

THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 - HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Board of Education plans to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. In June 2021, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) worked collaboratively to develop guidance, The Road Forward – Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year (The Road Forward).

The Road Forward replaces the mandatory anticipated minimum standards outlined in the NJDOE’s “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” (June 2020) and provides a range of recommendations rather than mandatory standards. These recommendations are meant to assist school districts in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

The Board considered many factors as they prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and the school community.

For the purpose of this Policy, “Order” shall mean any Governor of New Jersey Executive Order, New Jersey State Agency mandate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, New Jersey statute, or administrative code requiring compliance by the school district.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop health and safety protocols. The Board will consider all recommended Orders and comply with all mandatory Orders when developing health and safety protocols and reviewing them periodically.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the school district’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas and included in corresponding Appendices:

- A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors
 - 1. Vaccination – See Appendix A.;
 - 2. Communication with the Local Health Department – See Appendix B.;
 - 3. Mask Wearing Protocol – See Appendix C.;
 - 4. Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols – See Appendix D.;
 - 5. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols – See Appendix E.;
 - 6. Provision of Meals – See Appendix F.; and
 - 7. Transportation Protocols – See Appendix G.

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- B. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow – See Appendix H.
- C. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members – See Appendix I.
- D. Contact Tracing – See Appendix J.
- E. Testing – See Appendix K.
- F. Student and Staff Member Travel – See Appendix L.

The absence of one or more of the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward and/or in the school district's health and safety protocols will not prevent the reopening of the school(s) in the district for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff members present.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, schools must be in session for 180 days to receive State Aid. The statute requires that school facilities be provided for at least 180 days during the school year. N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(b) indicates when a school district is required to close the schools of the district for more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, days of virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction will count toward the school district's 180-day requirement.

The school district may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases among staff and/or students. If the school district is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of possible exposure to COVID-19, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the school district may offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible. In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count toward the school district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The school district anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this Policy is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of this Policy. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy and corresponding Appendices shall be reviewed by the Superintendent with the Board Attorney, School Physician, and Board of Education, if appropriate. The Superintendent may revise the health and safety protocols included in any Appendix as necessary and appropriate. All students, parents, and staff members will be notified of any changes to school district-developed protocols implemented as a result of this Policy, as appropriate.

Appendix A

Vaccination

The school district will:

- a. To the best extent possible, maintain records of vaccinated staff.

Appendix B

Communication with the Local Health Department

The school district will:

- a. Maintain close communication with the Local Health Department in order to provide information and share resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control.

- b. Establish procedures for Local Health Department notification and response to COVID-19 illness in school settings.

Appendix C

Mask Wearing Protocol

The school district will:

- a. Follow guidelines as per Section 1.3 of “The Road Forward” pertaining to masks and mask wearing.

Appendix D

Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

The school district will:

- a. Implement physical distancing measures as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy.
 - (1) Maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings.
 - (2) Consider structural interventions within classrooms to aid with social distancing.
 - (3) Outside of the classroom, the school district will consider approaches to implement physical distancing.

Appendix E

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

The school district will:

- a. Teach and reinforce hand washing.
- b. Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask.
- c. Maintain adequate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette supplies.

Appendix F

Provision of Meals

The school district will:

- a. Implement layered prevention strategies to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in cafeterias or other group dining areas.

Appendix G
Transportation Protocols

The school district will:

- a. Address and mandate the use of masks on school buses.

Appendix H

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

The school district will develop protocols to:

- a. Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often; such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys at least daily.
- b. Improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants.

Appendix I

Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

The school district will:

- a. Establish procedures to identify and respond to a student or staff member who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.

Appendix J

Contact Tracing

The school district will:

- a. Identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.
- b. Notify parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

Appendix K

Testing

The school district will:

- a. Identify rapid viral testing options in their community for the testing of individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- b. Develop and implement screening testing as a strategy to identify cases and prevent secondary transmission.

Appendix L

Student and Staff Member Travel

The school district will:

- a. Follow the recommended CDC guidelines for student and staff member travel out-of-State.

Adopted: SEPTEMBER 23, 2021