



December 4, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians,

I hope that you and your family enjoyed a safe and restful Thanksgiving holiday. The Southern Lehigh School District plans to continue in-person instruction while following the established mitigation strategies, operational procedures, case investigation/contact tracing systems, and cleaning and disinfecting practices. To that end, Southern Lehigh submitted the School Board Approved [PDE Attestation Form](#) on November 25, 2020.

- **Updated PDE & DOH Orders** - As a reminder, over the last several weeks the PA Department of Health and PA Department of Education have provided school districts with a number of significant updated orders and guidelines. Southern Lehigh must continue to emphasize that these changes REQUIRE that public school districts in counties with two consecutive weeks of substantial transmission comply if they wish to continue any form of in-person instruction.
 - The updated [Order of the PA DOH Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) was reviewed in the [November 20, 2020 Communication](#).
 - The updated [Recommendations for Pre-K to 12 Schools Following the Identification of COVID-19](#) was reviewed in the November 25, 2020 Communication. As a reminder, this change institutes a numerical framework for addressing cases at the school building level. The DOH and PDE have created a chart that combines county community transmission and the number of cases of COVID-19 in a school building during a rolling 14-day window to determine when a school building would be **REQUIRED** to temporarily transition to 100% remote instruction. Some additional important information to consider;
 - Cases will be added to the 14-day rolling window using the date of symptom onset as the determining factor for inclusion.
 - A case in a school setting would include any confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 when the individual was physically present in the school setting during the infectious period, including but not limited to, instruction, work, sports or extracurricular activities. Students who are participating in fully virtual instruction are not counted in the case count unless they have physically entered school property for a reason such as athletic practice, participation in an extracurricular activity, or another school related purpose.
 - The DOH and PDE guidance indicates that once a school building has reopened after the **REQUIRED** closure period that the rolling 14-day window starts over again at zero, and a new rolling 14-day window will not begin again until there is a new case of COVID-19.

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- **Winter Weather Closures** - As we progress into the winter months, Southern Lehigh will have the ability to utilize Remote Learning in place of a traditional winter weather closure. In the event of necessary winter weather closures, Southern Lehigh will first utilize the existing three (3) “snow days” that are currently built into the 2020-2021 District Calendar. Then, if a situation arises where those days are exhausted and additional winter weather closures are needed, **Southern Lehigh will convert future closures starting with the fourth (4th) winter weather closure into a Fully Remote Learning Day rather than a traditional “snow day” school closure.** Announcements about these decisions will be made at the time of a necessary closure.

While we continue to follow the established mitigation strategies in our schools, we must collectively remain prepared that transitions to temporary remote learning will always be a possibility. All Southern Lehigh families **MUST BE PREPARED** and have a plan in place in the event that your children are unable to attend in-person instruction due to a physical building closure related to cases of COVID-19. Southern Lehigh will continue to work alongside the PADOH to support COVID-19 case investigation and we must continue to emphasize that the updated orders from the PA DOH **may force temporary closures and periods of remote instruction WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT PRIOR WARNING.** As a reminder, **if a school building is closed due to cases of COVID-19, ALL INSTRUCTION will shift to a remote format including instruction for students with special needs.**

Please continue to do everything that you and your family can to keep yourself and others safe. Slowing the spread of COVID-19 requires a comprehensive community effort. Wearing a mask, remaining socially distant, increasing hand hygiene, and the avoidance of gatherings are all keys to ensuring that our schools remain open for in-person learning. Further, all Southern Lehigh staff and students **MUST stay home when sick** and notify the Southern Lehigh School District Nursing team immediately if they are experiencing symptoms related to COVID-19 or are a confirmed case of COVID-19. We must continue to recognize that we all hold a personal responsibility in the maintenance of in-person learning.

The Southern Lehigh School District staff remains committed to supporting the academic, social, and emotional growth of all children. We will continue to navigate these challenging times, together. Thank you for your continued support.

Kathleen Evison
Superintendent