

# AMBER-POCASSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## Safe Return and Continuity of Services Plan 2023-2024

### ➤ **Start Date August 18, 2023**

- Regular In-person Classes with safety protocols
- Virtual Learning Option – This option will only be used for credit recovery and in special situations that involve extenuating circumstances. Application and Approval are Required, please contact your site principal for more information:
  - Elementary (Grades PK-6) Angie Scott, [ascott@amposchools.org](mailto:ascott@amposchools.org)
  - JH/HS (Grades 7-12) Bobby Odam, [bodam@amposchools.org](mailto:bodam@amposchools.org)

The development of this plan is driven by two guiding principles:

#### I. **Limit Exposure:**

We will continue to follow the latest CDC recommendations and our local and state health departments. Please review the following document for the best safe practices:

[How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)

#### II. **Learning Must Remain Constant:**

We know some level of disruption to our face-to-face instruction during the school year is highly likely due to cases of and exposure to COVID-19. While we can expect disruption during the school year, our commitment to providing consistent, high level instruction from teachers to students will remain strong whether through a face-to-face method or through a remote learning environment. We have learned many lessons from last year's distance learning opportunities. Our teachers and staff have been preparing to be ready to provide a more improved remote learning experience with new content and accountability for grades and attendance since the 2021-2022 school year.

The SAFE RETURN AND CONTINUITY OF SERVICES PLAN is derived from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) Ready Together Oklahoma. ([click here](#)). Within each area, protocols are discussed with the understanding that conditions for each area are subject to change depending on the uncertain circumstances related to COVID-19.

### ➤ **Communication with Parents, Students, Staff, and Community**

We are committed to maintaining a strong chain of communication between staff, students, parents, and our community. It is vital that we all stay informed with the most accurate and recent information as it becomes available. As a district we continually receive updates from local, state, and national authorities and we will continue to pass along information as it becomes available. To disseminate this information in the most efficient way we will utilize the following platforms for all communication:

- WenGage, emails using our local student information system. To login [click here](#), if you need to create an account please call your child's building office.
- Remind 101, text alerts on your mobile device. To sign up for this service [click here](#).
- [District Website](#), use this site for the latest information and resources.
- [Amber-Pocasset Public School Facebook Page](#), follow our page to receive information.

## I. COVID-19 GUIDANCE AND PROTOCOLS TO LIMIT EXPOSURE

Lessons learned from the 2020-22 school years are that COVID is unpredictable and flexibility is key! Our District plan has been developed to help limit the exposure risk and spread of COVID-19 within our school system. We also understand that this continues to be a fluid situation, and that guidance and recommended protocols are subject to change at any given time. For the latest information see [CDC guidance](#) for more details.

### ➤ Symptoms and Screening

It is important that all families partner with us in monitoring the health of your students and families every day before attending classes or school functions. Checking students and staff for COVID-19 symptoms can pose challenges given the similarities between certain COVID-19 symptoms and seasonal allergies; challenges with younger persons recognizing when they are sick due to mild symptoms; and the fact that some persons may have COVID-19 and not have any symptoms at all. Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms of infectious illness, such as [influenza](#) (flu) or [COVID-19](#), should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care. Staying home when sick with COVID-19 is essential to keep COVID-19 infections out of schools and prevent spread to others. OSDH has developed a symptom assessment tool to help determine when someone should be kept home or sent home from school and/or tested for COVID-19:

Please use the following self-assessment daily.

"A" Symptoms	"B" Symptoms
Fever $\geq 100.4$ degrees	Elevated Temperature $<100.4$ degrees
Sore Throat	Nasal Congestion/Stuffiness
Cough	Runny Nose
Difficulty Breathing	Muscle/Body Aches/Fatigue
Diarrhea or Vomiting	Chills
New Loss of Taste or Smell	Nausea/Loss of Appetite

If you are experiencing any one (1) of the "A" Symptoms do not attend school or any school function. It is also recommended that the individual be tested for COVID-19.

If you are experiencing any combination of three (3) of the "B" Symptoms do not attend school or any school function. It is also recommended that the individual be tested for COVID-19.

Students or staff members who start displaying COVID symptoms at school will be sent to a designated isolation room. School staff will follow an [established protocol](#) for taking the student's temperature and notifying the student's parents.

### ➤ Diagnostic Testing

[Diagnostic testing](#) for SARS-CoV-2 is intended to identify occurrence of SARS-CoV-2 infection at the individual level and is performed when there is a reason to suspect that an individual may be infected, such as having symptoms or [suspected recent exposure](#). Examples of diagnostic testing strategies include testing symptomatic teachers, students, and staff who develop symptoms in school, and testing asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-

19. In collaboration with our local health department, physicians, and clinics, the district will provide employees and students with a list of providers that can diagnose and screen for COVID.

➤ **Face Coverings**

In collaboration with local and state health departments, Amber-Pocasset Board of Education, Faculty, and Staff, and community, Amber-Pocasset Public Schools will determine when universal mask wearing is necessary. Masks are highly recommended but not mandatory, especially for unvaccinated children and adults. Any one that has been exposed to a known case or who is experiencing symptoms is asked to consider wearing a mask over both their nose and mouth so as not to expectorate into the air. For the latest CDC guidance regarding face coverings please [click here](#).

➤ **Hand Washing**

A consistent schedule of times and procedures will be established throughout the day for proper hand hygiene, hand washing, and limiting exposure to the virus during class transitions. Where possible the number of hand sanitizing stations has been increased in school sites. The school will provide extra hand washing stations for each classroom to minimize the time out of the class.

- Hand Washing: During the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, keeping hands clean is especially important to help prevent the virus from spreading. For more information on the importance of and how to properly wash your hands please [click here](#).
- Hand Sanitizer: Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer dispensers are located near each office for visitors to use before entering the building. Each classroom teacher will establish a set of classroom protocols for hand hygiene.

➤ **Respiratory Etiquette**

Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands clean can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and COVID-19. To help stop the spread of germs:

1. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
2. Throw used tissues in the trash.
3. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
4. Wash Hands

For more information [click here](#).

➤ **Water Fountains**

Students will be permitted to bring their own bottles of water and should not share with others. The bottles must be clear and have a secure lid to prevent spills. The bottle fill option on our new water fountains will be available for students to use.

➤ **Social Distancing**

Because of the importance of in-person learning, the CDC recommends that schools where not everyone is fully vaccinated implement physical distancing to the extent possible to ensure that in-person learning can continue. In general, CDC recommends people who are not fully vaccinated maintain [physical distance](#) of at least 6 feet from other people who are not in their household. The CDC recommends students maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between other students within classrooms, combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated, to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot

fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is highly recommended to wear a face covering, practice proper handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, staying home when sick with symptoms of infectious illness including COVID-19, and regular cleaning to help reduce transmission risk. Mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is particularly important when physical distance cannot be maintained. A distance of at least 6 feet is recommended between students and teachers/staff, and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated.

To help facilitate social distancing the district will:

- ❖ Classrooms
  - Maintain suggested separation in classrooms as space allows.
  - Have assigned seats for all students.
- ❖ Cafeteria
  - Elementary – have assigned seats and sections of a table for each class.
  - MS/HS – will encourage students to maintain the proper separation, additional seating will be provided to allow for separation, and students will be encouraged to eat outside as weather permits.
- ❖ Buses
  - Daily Bus Routes: will have assigned seats for riders, face coverings are recommended, and windows will be lowered to promote additional ventilation as circumstances allow.
  - Activity Trips: students will be properly spaced as space allows, face coverings are recommended, and windows will be lowered to promote additional ventilation as circumstances allow. Properly sanitize all vehicles after each use.
- ❖ School Vehicles
  - Since social distancing is much harder in smaller school vehicles, it is highly recommended that individuals who have not been fully vaccinated wear a properly fitted mask. Properly sanitize all vehicles after each use.

### ➤ **Quarantine**

Health officials recommend that schools continue to collaborate with state and local health departments, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19. This allows identifying which students, teachers, and staff with positive COVID-19 test results should [isolate](#), and which [close contacts](#) should [quarantine](#). See the added exception in the [close contact](#) definition for the exclusion of students in the K-12 indoor classroom who are within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student with masking and other prevention strategies.

To the extent allowable by applicable privacy laws, school officials will notify teachers, staff, and families of students who were close contacts as soon as possible (within the same day if possible) after they are notified that someone in the school has tested positive. [Fully vaccinated](#) people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do NOT have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine or be tested.

### ➤ **Vaccinations:**

There are several ways you can look for vaccination providers near you.

- Visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find vaccination providers near you. In some states, information may be limited while more vaccination providers and pharmacies are being added. Learn more about COVID-19 Vaccination Locations on [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov).
- Text your zip code to 438829 or call 1-800-232-0233 to find vaccine locations near you.

- Check your local pharmacy's website to see if vaccination appointments are available. Find out which pharmacies are participating in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program.
- Contact your state health department to find additional vaccination locations in the area.
- Check your local news outlets. They may have information on how to get a vaccination appointment.
- **Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities (including ventilation):**
  - The virus that causes COVID-19 can land on surfaces, making it possible for people to become infected if they touch those surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. In most situations, the [risk of infection from touching a surface is low](#). The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to [regularly wash hands or use hand sanitizer](#).
  - High-touch surfaces will be cleaned at least once a day or as often as determined is necessary. Examples of high-touch surfaces include: pens, counters, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
  - ❖ Desks will be disinfected throughout the day.
  - ❖ Due to recent construction projects funded by the support of our community we have been able to upgrade most of our HVAC systems throughout the district. We will continue to ensure that these ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
  - ❖ To improve ventilation in our school buildings we will open windows and doors, when weather conditions allow, and when doing so does not pose a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to occupants in the building.
- **Facility Use by Outside Organizations:**  
Facility use by outside organizations will be determined on a case by case basis. Organizations must be able to commit to guidelines for limiting exposure to the virus. Additional cleaning fees may be required.

## II. Continuity of Learning and Academic Protocols

- **In-Person Instruction**  
Of all the lessons we have learned over the past year, none is more evident than the fact that students benefit from in-person learning. Therefore, safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority. To that end, we will again be offering our full slate of classes for all students beginning August 18, 2021, with the safety protocols in place that were discussed earlier. We encourage all students, parents, and staff to take all the necessary safety precautions necessary to ensure the safest learning environment possible for everyone.
- **Distance Learning Information**  
If it becomes necessary for the district or a student to transition to a distance learning model for a period of time during the school year, the goal will be to continue the educational process that has been occurring in the classroom. Teachers will continue to lead and direct the learning process, and students will continue to learn new material with teacher support.
  - ❖ Grades and attendance will be recorded and posted to the student's academic record.
  - ❖ Students will be required to connect to lessons at assigned times and complete all assignments in order to receive credit.
  - ❖ Lessons may be pre-recorded, live presentations, or tutorials.
  - ❖ Student's will receive credit for attendance based upon participation and completion of all assignments.

➤ **Technology**

- ❖ The district has purchased additional technology that can be utilized by students if distance learning is required.
- ❖ Classroom sets of iPads have been purchased for all elementary classrooms.
- ❖ Chromebooks have been purchased and will be checked out to all MS and HS students.
- ❖ The district can help provide connectivity for students should the district have to move to a distance learning model at some point during the year. For more information contact your child's building principal.

➤ **Social-Emotional Well-Being**

The circumstances of this past year have undoubtedly impacted each one of us in a multitude of ways. Our district will utilize multiple strategies to identify and support students with social-emotional needs and build in structures that promote a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. Activities could include:

- ❖ Weekly or daily opportunities for social-emotional instruction for all students PK-12 embedded in or outside disciplinary instructional time.
- ❖ Instructional and assessment practices that allow students to share their thinking with peers or teachers.
- ❖ Developing a supportive classroom environment, including procedures and protocols to ensure students' social-emotional and physical health and safety.

➤ **Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Special Needs**

Individualized Education Plans (IEP), 504s, or English Language Academic Plans will be followed with the assistance of site principals.

- ❖ District related services providers such as speech and OT/PT will be in contact with students and parents to arrange for continued services within the constraints of this public health crisis.
- ❖ If necessary or requested, IEP and 504 meetings will be held virtually. All IEP/504 team members are required to participate.
- ❖ For more information about Special Education and English Language Services, you may contact Assistant Principal/Special Education Director Holly Lewis, [hlewis@amposchools.org](mailto:hlewis@amposchools.org)

**This framework is subject to change based on guidance and recommendations from district, local, state, and national officials.**