



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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Date: October 5, 2020

RE: City Council Request for Information – Councilor Samaras

Req. City Mgr. Communicate With School Administration As To What Steps Were Taken To Clean And Sanitize Our School Buildings And What Steps Will Be Taken On An Ongoing Basis To Ensure The Safety And Security For Our Students And Faculty - What Safety/Personal Protection Will Be Available To All Our Staff In Our Schools.

In an effort provide clarity regarding the process taken to clean, disinfect, and sanitize our schools, it is worth reviewing the differences between cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. The CDC defines these terms as follows:

Cleaning - removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting- kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Sanitizing- lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process **works by either cleaning or treating** surfaces with sanitizing products or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection.

All cleaning products used within the school are selected for their efficacy to treat the area/surface thoroughly while maintaining as many "Green" qualities as possible. We use two of the defined terms from above (Cleaning & Disinfecting) when treating the schools. We choose disinfecting over sanitizing as we prefer to eradicate the possible virus or germs rather than lower the number of germs.

The process starts by cleaning the areas first, then disinfecting with an EPA approved disinfectant. These products have been amended to ensure the we effectively treat the COVID-19 virus.

The summer process followed includes a “top down” cleaning of the school facilities.

- Starting at the ceiling, supply and return vents cleaned, light fixture lenses are washed and bulbs are replaced as needed
- The walls are cleaned and the windows and window frames are washed
- The unit ventilators are opened, vacuumed or blown out and if equipped, the filter is replaced.
- All of the furniture and fixtures in the rooms are cleaned on all sides. Student desks are flipped to remove gum, stray markings are removed, all horizontal surfaces are wiped down
- Tiled floors are stripped and refinished
- Carpeted floors are extracted and deodorized
- Lockers are emptied and washed
- All areas receive high dusting (often times this requires the use of lifts to service light fixtures, dust and wash windows)
- Bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned
- Gyms, Theaters and Cafeteria spaces are maintained using similar methods listed above
- Once each area is cleaned, they are disinfected with the appropriate tool and product.

The “School Year” daily process includes the steps to maintain the facilities in safe and good working order. It includes the following:

- Removal of all refuse and recycling materials
- Dusting of horizontal areas
- Cleaning of all “High Touch” items such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, lavatory fixtures, phones, etc.
- Regular cleaning of all furniture and cabinet fixtures
- Dust and damp mopping of all tiled floors and vacuuming of all carpets
- Common Area and gathering spaces are dusted, floors are generally wash with an auto scrubber
- Bathrooms are cleaned and disinfected
- Once each area is cleaned, they are disinfected with the appropriate tool and product.

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment and Safety Measures

- All schools have been and will continue to be replenished with an abundance of PPE. The list includes Face Masks, Face Shields, Surgical Gowns, Gloves, Alcohol Wipes, and Hand Sanitizer. We also track PPE resources and regularly present such information to the School Committee (see enclosure for current available resources).

- All PPE is delivered to the School Nurse's Office as the point location for students and staff to obtain items as needed.
- All schools have received plexiglass dividers as an added measure in particular for staff interacting with visitors to the school.
- An abundance of floor and wall signage is in place to remind students and staff of safety measures in place regarding social distancing, occupancy of areas, reminders to wear a mask, limit entry, etc.
- Floor marking promote social distance around learning spaces, and directions in hallways and stairwells
- School entrances have been signed to explain the process for entry to the buildings. They have equipped with stations just inside the door which provide hand sanitizer and sign in sheets for contact tracing.

We will continue to amend our practices based upon the guidance we receive from DESE and CDC. If there are significant changes to our methods or procedures, we will provide them to the Council in a timely manner.

