

## **PPSD PANDEMIC MITIGATION POLICY**

**Purpose** The Providence School Board is aware of the evolving need for mitigation measures to respond to COVID-19 and other potential global pandemics in a manner that allows schools to open and operate as safely as possible. It will **impose, implement, adapt and** lift mitigation strategies aligned to Center for Disease Control (“CDC”) and Rhode Island Department of Health (“RIDOH”) when necessary for both staff and students. This policy also covers children and staff in District child care, after school and school enrichment programs.

**District Procedures** The Superintendent shall be empowered to implement any mitigation strategy recommended by the CDC or RIDOH for the safety of the school community to combat any identified pandemic. These mitigation strategies, once imposed, shall be maintained in each school and building and program throughout the District. .

Mitigation strategies may include any of the following:

- Mandatory masking;
- Social distancing;
- Closure of schools;
- Closure of District buildings; and
- Other reasonable measures identified by CDC or RIDOH

The Superintendent may impose reasonable timeframes for transitioning to or from the implementation of mitigation strategies. Within twenty (20) days of the implementation of a mitigation strategy by the Superintendent and prior to altering or coming out of any mitigation strategy, the Board shall have the opportunity to meet and receive public comment regarding the mitigation strategy imposed or the alteration or cessation of the mitigation strategy.

Unless otherwise exempt, all students, staff and faculty shall be required to adhere to the mitigation strategies implemented by the Superintendent.

### **Information Dissemination**

The Superintendent shall provide reasonable notice to students, parents, faculty and staff prior to the implementation, alteration or termination of any mitigation strategy. This notice should explain the details and rationale for the decision(s) made. Said mitigation strategy shall be reasonable under the circumstances with consideration being given to the nature of the pandemic, the rate of community spread and the needs of the school community.

### **Exemptions**

The Superintendent shall establish reasonable exemptions to accommodate the health conditions and academic needs of students who are medically precluded from adhering to the mitigation strategies recommended. The Superintendent may develop limited exemptions to accommodate the religious beliefs of members of the school community, provided such exemptions do not impair the health and safety of the school community. Failure to comply with mitigation strategies shall be handled in accordance with existing District policies.

### **Enforcement**

Every attempt will be made to ensure that the students and students’ parents

understand the importance of Students adhering to the mitigation strategies. The District will work with families to identify more appropriate learning paths, including virtual learning, if students fail to comply with identified mitigation strategies.

Further, and to the extent practicable, staff should document violations of this policy by students' age, race, and gender and evaluate this information on a regular basis for bias enforcement disparities. This information should be made available to the School Board and the general public.

Employees who refuse to adhere to implemented mitigation strategies at school, a school function, or on school transportation under this policy shall be subject to discipline under in accordance with Board policy, state law and applicable collective bargaining agreements.

**Legal References**

R.I.G.L. section 16-21-34 (School Safety)  
R.I.G.L. section 16-21-33 (Safe Schools Act)

**History**