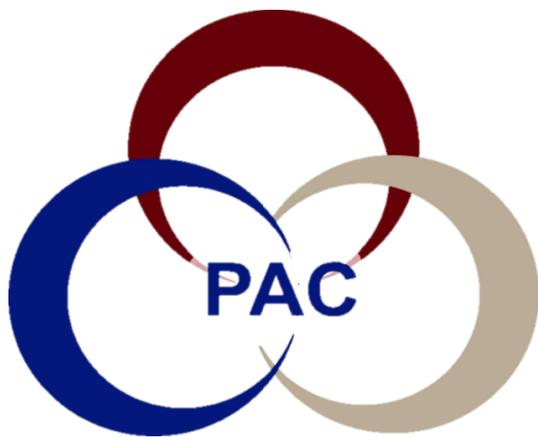




# PILGRIM AREA COLLABORATIVE



FALL 2020-21  
RE-ENTRY PLAN

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## ***EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE***

August 2020

Dear Pilgrim Area Collaborative Community:

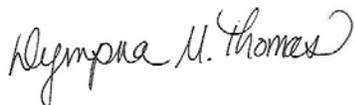
As the summer winds down, we are gearing up to welcome our students for the 2020-2021 school year. I am happy to report that Pilgrim Area Collaborative's phased in approach to reopening our school buildings has been a success. As you will recall, school closures began in March 2020, followed by remote learning in April-June 2020, then the opening of our July-August 2020 summer programming that consisted of a hybrid model of in-person and remote learning. Finally, based on the feedback from our families, staff, students, sending districts and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) we are thrilled to be preparing to open our doors to full, in-person learning for our students beginning on Wednesday, September 16, 2020.

This document is meant to provide a framework for what a safe return-to-school will look like in the fall. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education currently requires students and staff to maintain social distances of three to six feet, wear face masks (Grades 2-12), and to organize students at the middle and high school levels by cohorts to minimize interaction. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education guidance endorsed by medical professionals, sets the expectation that children need to be back in school this fall, while minimizing risk.

Please be aware that given the ever-evolving situation of the COVID-19 crisis, aspects of this plan may change as new information becomes available. So please keep informed by following our Pilgrim Area Collaborative website, Facebook and Twitter social media feeds.

We look forward to welcoming our students back to school on September 16, 2020 and engaging once again in the love of teaching and learning. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Dympna M. Thomas, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

## **ALL INCLUSIVE SCHOOL REOPENING**

**Pilgrim Area Collaborative will be providing in-person learning beginning on September 16, 2020.** Ideally, educators and students need to be in the school building to maximize student learning and development. The advantages of the full in-person model for students, educators, families, and the community are that all student individual educational plans (IEP) and services will be provided within the provisions of Special Education regulations. The continuity of instruction is more equitable and efficient in this model and routines, support services and valuable experiences will continue to be enjoyed by all students within the Pilgrim Area Collaborative.

Relationship building will be paramount to the successful return to school this fall. With a full in-person student population, staff will be able to facilitate social-emotional education. Pilgrim Area Collaborative has a smaller student population, so staff will be able to more effectively identify students-at-risk and monitor individual students' social emotional needs. Valuable peer-to-peer and student-to-staff relationships will be achievable in the in-person model. Physical spaces have been reconfigured to accommodate three to six feet of space between student desks with all facing the point of instruction. In order to create enough space, most other furniture/items (easels, rugs, calming spaces, dramatic play stations, bookcases, round tables) will be removed and stored away. This classroom experience will limit the extent of student collaboration in instruction. Due to the expectation of physical distancing, arrival and dismissals will be staggered appropriately. Lunches will be delivered, eaten in classrooms, cafeterias, hallways, and gymnasiums. Moving students through the building, to the nurse and bathrooms will require staff to monitor and enforce physical distancing requirements. Mask breaks will be scheduled school wide and be taken within each classroom. The Collaborative will also provide remote learning for those families who choose not to send their children into the buildings. This will either be accomplished with a building-by-building remote learning teacher or an expectation of each teacher for the students on their class roster.

Currently, Pilgrim Area Collaborative does not believe that a hybrid model is necessary due to our ability to social distance in all circumstances because of the small number of students our Collaborative services. However, if circumstances should change, we recommend following a similar format to our Extended School Year (ESY) Program which was a half day in-person and half day remote model. Students accessed half day in-person instruction and half day remote learning instruction via Google Classroom. Careful consideration and thoughtful planning went into determining the number of in-person hours in order to meet the unique sensory, behavioral and social-emotional needs of our students and to ease the transition back into classrooms while maintaining the health and safety for all students and staff. Specialist (OT, PT, SLP, Behavioral & Reading) and Counseling services were provided with both in-person as well as remote services for students. By reducing the number of hours in the buildings by half, we decreased the time that staff and students were together. With a reduced student population using the hybrid model, staff can facilitate social-emotional education (coping with anxieties, communicating feelings, adapting to and coping with whole-scale change, etc.). Additionally, with a smaller student population, staff can more effectively identify students-at-risk and monitor individual students' social emotional needs. If the health conditions warrant, this model will also support splitting the population into two cohorts. The exact split will be dependent upon the support of

sending districts and their capacity to transport students from their districts. For example, Pilgrim Area Collaborative will consider splitting the cohorts either by middle school, high school, sending districts or alphabetical. If host schools must close and are unable to house our programs, Pilgrim Area Collaborative will shift the middle and high school behavioral programs (students of average to high average intellect) to remote learning in order to move the other programs (medically fragile, developmentally delayed) into the Pilgrim Academy facility. Although a hybrid model is disruptive to family schedules and childcare needs, the Collaborative will make every effort to accommodate extraordinary circumstances.

Lastly, the remote learning model for Pilgrim Area Collaborative is not the optimal delivery model and only a default mode when it is unsafe to be in the building. We understand the pervasive equity and efficacy issues connected to remote learning. This model also has an adverse impact on relationship building and social-emotional development at all levels. In this learning model, instruction and face-to face communication will be provided both synchronously and asynchronously through Google Classroom, the Collaborative's learning platform. All students are provided a Chromebook and charger. All teachers will access professional development prior to school opening in order to develop and increase strategies that maximize student learning in a remote setting. Student attendance and participation will be tracked through Rediker, every day in all classes. Grades will hold students accountable for participation and for demonstrating what they know and are able to do. Criteria for success will be developed, aligned with state standards, reviewed by Directors and shared with students and parents/guardians on a predetermined schedule. Instruction and services will include a regular and consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services, and therapies as required by the student's IEP, offered both or either synchronously and/or asynchronously; the structured learning time designed so that the student can access state standards; and frequent interactions with teachers and other staff members to ensure participation. The consistent schedule of classes, interventions, services, and therapies will be dedicated time students spend interacting directly with teachers and related service providers on a regular basis, as well as some independent work time and opportunities for interacting with classmates. Synchronous remote lessons or tele-therapy sessions will be provided via telephone or video conferencing. Considerations will be made for simplifying student routines, accounting for student access at home and adapting screen time. Administrators will support staff and students by attending announced visits to synchronous lessons. Feedback will be provided through the Pilgrim Area Collaborative Evaluation Process.

## **COMPREHENSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION**

All students who attend Pilgrim Area Collaborative are on an individual education plan (IEP) and/or a 504 Plan. Our staff members often have particularly close connections with their students; therefore, ongoing communication and meaningful partnerships with families continues to be of paramount importance to us. The collaboration that took place during the spring school closure, to remote learning and then the summer hybrid model will continue into the new school year with full in-person learning to provide students with their IEP or 504 services. Depending upon the health metrics of Massachusetts and Governor Baker's decisions, we may be pivoting from full in-person learning, to remote learning to hybrid and back again to full in-person learning.

The Pilgrim Area Collaborative provides a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to our students, while abiding with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing specialized instruction and related services. As we consider social distancing requirements, the Collaborative will factor in the additional special education personnel, who enter classrooms to provide accommodations and modifications, in a manner that avoids overlapping with other staff members or related service providers. Specialized personnel protective equipment (PPE) will be provided when the instructional needs require closer proximity. IEP meetings will be held mainly remotely to limit the number of people in the building.

Students with disabilities will be assessed to evaluate skill gaps. In addition, special education progress reports and data on levels of performance towards goals prior to closure will be reviewed for progress and regression post-closure.

Should full school closure occur after the start of the school year, please be assured that remote learning in the school year 2020-2021 will be more robust than the models of remote learning implemented in the spring of 2020 when schools did not have time to fully plan for the changes in instruction and service delivery due to emergency school closures. Curriculum, instruction and assessment expectations will be very different for student learning. Assignments will not be optional, and the focus will be on both social-emotional well-being of students and their traditional academic growth. We will be returning to the norms we all recognize---teachers teaching students directly, students working on assignments and passing them in for grades, and students engaged in a wider range of classes and activities. Additionally, the various screening tools and diagnostic assessments typically used will continue to be used to identify areas of need for all students. The Collaborative will also explore continuing in-person services on a one-to-one basis if school closures persist. Such a decision will be made in agreement with parents, staff and the Board of Health guidelines. A key element in the process will be more consistency and continuity across grade spans. Families can expect to see common expectations and structure in terms of nature of assignments, length of assignments, feedback tools and executive functioning support for all students.

## **FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS**

The Pilgrim Area Collaborative programs are in a variety of sites on the South Shore. We are fortunate to rent classrooms from the Duxbury Public Schools, Plymouth Public Schools and Silver Lake Regional School District. In addition, we rent two buildings, one in the Town of Bridgewater and the other in the Town of Plymouth. All rented facilities adhere to health, fire and building inspections.

In addition, the Pilgrim Area Collaborative has taken several school safety measures to minimize risk to all members of our school community to ensure the safe return to school while the COVID-19 risk remains. We have completed a *Facilities Needs Assessment* to determine the number of teaching spaces and classrooms in each school that provide adequate square footage, based on approved social distancing guidelines, to safely seat students and staff. The air handling and filtration system capacity has been analyzed to ensure adequate, safe, and high-quality ventilation in teaching spaces. We have conducted walk-throughs to identify additional

expanded space for staff to separate sick students from well students, and care for students or staff in the event they become sick during the school day. In addition, student/staff bathrooms are assigned, and lunches are delivered to classrooms to prevent possible cross-contamination, and to facilitate tracking. Custodial plans are designed for daily cleaning and disinfecting,

Lastly, Pilgrim Area Collaborative continues to purchase Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies necessary to keep students and staff safe in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education school safety guidelines. Supplies purchased to date include the following:

- ◆ Cleaning supplies & foggers
- ◆ Disposable gowns
- ◆ Disposable masks & N95 masks
- ◆ Face shields & goggles
- ◆ Hand sanitizer dispensers and refills
- ◆ Infrared Thermometers
- ◆ Nitrile and vinyl gloves
- ◆ Pulse Oximeters
- ◆ Sanitizer wipes

## **FAMILY SUPPORTS**

Throughout this unprecedented shift, our dedicated staff will continue to serve our Pilgrim Area Collaborative community, connecting students and families with the varied resources necessary to engage in learning amidst this pandemic. We have all made incredible shifts in practices, routines and expectations and it has not been easy however, collaboration and communication will continue to be the key factors to success. So as educators, students, and parent/caregivers navigate their way through the 2020-2021 school year, please be assured that we will continue to provide you with the professional learning to make sure everyone has the tools needed to succeed.

If for any reason you experience a frustration with your child's school experience, it can be challenging to know where to turn to get help and support. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, therapists, support staff and try to work out the issues together. If you feel that the problem is still unresolved, or you are uncomfortable working directly with those individuals, feel free to reach out to your child's director. If the issue persists or you would prefer to speak to someone outside of your child's program, please feel free to contact Executive Director Dympna M. Thomas at [dthomas@pilgrimac.org](mailto:dthomas@pilgrimac.org) or by calling the office at 781-293-6111 x. 1112.

The collaboration and communication between and among our families, staff, students and sending districts will result in a safer, more effective plan for our return to full in-person learning and we thank you for your participation and cooperation.

## **PERSONNEL & STAFF SUPPORT**

While ensuring planning for making students safe when we come back to school, we also need to remember that our buildings are full of adults and our focus is also on keeping staff safe.

If a staff member does not think he or she can return in the fall for reasons related to COVID-19, please contact the Executive Director to discuss. Each case is different and will depend on your specific circumstances. The Central Office will reach out to you if you have indicated that you are not able to return to Pilgrim Area Collaborative. We will work with you to review your options in accordance with your rights under contracts as well as state and federal law. Employees can also find information about paid sick leave and the expanded Family and Medical Leave Act under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

## **PROTOCOLS FOR RESPONDING TO COVID-19 SCENARIOS IN SCHOOL, ON THE BUS, OR IN THE COMMUNITY SETTINGS**

The Pilgrim Area Collaborative adheres to the protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus or in the community settings in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education safety guidelines. Frequent risk assessment checks are conducted by administration to ensure that all safety measures are being followed and supplies are in stock.

### **School/work attendance guidelines:**

- ◆ Students and staff must stay home if they do not feel well. This is vital in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Symptoms include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue when accompanied by other symptoms, muscle or body aches, headache when accompanied by other symptoms, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or abdominal pain.
- ◆ Students and staff with a temperature above 100.4 degrees should not attend school until they have been fever-free for three days and without the use of antipyretic medication, such as Tylenol, Motrin, Advil or Ibuprofen.
- ◆ Student and staff will be provided with a self-screening tool to review COVID-19 symptoms so that they can self-monitor themselves daily before school/work.
- ◆ Sick students and staff members should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Health to discontinue home isolation and/or quarantine. Students and staff will check with their school nurse prior to returning to school/work.
- ◆ Staff and students should not come to school if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case. Staff and students will be asked to provide documentation of symptoms that precludes them from attending school/work.
- ◆ Students and staff who are out of school/work for out of state travel, must quarantine or produce a negative COVID-19 test to return safely to school/work, in accordance with the Massachusetts COVID-19 Travel Order.

Student or staff member becomes ill at school/work:

- ◆ Staff and children with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school will be separated from well students/staff. Individuals who are sick will be triaged by the school nurse and asked to either go home immediately or to a healthcare facility depending on the severity of the symptoms.
- ◆ Each building will have a designated “sick area” where staff and/or students will be triaged and assessed for an appropriate disposition. Sick students and staff will be separated from well students and staff.
- ◆ School nurses and other healthcare providers will use standard and transmission-based precautions when caring for sick people.
- ◆ If the nurse/school personnel are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, they will alert the dispatcher that the person may have COVID-19.
- ◆ Students and staff need to provide the school nurse with emergency contact, indicating individuals who will be able to come to the school and pick up their child if they become sick during the school day. Dismissing sick students and staff in a timely fashion (within 45 minutes) is imperative for the safety of all.

Notification to Health Officials and Close Contacts:

- ◆ In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, school nurses/administrators will notify the local Board of Health, staff, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- ◆ The nursing team will work collaboratively with the local Board of Health to identify individuals who have tested positive and/or who had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals and families will be instructed to stay home, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance if symptoms develop.
- ◆ The nursing team and administrators will work closely to identify any COVID-19 cases and any necessary actions will be taken.

Health Protocols Prior to Coming to School:

School Personnel:

- ◆ Every day prior to coming to work staff will conduct a self-screening tool to review COVID-19 symptoms so that they can self-monitor themselves daily.
- ◆ If a staff member has any symptoms, they should call their supervisor and report the symptoms and stay home from work.
- ◆ Staff should follow up with their Primary Care Physician for further evaluation. They will be allowed to return to work based on their symptoms, further evaluation, and clearance from the nursing team.
- ◆ Staff who become ill while at work will be sent home immediately.

Students:

- ◆ Families should assess their child’s state of wellness before leaving home for school.

- ◆ If the student has any symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend school. The family should notify their school nurse that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The school nurse will follow-up with the family regarding the child's symptoms, whether the child was seen by a medical professional and any testing that was done. The child can return to school once cleared by the nursing team.
- ◆ It is important to know that the symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the symptoms of many other illnesses. To protect all students and staff, any symptoms of COVID-19 will be treated as a suspected case until determined otherwise.

## **STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The entire Pilgrim Area Collaborative staff will participate in eleven days of professional learning and development leading up to the start of school from August 31, 2020-September 15, 2020. On these days, educators will learn about safety practices and procedures related to the pandemic, culturally responsive social-emotional supports, curriculum, instruction and assessments, and trauma-informed teaching for students in the context of current events. Professional learning will be provided to help educators adapt to the pedagogical shifts required for in-person, hybrid and remote plans. Lastly, professional development and learning will continue throughout the school year to offer continuous support to meet the needs of our staff.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Student transportation is provided by sending districts who are responsible for adhering to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education transportation guidelines. Please be aware that families are strongly encouraged by sending districts to drop off/pick up their child/children. If you have any questions or concerns about transportation, please contact the school district in which your child/children reside.

In addition, the Pilgrim Area Collaborative leases school vans and a minibus that are used for community experiences that are consistent with student's individual education plans (IEP). The Pilgrim Area Collaborative will adhere to the following when transporting students in accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education transportation guidelines:

- ◆ Students will be seated one student per seat
- ◆ Windows on vans/minibus will be open to circulate fresh air
- ◆ All riders and the driver/monitor will be required to wear a mask
- ◆ Drivers/monitors will clean and sanitize the vehicle after each usage

**This plan is the result of inclusive strategic engagement, collegiality, transparency and the active two-way communication to seek feedback and address questions and concerns.**

**Thank you for your phone calls, emails, and completing our surveys.**