

## SY 2021-22 LEA Health and Safety Plans

**LEA Name: The Next Step\_El Proximo Paso PCS**

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**LEA Type: Adult**

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### **Background and Purpose**

[OSSE's Health and Safety Guidance for Schools](#) is issued for LEAs and private, parochial and independent schools (schools). LEAs and schools must develop and submit to OSSE comprehensive health and safety plans. This plan is intended to provide the public with information on how the LEA will support the safe reopening and operation of school buildings, including guidelines on masking, social distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, and appropriate response to a positive COVID-19 case.

OSSE reviewed each LEA's responses to the questions for clarity, completeness, and compliance with the DC Health and OSSE health and safety guidance for schools and provided feedback to the LEA. Before publication, LEA's were given the opportunity to revise their responses based on OSSE's feedback. LEAs and schools are responsible for incorporating additional or updated public health guidance into their policies and procedures throughout the school year as such guidance is released.

## Face Masks

### 1. Provide the LEA's plan to comply with the requirements to:

- **a. except for specific circumstances (e.g., while eating) articulated in OSSE's guidance, all students, staff and visitors, including those who are fully vaccinated, must wear non-medical face coverings or face masks at all times while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. masks must be worn correctly.**

As part of the preparation for full time in person learning, all students and staff will receive a protocol guide inclusive of the mitigation strategies to minimize COVID-19 transmission.

The Next Step Public Charter School's policy requires that all staff, students, and visitors are to always wear a non-medical facemask while in the building. This includes in individual classrooms, bathrooms, hallways, offices, school grounds, common areas, and all school sponsored activities. Upon arrival, all entrants to the building must wear a face mask. If a person arrives with no facemask a face mask will be provided to them. Facemask can only be removed for eating purposes. All staff, students and visitors are required to wear facemasks even if fully vaccinated. All facemasks must cover both the entire nose and mouth. Under the chin is prohibited. Just exposing the nose is also prohibited. The nose and mouth must be fully covered always.

To ensure easy compliance with this policy, any member of our community who arrives without a face covering, loses or damages their face covering while attending a school activity will be provided a new one. The school will keep a supply of PPE, including masks, until such time as face coverings are no longer required at schools.

### 2. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures in the event that a student, staff member, or visitor is unable or unwilling to wear a face mask at all times.

Our policy requires that students who refuse to wear their face mask without a medical certificate will be referred to their case manager for further discussion. The case manager is to work with the student to help him/her understand the importance of compliance in ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all. A solution will be sought via a restorative conversation and a strategy will be developed to address any difficulty the student may be experiencing in complying with this requirement.

Any staff or visitor who comes to the building must wear a facemask. If the staff or visitor refuses to wear a facemask the Executive Director and/or the Chief Operating Officer must be notified to assist in getting the person to comply with this requirement. If the staff or visitor still refuses to comply and they don't have a doctor's certificate stating that they can't wear a face mask they will not be allowed to enter.

### 3. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to support physical distancing between individuals and within and across groups, including in classrooms, common spaces, during arrival and dismissal procedures, and during extracurricular activities.

Each classroom will be organized to support students seated and standing at least 3 feet apart from one another (head-to-head). Teachers will stay at least 6 feet from students and each other. For our students who are 18 and older, the physical distance will be 6 feet. We are encouraging all staff and eligible students to get vaccinated, and will require masks. The school will not hold in-person assemblies until guidance allows for this. During activities such as during arrival and dismissal, the school will continue to have signage reminding students and staff to stand at the appropriate social distance for their age, which is currently 6 feet for all. A recurring announcement will be made via the intercom throughout the day to remind the community to observe social distancing at all times.

Students and staff must go directly to the floor/area designated for their cohort and remain there until it is time for departure. They will be reminded of this policy during the screening process at the entrance.

**4. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures regarding the use of cohorts for students and/or staff, including steps to minimize interactions between cohorts, as applicable.**

We have already established the use of cohorts as a preventive measure during our transition period from virtual to hybrid during the spring of 2021. Our cohorts will consist of groups divided by track, based on the student's program. Each cohort will be assigned to stay within one floor of the school building. Students will be able to transition from class to class only within the space designated for their cohort.

As students enter the building, they will be reminded to maintain social distance as they travel to their floor and to remain there for the duration of the day. They will also be reminded that the front stairwell is only to be used to go upwards and the back stairwell to go down. A recurring announcement will be made throughout the day via the intercom, reminding students and staff of this policy.

**5. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to support handwashing and respiratory etiquette including frequent, proper handwashing strategies and encouraging covering coughs and sneezes.**

Consistent with our policy, the school will enforce frequent, proper handwashing strategies by staff and students with soap for at least 20 seconds. We will also include hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol throughout the school and in the bathrooms (see next question). We will have all students and staff have the opportunity to wash hands, either with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or, if not readily available or would compromise cohort isolation practices, hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol at the following times:

- Before and after eating;
- Before and after group activities or student centers;
- After going to the bathroom;
- After removing gloves;
- After blowing noses, coughing, or sneezing.

**6. Provide the LEA's plan to make available adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissues) to support healthy hygiene practices including, as relevant, in classrooms, bathrooms, offices and common spaces.**

We are planning on having hand sanitizer, tissues in all bathrooms, classrooms, and common areas and will do weekly supply checks. We will also seek to have soap through hands-free dispensers and paper towels in every bathroom. These will be checked on a daily basis by our custodial staff. Students and staff will use the daily debriefing system to report any malfunctioning observed throughout the day.

**7. Provide the LEA's policies and procedures to acquire, distribute and support the appropriate use of PPE including gowns/coveralls, gloves, surgical masks, eye protection (face shield or goggles) and N95 masks, as relevant and necessary.**

The school keeps a supply of PPE, including masks, until such time as face coverings are no longer required at schools. Our PPE Policy includes the following:

### **Use of Face Coverings**

All persons must wear a face covering while in the building. The School will provide an adequate supply of face coverings for all employees and students. Each students and employees will receive a face covering at the beginning of the year. Depending on supply, additional face coverings may be provided. The School will provide receptacles for used/soiled face coverings, and will provide clean face coverings to persons who forget to bring one.

### **Rules of Use**

- All persons must follow the instructions provided for the “Fitting/Removing/Reusing of Face Covering” section described below.
- At the end of shift, used/soiled face coverings must be deposited in identified receptacles.
- Employees must not wear a face covering if doing so will adversely affect his or her health. If an individual believes the use of a face covering will affect his or her health, s/he should speak with the HR Director, Maria Suber-Anderson or with the case managers in the case of students.
- Employees must not wear a face covering if doing so will inhibit job functions. Employees should check with their supervisors to ensure which job functions can and cannot be performed while wearing face covering.

The school strongly recommends the use of school-provided face coverings. However, individuals may use personal face coverings. In the event employees choose to use personal coverings, these rules still apply.

Failure follow these rules may result in disciplinary action through a restorative process in most cases but may include more severe actions if the behavior persists.

### **Fitting/Removing/Reusing Face Covering**

In order to properly use the face covering, you must ensure that:

- The covering fits snugly but comfortably against the sides of your face and covers your nose and mouth.
- The covering is secured either by ties or ear loops.
- You can breathe without restrictions.

When removing the face covering, you must:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds following the removal of the face covering. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub product with at least 60% alcohol.

Additionally, if you remove your face covering during the workday (e.g., to drink or eat) you must:

- Avoid touching the inside of the covering.
- Account for the whereabouts of the removed covering at all times.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after putting the covering back on. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub product with at least 60% alcohol.
- At the end of shift, place the used/soiled covering in the provided receptacle and wash your hands for at least 20 seconds.

### Maintain Clean and Healthy Facilities

8. Provide the LEA's schedule for routine cleaning of rooms, surfaces and objects, including high touch objects and surfaces (e.g., pens, keyboards, elevator buttons, light switches, handles, stair rails, faucets, phones, doorknobs, grab bars on playgrounds).

		Throughout the day	Daily	Weekly
Classroom	Floors of classrooms	6:30 am 3:00pm	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Student desks, chairs	6:30am 3:00pm	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Teacher desks, chair	6:30am 3:00pm	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Walls and white boards	6:30am 3:00pm	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Manipulatives,	Between each class	X	Full Sanitizing of

	textbooks, etc.	session		Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Pens, pencils, white board markers, crayons, markers	Between each class session	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
Hallway and Stairs	Fixtures (switches, knobs, buttons)	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Railings	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Floors of hallways	6:30am 3:00pm	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
Office and Common Area	Pens, pencils	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Fixtures (switches, knobs, buttons)	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Chairs	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	Copiers, etc.	Constant wipe down every hour	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
Bathrooms	surfaces	6 Times a day	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
	floor	6 Times a day	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays

	Fixtures, handles, switches, faucets	6 Times a day	X	Full Sanitizing of Building -Wednesdays and Fridays
Outdoor Space	Playground	NA		NA
	Balls, toys	NA		NA

**9. Provide the LEA's cleaning and disinfecting protocols in the event that (1) a student, staff member, or visitor develops symptoms of possible COVID-19 while in the school; or (2) if the school is notified that a student, staff member or visitor who tested positive has been in the school.**

Should there be a positive test result for a member of The Next Step PCS community, our Operations Division will engage with an external vendor. The Next Step PCS has partnered with an external vendor who specializes in deep cleaning and sanitizing; this service can be provided within a relatively quick window of time. In a proactive effort, The Next Step PCS has already engaged this service to clean and sanitize our entire building prior to the start of June 2020.

We anticipate our building maintenance team will remain aware and informed of cleaning tools, protocols and resources to ensure that we continue to deliver industry-normed and accepted practices for our community. A daily log will be kept in the maintenance office detailing what rooms were cleaned, at what time of day, and which chemicals were used during the cleaning process. The Building Manager will be notified when cleaning supplies need to be replenished and those supplies will be ordered the same day.

**10. Provide the LEA's plan to make available sufficient and appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies.**

We will run our supply inventory on a weekly basis to ensure that we have appropriate disinfection supplies. Our cleaning is done by our in-house maintenance team. All Staff who are doing any cleaning must wear gloves while cleaning and disinfecting spaces throughout the building. Maintenance will constantly sanitize the mops after cleaning each space. Maintenance will request additional help as needed to keep up with the cleaning and sanitizing of the building. Maintenance has purchased a sanitizing fogger system to further sanitize all areas on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

**11. Provide the LEA's plan to perform necessary maintenance to ventilation and water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) so that they are ready for use and occupancy and are adequately maintained throughout the operating period.**

All water fountains and water dispensers will be shut down to alleviate contaminations. Bottled water will be ordered weekly or as needed by the pallet-16.0oz-40 Pack cases. Each pallet holds 40 packs-case of 48 cases per pallet.

We have also purchased air purifiers for every classroom and office. These air purifiers cover up 310 square ft. of space. The air filters are changed once a month.

## **Response to a Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Case**

### **12. Describe the LEA's policies and procedures to:**

- **a. Comply with the requirement to not admit or to dismiss any student, staff member or visitor who is COVID-19 positive or otherwise meets criteria for exclusion, per OSSE's guidance; and**
- **b. Dismiss any individual or cohort that is potentially exposed to COVID-19 within the school setting.**

All students, staff and visitors will be provided instructions for completing a self-assessment health screening prior to entering the school building. For students, the health screening will be accessed via a student link on the school's main webpage. The health screening will consist of the following questions, as detailed in the guidance from DC Health:

1. Have you been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
2. Have you felt like you had a fever in the past day?
3. Do you have a new or worsening cough today? [Fever; Cough; Congestion; Sore throat; Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; Diarrhea; Nausea or vomiting; Fatigue; Headache; Muscle or Body aches; New loss of taste or smell; Or otherwise feeling unwell].

Health screenings will be required on a daily basis prior to their designated arrival time. All students, staff and visitors who successfully pass the health screening will receive an automated message indicating that they are clear and may enter the building following the established protocols. Any student who fails the screening by answering "yes" to any of the screening questions will receive an automated response informing them that based on their responses, they may not enter the building. The automated response will also instruct them to seek medical guidance from their health care provider to determine next steps, as well as to stay at home until they have a doctor's note/fitness for duty declaration, indicating that they may return to the building.

All health screening data will be collected and stored in a confidential database. A report will be generated with the names of all staff, students, and visitors who have passed the screening prior to their arrival. The Security Team will check the names of all persons entering the building against the health screening report, prior to the individual's participation in the daily temperature check process, and access to the mandatory security scan process.

Temperatures are taken by a standalone electronic temperature thermistor. If not wearing a mask the equipment will remind you to put the mask on your face and then proceed to get your temperature checked. The temperature is recorded in our staff and student data base.

If an individual or cohort needs to be dismissed due to a potential exposure to COVID-19, we will inform them of the decision and the reason for dismissal immediately upon confirming the potential exposure. We will also provide them with appropriate guidance as to next steps. In the case of students, we will arrange for an individual virtual meeting with their assigned case managers to provide them with additional support in terms of following the appropriate DC Health guidelines. In the case of staff, we will arrange a meeting with the Human Resources Director so that they may be advised of resources and support services available to them, as well to inform them on the necessary steps they need



to follow according to DC Health guidelines.

**13. Provide the LEA's plan to comply with the requirements to:**

- **a. Identify a staff member as the COVID-19 point of contact (POC) to whom families, staff, contractors and vendors should report a positive case of COVID-19 and who is responsible for reporting positive cases of COVID-19 to DC Health;**
- **b. Report any applicable positive COVID-19 case in a student, staff member or essential visitor to DC Health on the same day the school is notified;**
- **c. Not exclude students or staff with pre-existing health conditions that present with specific COVID-19-like symptoms on the basis of those specific symptoms, if a healthcare provider has provided written or verbal documentation that those specific symptoms are not due to COVID-19.**

The Next Step has appointed our Chief Operating Officer, Taunya Melvin, as the POC for all COVID-19 related matters. She will work with the Executive Director to report cases to DC Health. Our choice is to have someone who will be in regular contact with families, staff, contractors, and vendors and report positive cases of COVID-19 to DC Health.

Our reporting plan of applicable positive COVID-19 cases in a student, staff member, or essential visitor to DC Health will include both how staff, families, and vendors know to contact us when a member of our community has a positive test result. The COVID-19 POC will be able to receive calls throughout the day and into the evening hours. The COVID-19 POC may also proactively reach out to families of students, staff, and visitors who had symptoms or have been absent to inquire. All confirmed reports will be shared with DC Health in a means that is requested by them.

Ensuring that all staff and students learn as often on-site as possible. We will not exclude students with COVID-like symptoms if they have provided written or verbal guidance from a medical professional that such symptoms are chronic and unrelated to COVID. To this end, our COVID-19 POC may review all of our daily screening questions to ensure that students or staff with preexisting symptoms have not been exposed. In some cases, the COVID-19 POC may seek the counsel of the school nurse.

**14. Provide the LEA's procedures to support DC Health with contract tracing in the event of a positive case of COVID-19.**

We will use [OSSE's daily screening form](#) and, per the form's guidance, records of screenings will be stored for 30 days in order to support DC Health with contact tracing efforts should a positive COVID-19 incident occur within the facility."

Our COVID-19 POC will report all positive cases and contact with positive cases to DC Health, as described in Section N. of the [Health and Safety Guidance](#) from OSSE (p 28-29). The COVID-19 POC will contact DC Health if a staff member, essential visitor, or student notifies the school that they (or their student) tested positive for COVID-19 if the individual was on school grounds or participated in school activities during their infectious period. Immediately upon learning of the positive case, the COVID-19 POS will notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website using the [Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form](#).

**15. Describe how the LEA will notify the school community, as appropriate, of the positive case and corresponding actions taken by the LEA.**

The school has protocols in place to protect the privacy of the individuals while alerting families and staff to mitigate spread. Specifically, the protocol requires that the COVID-19 POC notify either the entire school or the impacted individuals within the cohort of the positive case. The COVID-19 POC will work closely with DC Health to determine whether the students and staff within the infected person's cohort may stay at school or be sent home and for how long. The COVID-19 POC will update impacted families and staff on how to participate in off-site learning until it is safe to return to on-site learning.

Our LEA will comply with all OSSE related guidance in planning for responding to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases. We will comply with the requirement to not admit or to dismiss any student, staff member or visitor who is COVID-19 positive or otherwise meets criteria for exclusion, per OSSE's guidance.

Our LEA also commits to dismiss any individual or cohort that is potentially exposed to COVID-19 within the school setting .

**COVID-19 Testing and Vaccines**

**16. If applicable, describe the LEA's current or planned COVID-19 testing protocol for symptomatic and/or asymptomatic students and/or staff, including steps the LEA will take to encourage participation in the testing program. Please include the LEA's plan to ensure that results of such testing programs are reported to DC Health per DC Health's COVID-19 reporting requirements: [dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements](https://dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements).**

NA

**17. Provide the LEA's plans to support COVID-19 vaccination of staff and students, as eligible, including efforts to encourage participation in public and community-based vaccination opportunities.**

Our Student Support and Engagement Division has been proactive and consistent in sharing updated information about the availability of and accessibility to vaccinations at public and community-based organizations. This has taken place in many forms, though text alerts, bulk e-mail, and through individual counseling with students. This information has also been shared with staff during weekly staff meetings and general announcements. The Student Support and Engagement Division will continue to disseminate information during the summer and into the 2021-2022 school year.

Our Human Resources department, on their part, has arranged for webinars with professionals from Kaiser Permanente for staff to learn about the benefits of vaccination and to address any fears or hesitation on the part of staff. We will use a similar approach with students by coordinating webinars with professionals to educate our students and families.

**Students with Disabilities**

**18. Provide the LEA's plans to provide appropriate accommodations to students with disabilities with respect to its health and safety policies and procedures.**

Accommodations for IEP students will be tailored in accordance with their IEPs in coordination with the Special Education Director and her team.

### **Training, Technical Assistance, and Monitoring**

**19. Please provide the LEA's plan to provide training and technical assistance on its policies and procedures to safely reopen schools in accordance with the DC Health Guidance for Schools and the OSSE Health and Safety Guidance for Schools, including:**

- **a. who will receive training and technical assistance; while on school grounds, on school buses and while participating in any school-related activities, including physical education and sports; and**
- **b. the topics that the training and technical assistance will address; and**
- **c. how and by whom the training and technical assistance will be delivered.**

We will provide training to all staff during the summer session as well as during start of school professional development week. The training will center around our COVID-19 Health and Safety policy as follows:

See COVID-19 Health and Safety Policy [here](#)

**20. Provide the LEA's plan to monitor the implementation of the health and safety plans at each campus, including how, when and by whom the implementation will be monitored, and how the LEA will respond if a given campus is not adhering to the plan.**

Implementation will be monitored mainly by the Operations team, in coordination with the Management team, and supported by a team composed of representatives from each division. Students and staff will be reminded to complete the daily debrief survey, which includes questions specifically about the safety plan. Debrief data will be reviewed daily by the management team and discussed weekly as a regular item on the management team meeting.

**21. Describe the LEA's plans to communicate key health and safety policies and procedures to students, families, staff and visitors.**

The key aspects of our health and safety policies will be communicated through a Student/Family Guide, a Staff Guide, and a visitor guide similar to the guides we provided during our transition from virtual to hybrid mode during the spring. These guides are tailored to the specific audience and will be available in all the languages represented at the school. The preferred mode of delivery will be electronic but we will also make them available in print form as needed.