

# DELAWARE VALLEY REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT



## **2023/2024 Health and Safety Protocols**

*in accordance with "The Road Forward" and NJ Department of Health/CDC guidelines*

**Revised/Presented: Fall 2023**

# Delaware Valley Regional High School District 2023/2024 Health and Safety Protocols

## INTRODUCTION

The physical and mental health and safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority; we cannot create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning without it. While it is impossible to eliminate all risks, every decision will be made with an eye to minimizing them to the greatest possible extent.

As we have since the onset of the pandemic, the district's health, safety, and learning environment protocols follow recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NJ Department of Health (DOH), the NJ Department of Education (DOE), and requirements set forth in NJ Statutes, Codes, and Executive Orders. Protocols are intended to reduce risks to students and staff from SARS-COV-2 while allowing for full-time, in-person programming.

Procedures will be updated as information is received from the CDC, NJDOH, NJDOE, and as NJ Statutes, Codes, and Executive Orders are implemented or edited. **Based on current COVID-19 trends, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has allowed the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19, declared under Section 319 of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act, to expire at the end of the day on May 11, 2023.**

## 1. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

### 1.1 Vaccination

The Delaware Valley Regional High School does not require students or staff members to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Proof of vaccination is also not required. One may elect to submit a copy of the COVID-19 vaccination record to the school nurse to be kept as part of the student or staff member's confidential medical file.

According to the CDC, vaccination, including booster shots, remains the most critical strategy to protect students and staff and reduce interruptions in learning. [The CDC recommends that people remain up to date with their vaccines](#), which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised and booster doses at regular time points.

### 1.2 Communication

The Delaware Valley Regional High School will maintain lines of communication with the Hunterdon County Health Department, the Hunterdon County School Districts, and the NJDOE through the Hunterdon County Office.

The Superintendent of Schools will share changes in protocols and procedures with the Board of Education and convey important information or changes to the School Community via email communication.

### 1.3 Masks

Masks remain optional both in school and while riding the bus. Each student and staff member can make their own decision as to whether they want to wear a mask. Please keep in mind that some may choose to continue to wear masks, and we will respect and support their decision to do so. *Targeting of any student for their choice of whether or not to wear a mask will be taken seriously and addressed through the HIB process.* The school district cannot ban the wearing of masks that are approved for medical purposes.

The district may require temporary mask-wearing under certain circumstances, such as when staff members or students become ill at school they should wear a mask until they leave the premises, a State-confirmed local outbreak at DVRHS, or any other reason mandated by the State of NJ or Public Health Agencies.

### 1.4 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Staff and students should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their noses/coughing/sneezing. Staff and students should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.

To contain respiratory secretions, all persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of presumed cause, are advised to cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing; use tissues to contain respiratory secretions; dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use, and perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

## 2. CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND AIR FLOW

### 2.1 Cleaning and Disinfection

The district has developed and will maintain a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfection. The district utilizes EPA-approved products for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and follows the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, contact time, etc.). Frequently touched areas in schools such as classroom desks and chairs, door handles and push plates, bathrooms, light switches, and shared computer keyboards are cleaned and disinfected daily.

### 2.2 Improving Air Flow

All DVRHS facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and risk systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component. Filter(s) for A/C units are maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations. Classroom doors may remain open during the school day to increase airflow. Windows, when appropriate, will be opened. To improve airflow on school buses, windows may be open weather permitting.

### 3. SCREENING, EXCLUSION, AND RESPONSES TO SYMPTOMATIC STAFF AND STUDENTS

#### 3.1 Health Screening

Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. [The District shall enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff](#) (section 3.3 Exclusion).

Students and employees may be asked to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit:

At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; **OR**

At least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.

#### 3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Students and staff members who arrive at school with or develop the above COVID-19 symptoms or meet the exclusion criteria during the school day will be safely and respectfully isolated from others in designated isolation spaces. Students shall remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

District health personnel shall follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.

#### 3.3 Exclusion

The district will comply with the [most up-to-date CDC exclusion recommendations](#) which are subject to change.

##### **Exposed close contacts who have no COVID-like symptoms:**

- Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
- If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing and inform their healthcare provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

#### 3.4 Remote Instruction /180-Day Requirement

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, schools must be in session for 180 days to receive state aid. The statute requires that school facilities be provided for at least 180 days during the school year. Section (b) notes that where a district is required to close the schools of the district for more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, days of virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction

will count towards the district's 180-day requirement.

The bell schedule for the 2023/2024 school year is as follows:

A	B	Time
A1	B1	7:37-9:01 a.m.
A2	B2	9:06-10:30 a.m.
Unit Period/Lunch		10:35-11:28 a.m.
A3	B3	11:33 a.m.-12:57 p.m.
A4	B4	1:02-2:26 p.m.

Please visit the [website for alternative bell schedules](#) (delayed openings or early dismissals).

### Closure for Declared State of Emergency

Should the entire district be required to close for more than three consecutive days due to a declared emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, the district will provide remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction that will count towards the district's 180-day requirement utilizing our Distance Learning Day Bell Schedule:

Block 1 (A/B): 9:00-9:55 a.m.

Block 2 (A/B): 10:05-11:00 a.m.

Block 3 (A/B): 12:00-12:55 p.m.

Block 4 (A/B): 1:05-2:00 p.m.

## 4. CONTACT TRACING

Per the updated guidance from the CDC released in August 2022, contact tracing of individual cases is no longer recommended for school settings. Our nurses will be monitoring for outbreaks or clusters, which will be reported to the NJ Department of Health. If your child tests positive, we do recommend parents conduct their own contact tracing when possible and let others know of potential COVID-19 exposure. Per the CDC, close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. Any close contact that begins to show COVID-like symptoms should get tested.

Quarantining students who are close contacts with a positive case is no longer recommended in school settings. Please monitor your child for COVID-like symptoms and get them tested if symptoms begin. If they test positive for COVID-19, they will be excluded as outlined above.