expectations for both in-person and remote learners.

Schedule Summary

Group 1 - In-person A/B Days; Remote C/D Days

Group 2 - In-Person C/D Days; Remote A/B Days

Scheduling aligned with District Calendar Days

Remote & In-Person - ELA, Math, S.S., Science & Spanish
(approx. 3hr. daily)

In-Person Only - Art, Music, Phys. Ed., Technology

Remote-only if needed

Elementary Schedule

If a school closure is required, all students in grades UPK-6 will be engaged in remote learning. Students and teachers will utilize the district Learning Management System, Google Classroom for posting and submitting all assignments. A video conferencing schedule will be followed to ensure that all students are engaged in face-to-face instruction with a certified teacher. This schedule takes into account the age and maturity of all students and ensures that students will have time for breaks and one-on-one conferencing with their teacher, if needed.

Secondary Schedule

If a school closure is required, all students in grades 7-12 will be engaged in remote learning. Students and teachers will utilize the district Learning Management System, Google Classroom for posting and submitting all assignments. Students and teachers will follow the same bell schedule for video conferencing that is utilized during the in-person model of learning. Students will video conference for their courses as required.

Lunch Schedule

Under a Hybrid Schedule, Panama Central School will increase the number of lunch periods in order to properly socially distance students from one another while in the cafeteria. The following is the Hybrid Lunch Schedule with student counts for each scheduled lunch period.

Grade Levels	10:30-11:00	11:05-11:35	11:40-12:10	12:15-12:45	12:50-1:20
K/1st	Lunch				
	Approx. 58 Kids				
2nd/3rd		Lunch			
		Approx. 53 Kids			
4th/5th			Lunch		
			Approx. 75 Kids		
6th-8th				Lunch	
				Approx. 63 Kids	
9th-12th					Lunch
					Approx. 67 Kids

Teaching and Learning

Panama Central School has developed three learning scenarios, in-person, hybrid, and remote to meet the health and safety needs of students and staff. The committee took into consideration the learning process and best practices of learning in order to ensure academic success for all students. Both explicit and implicit instruction strategies were considered when planning for the reopening in the three different scenarios. The committee broke down these instructional strategies into four primary pieces of a learning cycle which are outlined in the chart below and ensure that planning met the needs of each specific part of the learning process.



The following is an outline of all three scenarios:

In-Person: (2022 Opening Model)

Panama Central School will return to a traditional learning environment and schedule. In accordance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the New York State Department of Health Panama CSD will be operating at 100% with no social distancing or mandatory masking in place.

Hybrid-if needed

Elementary School

In order to properly socially distance students in the building, Panama Central School will host all Elementary School (grades UPK-6) students in-person split from two cohorts per grade level to three cohorts per grade level. All cohorts will be provided instruction that aligns with the New York State Learning Standards by a certified teacher. Students will be socially distanced/separated by a barrier while in their classrooms and provided instruction on proper hygiene and procedures for transitioning throughout the building.

While seated at their desks, students will have an opportunity to remove their face covering, if they choose to do so. Polycarbonate barriers will be placed between a student and their teacher whenever re-teaching, differentiation, or assessment requires the teacher and student to be in close contact. During whole group instruction, teachers will socially distance themselves from students or wear the appropriate PPE.

Secondary School

While students are in the building, they will be required to wear a mask whenever they are unable to socially distance. Once in their classrooms, students will be spaced 6 feet apart or will be protected by a barrier and allowed to remove their face covering. Teachers and students will be required to wear a face covering whenever re-teaching, differentiation, or assessment requires the teacher and student to be in close contact. During whole group instruction, teachers will socially distance themselves from students or wear the appropriate PPE.

Remote-only if needed

In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak in a school, the LHD, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health, will implement its Public Health Emergency Pandemic Plan. Outbreaks are managed by the LHD based on individual circumstances and in full cooperation with the school district. During such outbreaks, the LHD will fully support the school district(s) with COVID-19 testing, investigations, contact tracing, and other appropriate actions, resources and consultation as deemed necessary and available.

If a school closure is necessary, school administration will discuss each situation with the LHD to determine what remediation efforts need to occur including but not limited to, closing an area, a classroom, a building, or an entire school.

Students will have access to video conferencing on a daily basis in order to receive instruction. A daily video conferencing schedule may be followed for each subject area and takes into consideration the age and maturity of the students and the course content. Teachers will be asked to complete whole group direct instruction via video conferencing. Differentiation and reteaching will be performed via individual meetings and/or office hours with their teacher. Independent practice and assessment will be performed through video conferencing and independently.

Learning Platform

All students and teachers will have access to the district Learning Management System, Google Classroom for posting and submitting all assignments to ensure clear communication of expectations for both in-person and remote learners. Zoom will be the district approved video conferencing tool to also allow consistency in platforms for staff, students, and parents.

Vulnerable Populations

Parents and/or guardians of students who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness are encouraged to contact their building Principal for additional information and guidance in response to their unique situation, so appropriate accommodations may be considered if necessary.

Special Education

In developing our reopening plans, the District has considered IDEA and the needs of our special education students to the fullest extent possible and ensures the provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). In planning, the Least Restrictive environment has been central in the decision making on an individualized basis to ensure that every student has access to their grade-level standards and makes educational progress.

Children who are medically complex, who have neurologic, genetic, metabolic conditions, or who have congenital heart disease are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 than other children. Further, students with special needs or students who are medically fragile may not be able to maintain social distancing, hand or respiratory hygiene, or wear a face covering or mask. It is important for parents/ guardians to work with their child's healthcare providers so that an informed decision can be made on how best to meet the child's needs at school while protecting their health and safety.

The district recognizes the role of the parent/guardian in the IEP process is critical. Parents and students with disabilities are always encouraged to be a part of the decision making process and attend the CSE meetings. During the closure parents were contacted with multiple attempts through various means (ie. email, phone calls, certified letters) to participate in virtual CSE meetings. The district will continue to conduct virtual or phone meetings until such time the health and safety of all parties can be ensured. The district will work with parents to establish a mutually agreeable timeline with those who wish to meet face-to face.

The district will ensure continuity of services to support the IEP in the event of a school closure through the development of specific grade level virtual schedules that address IEP needs.

Bilingual Education and World Languages

Communications and translations to parents/guardians will be in their preferred language and mode of communication. Instructional Units of Study must be provided to all English Language Learners (ELLs) based on their most recently measured English Language Proficiency, including former ELLs.

Teacher and Principal Evaluation System

All teachers and principals will be evaluated pursuant to the district's currently approved [Educator Evaluation Plan](#) including any variance applications approved by the Department.