



**Avonworth
School District**

2021-2022

**Return to
School Plan**

August 2021

Avonworth School District
258 Josephs Lane
Pittsburgh, PA 15237
412-369-8738



The Avonworth School District is pleased to return to school in a largely traditional model for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Although the model is largely traditional, there will be mitigations in place for student and staff safety, as well as to do our part to limit the spread of COVID in our schools and community. It is important to note that this plan outlines the starting point for beginning the 2021-2022 school year with regard to mitigations. The District will continue to monitor conditions in our schools, in the County, as well as review and consider updated guidance from officials at the Centers for Disease Control, PA Department of Health, Allegheny County Department of Health, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Last school year taught us the importance of remaining flexible and adaptable as circumstances with the COVID pandemic changed often. As we approach the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, this continues to be the case as both conditions and recommendations are changing on a daily and weekly basis. The purpose of this document is to outline important details related to both our educational plan as well as our approach to student, staff, and visitor safety for the opening of the 2021-2022 school year.

While we have developed comprehensive plans for returning to school, decisions moving forward will continue to be driven by the recommendations and guidance provided by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Pennsylvania Department of Health, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD).

Please direct questions to your child's building principal or assistant principal.

Avonworth Primary Center Principal

Dr. Scott Miller, smiller@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Avonworth Elementary School Principal

Dr. Bill Battistone, wbattistone@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Avonworth Primary/Elementary School Assistant Principal:

Mrs. Pharlan Ives, pives@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Avonworth Middle School Principal

Mr. Mike Hall, mhall@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Avonworth High School Principal

Mrs. Keera Dwulit, kdwulit@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Avonworth Middle/High School Assistant Principal

Mrs. Kaitlin Remensky, kremensky@avonworth.k12.pa.us



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Avonworth School District Return to School Education Options

Return to School Educational Models

K-12 In-Person Learning Model	K-12 Virtual Learning Option
Students will attend school for fulltime, in-person learning.	Students will attend virtually through Seneca Valley's cyber program.

Students and parents/guardians have been asked to contact their building principal if they had an interest in virtual learning for the 2021-2022 school year. Based on the inquiries received for virtual learning as of August 6, 2021, 99.4% of students plan to return to school for in-person learning to begin the 2021-2022 school year.

With so few students interested in a virtual option for the 2021-2022 school year, Avonworth will not be able to offer the virtual options that were provided during the 2020-2021 school year. Avonworth has had a relationship with Seneca Valley for many years for the purpose of providing cyber options to Avonworth students for unique situations. As this pandemic continues to present us with a unique need to provide a virtual learning option to our families, Avonworth will utilize Seneca Valley's Cyber Program as a virtual option for students K-12.



Any family interested in exploring this virtual option should contact the appropriate assistant principal below. Also, the program guides for K-6 and 7-12 are also linked below for review.

Dr. Scott Miller, Grades K-2 Principal, smiller@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Dr. Bill Battistone, Grades 3-6 Principal, wbattistone@avonworth.k12.pa.us

Mrs. Kaitlin Remensky, 7-12 Assistant Principal, kremensky@avonworth.k12.pa.us

[2021-2022 K-6 Seneca Valley Cyber Program of Studies](#)

[2021-2022 7-12 Seneca Valley Cyber Program of Studies](#)



Avonworth School District Health & Safety Plan Overview

Section 2001 (i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a Health & Safety Plan. The Pennsylvania Department of Education required that all districts in the commonwealth submit a Board-approved Health & Safety Plan by July 30, 2021. The Avonworth School District Health & Safety Plan was submitted to the Avonworth Board of School Directors for approval at the July 19, 2021, School Board Meeting. A full copy of the District's Health & Safety Plan can be found [HERE](#).

The following are key components of the Health & Safety Plan that students, parents/guardians, and staff should know before returning to school if attending in-person.

Screening and Monitoring Before Coming to School

- Before students come to school, parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring students' health. If a student has a fever of 100 degrees or higher, a cough, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell, they must stay home.
- Staff members are expected to monitor their health in the same manner and remain home if experiencing any of the above. Please see the additional information below regarding when to keep a child home from school.
- While on a school bus, seats may be assigned to create consistent cohorts of students. This is needed for accurate contact tracing should the need arise. While on school buses, masks are mandated under the current [Federal/CDC order](#). According to this order, students and bus drivers are to wear a mask while on a school bus regardless of vaccination status. This order was recently extended to January 18, 2022; however, students are expected to follow any District requirement that is in place regarding masks after January 18, 2022.

When should I keep my child home from school?

- Please keep your child home if they show any of the following symptoms
 - Active vomiting or diarrhea
 - Fever (100 degrees or higher), chills, or general body aches
 - Has shown any COVID-19 symptoms including
 - Fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, repeated shaking with chills, achiness, sore throat, and a new loss of taste or smell
 - Other symptoms of possible concern including
 - Rash, conjunctivitis (red eyes), swelling of the palms and soles of the feet or skin peeling in those areas, lymph node enlargement (swollen glands), and sharp abdominal pains



When can my child return to school after an illness?

- 24 hours since the last episode of active vomiting or diarrhea
- 24 hours being fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication (fevers of 100 degrees or higher)
- 24 hours after starting antibiotics for bacterial causes
- Doctor's note of clearance for various student-specific medical conditions
- For a known exposure to COVID-19, contact your school nurse
- If your child has been home because they have been sick, they must see the school nurse for a temperature check before returning to school

Monitoring Student and Staff Health at School

- Students, families, and staff will be reminded of the likely symptoms of COVID-19 and families will be responsible for monitoring students prior to sending students to school. Staff members are responsible for self-monitoring for symptoms before arriving at school.
- If a student or staff member presents to the Nurse's Office with any of the described symptoms, they will be isolated. The school nurse will apply required PPE and ensure a face mask is applied/available to an individual with respiratory symptoms and a fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit if it is able to be tolerated and developmentally appropriate.
- A student or staff member experiencing symptoms will be required to go home.
- School Nurses will be responsible for making decisions and communicating regarding the need for a student to go home due to illness or identification as a close contact as well as the need to quarantine.

Contact Tracing, Quarantine, & Isolation – [Visual Chart](#) (ACHD)

- Avonworth School District will continue to collaborate with the Allegheny County Health Department when it becomes aware of a student or staff member that has tested positive for COVID.
- Avonworth School District is required to follow CDC and ACHD guidance regarding the identification of close contacts and quarantine of close contacts.
- A close contact is considered someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed) for 15 minutes or more within 2 days prior to illness onset.
- **Exceptions:**
 - In the K-12 indoor setting, the close contact definition **excludes** students who were not less than 3 feet of an infected student if universal masking is in place and all students were wearing masks.
 - This exception **does not apply** to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor setting.
 - An individual that is fully vaccinated and asymptomatic **does not** need to quarantine.
 - An individual who was previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last three months of being identified a close contact **does not** need to quarantine.



- **Required Quarantine:**

- An individual that is not fully vaccinated **is required** to quarantine if identified as a close contact.
- An individual required to quarantine must do so for 10 days. The quarantine can end after 10 days if no symptoms are present during daily monitoring.
- An individual can end their quarantine after Day 7 if a diagnostic test (PCR) is negative for COVID and no symptoms are present during daily monitoring. The diagnostic specimen (COVID Test) can be collected on Day 5 or thereafter but not before.

- **Isolation:**

- Isolation is necessary when a person tests positive for COVID-19 to keep the infected person away from those who are not infected.
- While in isolation, the infected person should remain separated from others and use a separate bathroom (if available).
- Isolation can end 10 days after symptom onset and after resolution of a fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, and with the improvement of other symptoms.

Education Procedures During Quarantine (more details will be provided by each building)

- **Grades K-6:**

- A building substitute teacher has been hired for Avonworth Primary Center and Avonworth Elementary School. These teachers will be 100% dedicated to providing support to students when in quarantine. Quarantine teachers will work closely with classroom teachers regarding assignments and classroom instruction for students when in quarantine.
- Students in quarantine will receive assignments from their classroom teacher(s) via Google Classroom or Seesaw.
- Students in quarantine will meet with the quarantine teacher via google meet at 9:00 AM. Based on the grade levels of the students in quarantine, the quarantine teacher will establish a schedule for the students to follow throughout the day.
- The daily schedule will include, at a minimum,
 - Whole Group Meeting at 9:00 AM where the schedule for the day
 - Math Mini-Lesson (per grade level)
 - Reading Mini-Lesson (per grade level)
 - Math Support Session (per grade level)
 - Reading Support Session (per grade level)
 - Science/Social Studies Session (per grade level as needed per classroom instruction & assignments)
 - Whole Group Afternoon Meeting at 1:00 PM
 - Homework Support Session



- **Grades 7-12:**

- Students in quarantine will receive assignments from classroom teachers via Echo or Google Classroom.
- Students in quarantine will also have the opportunity to view and listen to instruction being delivered in the classroom synchronously via Google Meet.
 - Synchronous learning will only be available to students in quarantine or isolation. Synchronous learning will not be available for a student that is home ill or on a District-approved educational trip.
- If a student also wishes to connect with a teacher for additional support or to ask questions related to assignments, they should reach out to the teacher via email. The teacher will respond within 24 hours to address the student's question.

Masks

- To begin the 2021-2022 school year students, staff, and visitors will be ***required to wear*** a mask at all times while inside a school building regardless of vaccination status. In the event a student or staff member forgets to bring a mask to school or a mask needs to be replaced at school, each school has masks available.
 - A mask will not be required when eating or drinking, during designated meal times, or while playing brass or woodwind instruments during music instructional periods.
 - A mask is not required to be worn when outdoors.
 - If a student or their family asserts, they cannot wear a mask in school for medical reasons, documentation must be provided by a doctor of medicine (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO). Section 504 and IDEA both require participation in a team meeting to decide whether accommodations should be provided. Therefore, the District will require parents/guardians to provide pertinent medical information in order to decide whether a 504 plan should be developed or modified for a child (or an existing IEP modified) to make a decision regarding a reasonable accommodation(s) to support the child.
 - Staff with a need-to-know basis will be informed of student accommodations.
 - If a student does not have a valid medical excuse from a doctor of medicine (MD) or doctor of osteopathic medicine (DO) to not wear a mask and demonstrates continued noncompliance with this requirement, the principal will apply the code of conduct and any necessary disciplinary procedures.



What is considered a proper mask?

- The CDC defines a proper mask as one that
 - Has two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
 - Completely covers the nose and mouth
 - Fits snugly against the sides of your face and doesn't have gaps
 - Has a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask
 - A gaiter with two layers

When selecting a mask, there are many choices. Here are some do's and don'ts.

DO choose masks that



Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric



Completely cover your nose and mouth



Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps



Have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask

DO NOT choose masks that



Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl



Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape



Are prioritized for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators

How NOT to wear a mask



Around your neck



On your forehead



Under your nose



Only on your nose



On your chin



Dangling from one ear



On your arm



For additional information from the CDC regarding masks, please use [THIS LINK](#) to access the CDC's Guide to Masks.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- Students and staff will be encouraged and reminded to follow good hygiene practices, including frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing.
 - When handwashing, use soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Please use [THIS LINK](#) for additional information from the CDC regarding handwashing.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to use proper respiratory etiquette by covering coughs and sneezes to keep from potentially spreading infectious illness including COVID-19.

Physical Distancing

- The CDC has stated that studies from the 2020-2021 school year indicated low levels of COVID-19 transmission in schools when students were less than 6 ft when the school implemented and layered other prevention strategies. Therefore, the CDC has changed its recommendation for distancing to 3 ft combined with masking when indoors.
 - The Avonworth School District will distance to the greatest extent possible in classrooms.
 - Students will be distanced at lunch when masks are removed for eating and drinking. Additional spaces, such as gymnasiums will be utilized to assist with distancing.
 - Students and staff will be encouraged to distance as much as possible in hallways and stairways.
 - Staff will be asked to avoid congregating in communal spaces such as copy rooms and teachers lounges during breaks or planning time.

Large Assemblies and School Activities

- Guidelines for gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities will be provided on a case-by-case basis and may not take place if the District will not be able to follow any ordinance that is in place at that time or if the District feels the activity may compromise the health and safety of staff, students, or those in attendance.

School Volunteers/Visitors

- At this time, the District will limit visitors to only those that are necessary for educational reasons. Visitors are expected to follow all requirements in place by the District. If a visitor is not able to follow any District requirement, they will not be allowed to enter a school building.

Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Ventilation

- All buildings have been subjected to extensive summer cleaning.
- Equipment was purchased last school year to support the cleaning and disinfecting of each building every night utilizing electrostatic sprayers and appropriate disinfecting



solutions. Custodial staff will conduct frequent cleaning of high traffic areas throughout the school day.

- HVAC systems will remain in “occupied” status 24/7 to support increased air circulation and filtration. Enhanced air filters (MERV-13) are being installed in air handlers for the start of school to further improve indoor air quality.
- Where feasible and safe, classroom and office windows will be opened in order to increase outside air supply into the buildings. Building HVAC systems will be adjusted to operate with increased outside air circulation.
- Additional disinfecting wipes will be available for staff to wipe down classroom surfaces or supplies.
- Touchless bottle filling stations were installed last school year at all buildings. Where traditional water fountains remain, they will be disabled and therefore, not able to be used. Students will be able to carry water bottles in all schools.

Social and Emotional Wellness

Avonworth School District is committed to the social and emotional wellness of our students and staff. Below are ways in which we will be addressing these needs this school year:

- All staff members have been trained in Trauma Informed-Care. Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) is an approach in the human service field that assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. Trauma-Informed Care recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual’s life, including service staff.
- Student Assistance Program –
 - The Pennsylvania Student Assistance Program (SAP) is a systematic team process used to mobilize school resources to remove barriers to learning. SAP is designed to assist in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues that pose a barrier to a student’s success.
- School-Based Mental Health –
 - The Avonworth School District has hired a Social Worker and Licensed Professional Counselor to provide school-based mental health services.
 - The District also has a partnership with the Human Services Administration Organization (HSAO). Through this partnership, students can be provided with outpatient mental health services both in the school setting and through teletherapy. This partnership will work to effectively diminish barriers that historically have prohibited some families from accessing supportive mental health services.
- Social and Emotional Wellness Committee –
 - Led by the District’s Student Services Director, Dr. Matt Erickson, our social worker, our licensed professional counselor, school counselors, building principals, nurses, parents, and additional staff members will work on addressing student and staff social and emotional wellness as we work to reopen and renew our school community.
- Individual Student Supports –



- Students at all levels may be afforded opportunities to address specific social and emotional concerns through individual school counseling sessions.
- Employee Assistance Program –
 - An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems.

Communication from the District

Avonworth School District recognizes that conditions, as well as information and safety recommendations continue to change rapidly. To keep the school community informed, the District will reinstitute a weekly COVID communication beginning on Friday, August 13, 2021. The District will also maintain a portion of the District website dedicated to providing up-to-date as well as historical information related to COVID. Please use [THIS LINK](#) to access the District's COVID webpages.

Student Services Information

Student Services

Students receiving student services in the Avonworth School District will continue to have access to the Avonworth School District Student Services Department regardless of any educational model changes throughout the 2021-2022 school year. The student services team is a coordinated group of professionals providing specialized services such as psychological, school counseling, health/wellness, student assistance, and social work to students within the Avonworth School District. The student services staff will implement health and safety protocols appropriately. Enrollment for students who are homeless or in foster care will be verified by District staff before the start of the school year.

English Language Learners

English as a Second Language staff will work with families to assist in making choices for their selection of options and to assist with any transition if the District moves between options of instruction throughout the year.

504 Plans

The Avonworth School District will ensure student support through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 while students are in school. If the District transitions between learning models during the 2021-2022 school year, the District will reach out to families to address individual student needs based on the changes to the instructional delivery.

Special Education

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) has been maintained during the pandemic. Therefore, the Avonworth School District is committed to working with the



parents/guardians of Students with Disabilities to provide individualized instruction based on each learner. During in-person instruction, service providers will follow the District's health and safety protocols in the Special Education environment while implementing each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Upon returning to school, case managers will address student-specific needs arising from the transition back into school buildings while considering whether or not a student has experienced a regression of skills and/or lack of progress. If regression and/or a lack of progress is present, the IEP team will identify opportunities for recovery, including additional, new, or different services and accommodations. If the District is required to transition from one instructional model to another, case managers will schedule a parent/teacher conference to discuss the contents of the IEP and create this individualized continuity of learning plan for students in a hybrid/remote environment. When working with students through alternative delivery models, the school or District should make a good faith effort within available capabilities to determine how a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) will be provided and should consider the following:

- Appropriate resources
- Equal access to learning and required materials
- Ability to provide the services and supports in the IEP
- Parents/guardians, students, and staff training
- Communication processes
- Related Services
- Instructional Assistants
- Assistive Technology

Gifted Programming

The Avonworth School District GATE program provides enrichment and a broad spectrum of educational opportunities while encouraging individual learners to develop personal responsibility, task commitment, self-discipline, independent learning skills, respectful conduct, and social/emotional balance. Enrichment and educational opportunities will be made available to students through the GATE program in all models of instruction.

Superintendent Designation

The Superintendent may decide to move the District from one model of instruction to another or close a building for emergency reasons, such as (but not limited to):

- Community spread of the illness in classrooms, individual school buildings, and across the District
- Lack of Bus Drivers to cover necessary runs to get students to and from school for the day
- The number of Teachers absent leading to the inability to cover classrooms in a manner that ensures the safety and welfare of students
- Inability to provide food to students during the school day due to an inability to staff the Food Services Department
- Lack of custodial staff to be able to clear and sanitize appropriately
- Lack of coverage in School Nursing Offices due to Nurse absence



