



Delaware County Intermediate Unit [DCIU] and Delaware County Technical Schools [DCTS] Health and Safety Plan

Questions and Answers Additional Guidance

Issued: September 1, 2020

DCIU Board of Directors approved the Health and Safety Plan on July 1, 2020 and then an Addendum on August 5, 2020. In addition to our Health and Safety Plan, the Department of Education, Department of Health and the Chester County Health Department have continually updated their guidance. Some of their guidance further defines strategies in our plan or places more restrictions. The *Questions and Answers* document will be used to clarify strategies in the DCIU and DCTS plan or define additional strategies or restrictions.

FACE COVERINGS

Why did the Secretary of the PA Department of Health issue the Face Covering Order on July 1, 2020?

The Secretary issued this Order to continue to protect all in the Commonwealth from the spread of COVID-19, mindful of the need to slow the increase in the number of cases as the Commonwealth reopens and in order to avoid the resurgence that is overwhelming the health care systems and public health systems in other states who have been less successful in reopening than the Commonwealth.

On August 17, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) outlined under what circumstances students are permitted to remove their face coverings (e.g. masks and face shields)?

Schools may allow students to remove face coverings when students are:

- Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart; or
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task; or
- At least 6 feet apart during “face-covering breaks” to last no longer than 10 minutes.

PDE identifies that student should be wearing their face covering even when 6 feet apart in a classroom. However, when a student is 6 feet apart, he/she can take a “face covering break”. This is a change from previous guidance. DCIU and DCTS programs should incorporate the strategy of “face-covering breaks” within classrooms or other settings.

How should the August 17 PDE guidance for face covering (e.g. masks and face shields) apply to staff?

Staff may remove face coverings when they are:

- Eating or drinking when spaced at least 6 feet apart; or
- At least 6 feet apart during “face-covering breaks” to last no longer than 10 minutes.

Best practice is staff should wear face coverings in shared spaces and when in classrooms with others. Face covering breaks are encouraged for periods of no longer than 10 minutes periodically throughout the day.

MONITORING STUDENT AND STAFF HEALTH

What was the updated guidance issued by the Chester County Health Department (CCHD) on August 14, 2020 regarding Isolation Rooms?

Designate an isolation room/area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-19-like symptoms until the individual can go home, or to a healthcare provider; the isolation room/area should not be the existing nurse’s office.

- Isolation rooms should be positioned near an exit that is separate from the main entrance/exit for ease of leaving the school.
- Isolation room doors should always remain shut.
- Any individual supporting the isolation room/area should enter with full COVID-19 PPE to include eye protection, gloves, gowns; upon exiting the room, the PPE should be taken off.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AND OTHER SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Is it OK for staff and students to fist-bump or high-five or handshake?

NO. The CCHD guidance states that physical contact such as handshakes, fist-bumps, high-five should be prohibited.

Are there any exceptions to social distancing, hygiene, or monitoring health for students with disabilities who have complex needs such as autism, intellectual disabilities or multiple disabilities?

CCHD identified additional strategies when working with students with complex needs. If feasible, these additional strategies should be incorporated into programs:

Social Distancing

- When social distancing cannot be adhered to due to the special needs of the students, students and staff should be cohorted into small groups and be assigned separate rooms for learning. Students shall remain with the teacher of record or assigned to the class. Related service personnel may work with students in the classes. Related service personnel shall wash hands before and after working with the cohort of students. Related service personnel shall be granted the ability to work with various cohorts of students throughout the program day.

Hygiene

- Implement a cleaning schedule that requires more frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces in spaces used by students served by special education.
- Implement a mandatory hand washing schedule for students served by special education and all staff that interact with them.
- Strictly enforce adherence to Standard Precautions by all staff; if COVID-19 level PPE is required, then staff must wear mask, eye protection, gloves, and gowns.

Monitoring Health

- Strictly enforce at-home health monitoring prior to arrival at school for both students and staff.
- Provide consistent reinforcement to staff about self-monitoring of symptoms, the importance of remaining home if not feeling well.
- Task a staff member with the responsibility for visually monitoring the health of students and staff throughout the day.