

Shaler Area School District

1800 Mt. Royal Boulevard, Glenshaw, PA 15116 • 412.492.1200 • www.sasd.k12.pa.us

Sean C. Aiken, Ed.D
Superintendent of Schools



Bryan E. O'Black, Ed.D
Deputy Superintendent of Schools

Kathleen R. Graczyk, Ed.D
Director of Student Services

Sherri L. Ludwig, CPA
Director of Business Affairs

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Shaler Area School District – Back to School 2021-22

Shaler Area faculty, staff, and administration are so excited to welcome everyone back for the start of the 2021-22 school year. After the uncertainty of last school year, we are looking forward to starting the year with students in the classroom. The first day of school for all students is Wednesday, August 25, 2021. Some of the changes and highlights for this school year include:

Curriculum Changes

The district's goal is to ensure the maximum number of students have access to in-person instruction for the maximum number of school days in the 2021-22 school year. At this time, there will be no hybrid instruction option for this school year, however, the district does provide all families with the option of full-time online instruction as an alternative to returning to a physical school building. Families and students must commit to the virtual option for the full semester or full year with an option to return to in-person instruction at the start of each semester. If you have additional questions about Shaler Area's virtual options for the 2021-22 school year or enrollment, please contact either Dr. Shannon Howard at Howards@shalerarea.org or Mrs. Eloise Milligan at Milligane@shalerarea.org.

Health & Safety

The district's [Health and Safety Plan](#) requires universal masking for all K-12 students and staff when in an indoor setting, regardless of vaccination status, starting on Monday, Aug. 16. The district will reevaluate this decision in mid-September based on the transmission rates in Allegheny County and any updated guidance from health officials. We will communicate any changes throughout the year. A mask will be defined as follows:

- A mask or "face covering" is a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face.
- A mask or "face covering" can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen. A plastic face shield is considered an alternative face covering and should only be worn when all other options have been exhausted.
- Masks and face coverings fall under the same requirements outlined in the student dress code and may not promote sexual activity, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, hate messages, or violence. Please see your building's student handbook for additional restrictions. Students wearing a face covering that is determined by administration to be unsafe, inappropriate, or disruptive to the educational process will be given an alternative face covering.

Any student with a disability who cannot wear a mask or face shield due to a medical condition is not required to wear face coverings as per guidance received from the state Department of Education, however, this must be recommended by the student's medical doctor and documentation is to be provided to the student's school nurse.

The district will continue to limit non-essential visitors and volunteers for the 2021-22 school year. Appointments for all essential meetings are required. Visitors will be required to wear a mask or face covering when indoors at any district building or facility for any reason.

Additional health and safety strategies will remain in place for the start of the 2021-22 school year based on the district's Health and Safety Plan, including but not limited to:

- Masking being required on all district transportation, including after-school team and activities buses;
- Reinforcement of regular and proper handwashing;
- Hand sanitizer placed in all classrooms and high traffic areas;
- Enhanced cleaning protocols;
- Contact tracing and isolation/quarantine protocols for all non-vaccinated individuals as directed by state and local health departments;
- Seating during meal times and in the cafeteria will remain 3-6 feet, as feasible;
- Staff will continue to provide mask breaks throughout the school day.

Contacting Your School Nurse

It is important to communicate with your student's school nurse in order for the school district to provide the safest learning environment possible for all students and staff. Please contact your student's [school nurse](#) via phone or email immediately if any of the following apply:

- Your student or any member of your household tests positive for COVID-19.
- Your student has been in close contact with a confirmed or presumed positive COVID-19 case.
- Your student is currently quarantined or isolated due to a recent exposure outside of school.
- Your student stayed home from school due to illness or COVID-like symptoms.

We ask that families continue to monitor their students at home as part of a [daily screening](#) before sending students to school.

If a COVID-19 positive case occurs in our schools, the district will work in consultation with the state Department of Health and Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) to complete a risk assessment, [isolation and quarantine recommendations](#), and other infection control recommendations. The district will maintain its COVID-19 Dashboard to provide a visual way to track the positive COVID-19 cases in the district. Daily notifications will be discontinued unless a student is identified as a close contact, however a summary report will be emailed to families on a monthly basis.

School Breakfast & Lunch

Shaler Area will continue to provide **free** student breakfast and lunch service for the 2021-22 school year in all school cafeterias. Students enrolled in Shaler Area's virtual options who wish to receive free meals should contact Sue Cook, food service director, at shaler@thenutritiongroup.biz to arrange for meal pick up options.

The district encourages families to apply for free and reduced-price meals even though meals will remain free for this school year. Students who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals may also qualify for other discounted or free benefits. For the fastest way to apply or see if you qualify, visit: www.compass.state.pa.us. As a reminder, families must reapply each year even if they qualified in the previous year. If you need additional information or need assistance with the online application please contact Sue McElhinny at mcelhinnys@shalerarea.org or your building's social worker.

Important phone numbers for Back-to-School include:

- Student Transportation 412-492-1200 ext. 2824

- Food Service 412-492-1200 ext. 1582
- Athletics 412-492-1200 ext. 1550
- Student Registration 412-492-1200 ext. 2813

Additional information for the start of the school year

School schedules for the upcoming school year:

- Shaler Area High School – 7:18 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.
- Shaler Area Middle School – 7:40 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.
- Shaler Area Elementary School – 8:12 a.m. to 3:08 p.m.
- Primary schools – 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Important orientation & preview dates:

Orientation day for students in K, 4, 7, 9 is Tuesday, Aug. 24. For students in grades 4, 7 and 9, this is a required ½ day program and attendance will be taken.

- Burchfield Primary Kindergarten Orientation: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Burchfield Primary Meet and Greet (grades 1-3): Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Marzolf Primary Kindergarten Orientation: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 1:30-2:30 p.m.
- Marzolf Primary Meet and Greet: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- Reserve Primary Kindergarten Orientation: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Reserve Primary Meet and Greet (grades 1-3): Tuesday, Aug. 24, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Scott Primary Kindergarten Orientation: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Scott Primary Meet and Greet (grades 1-3): Tuesday, Aug. 24, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
- Shaler Area Elementary School Back to School Night: Monday, Aug. 23, 5-6 p.m. (grade 4) and 6:30-7:30 p.m. (grades 5-6)
- Shaler Area Middle School Back to School Night: Tuesday, Aug. 24, 6-8:25 p.m.

For additional back-to-school information, please visit our website:

<https://www.sasd.k12.pa.us/BacktoSchool2021.aspx>. We hope you all enjoy the final days of summer break and return on Wednesday, August 25, feeling rejuvenated and ready to kick off another great school year with us!

Sincerely,

Dr. Sean C. Aiken
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Bryan E. O'Black
Deputy Superintendent