

Expanded In-Person Learning for Public Schools: The Requirements

As of February 8, 2021, districts and schools across all counties are eligible for hybrid learning if they meet the following requirements:

COVID-Safe Practices (CSPs)

COVID-safe practices as outlined in the PED Reentry Guidance and COVID-19 Response Toolkit must be strictly enforced at all times. CSPs include, but are not limited to:

- Masks available and utilized by all staff and students;
- Classrooms and common areas set up for 6 feet of social distancing with 50% student enrollment in place;
- Cafeteria and congregate eating areas set up for 6 feet of social distancing, and cohorts of students are not mixed;
- Ample cleaning supplies and daily sanitization protocols in place (including high-touch areas, playgrounds, and buses);
- Soap and supplies in bathrooms with reliable running water and hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol available across the school;
- Evacuation and dismissal plans that maintain 6 feet of social distancing;
- Compliance with indoor air quality standards;
- Proper personal protective equipment (PPE);
- Isolation rooms for symptomatic individuals;
- Protocols and signage for entry into the building;
- Signage throughout the school site about prevention practices; and
- Protocols for students exhibiting symptoms on buses or before entry.

Surveillance testing

All on-site staff are required to participate in surveillance testing. For schools in red counties, there is a 25% per week requirement, ensuring that all in-person staff are tested on a monthly basis. For schools in yellow and green counties, there is a 12.5% per week requirement, ensuring all in-person staff are tested on a bi-monthly basis. Additional details regarding surveillance testing can be found in the PED's COVID-19 Response Toolkit.

Expansion of in-person learning site visits

Prior to expanded in-person learning, each school must receive a reentry site visit. These visits, conducted by a local or state fire marshal in collaboration with the PED, will review the COVID-safe practices checklist to ensure adherence to all guidelines. Additional details about site visits can be found on the PED school reentry page.

Student cohorting

The practice of keeping smaller groups of students and staff together over the course of the school day is an integral component to limiting exposure and community spread. Hybrid allows schools to divide their student population into at least two cohorts, bringing back up to 50% of students at a time. Guidelines for student cohorting is included in the PED COVID-19 Response Toolkit.

Signed assurance document

Each school or district that wishes to expand in-person learning must submit a signed assurance document indicating that the district/school will follow PED Rapid Response Protocols and agree to the requirements and guidance outlined in the PED COVID-19 Response Toolkit.