

1648.11 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.
8. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow – See Appendix H.
9. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members – See Appendix I.
10. Contact Tracing – See Appendix J.
11. Testing – See Appendix K.
12. 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



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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.

Adopted First Reading 13 September 2021

Final Reading 27 September 2021

Abolished 13 February 2023



Appendices

The Road Forward

BOONTON School District Board of Education

Note:

As of August 10, 2021, the only mandatory requirements are included in Appendix C – Mask Wearing Protocol and Appendix G – Transportation Protocols. The school district should anticipate potential updates to The Road Forward Guidance as additional guidance becomes available.

Fall 2021



Appendix A

Vaccination

The school district has implemented locally developed protocols to:

- a. Determine the vaccination status of students and staff.

Staff and students will be asked to physically present their CDC COVID immunization card (or in the case of staff, given the option to upload a copy of it directly into Realtime). In the event that a staff member needs help with the upload, appropriate staff will be available to assist. If a staff member or student does not present their vaccination documentation for any reason, the district will require them to follow all policies for unvaccinated staff or students.

- b. Actively promote vaccination for all eligible students and staff.

BPSD will make the most current vaccination information available to all staff and students (the latter dependent on the age level(s) which the FDA approves their use for).

If large scale vaccinations were to ever be necessary again (i.e.: booster shots for previously vaccinated persons are deemed necessary), the district will make every effort to accommodate staff and students to receive such additional inoculations. Atlantic Health System was very instrumental in assisting our staff to get vaccinated when the Morris County Megasite was vaccinating by appointment-only this past spring. If they again extend additional vaccination services we will utilize said services.



Appendix B

Communication with the Local Health Department

The school district has implemented locally developed protocols to:

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

School administration and/or school nurses will notify the Local Health Department of confirmed COVID-19 cases within our school community.

School administration and/or school nurses will meet with the Local Health Department on an on-going basis, as needed, to review current procedures related to transmission, prevention and control of COVID-19 based on current levels of transmission and guidance from the CDC and NJDOH.

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

Upon notification of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case, school administration and/or a school nurse will contact the Local Health Department with pertinent information to allow the LHD to track transmission as well as advise pertinent district staff about procedures for prevention and control.

Staff and parents/guardians will be notified via email and/or phone call in the event that they are deemed a close contact and/or in the event that a class, activity, school needs to close.



Appendix C

Mask Wearing Protocol

The school district has implemented locally developed protocols to:

Address all mandatory Orders regarding the use of masks in schools.

The district's protocol for mask wearing reflects and incorporates the current guidance demonstrated by the Governor's Executive Orders for both staff and students. As this guidance has changed more frequently in the past several months, we will continue to monitor the Governor's press conferences, announcements and various other media outlets in addition to the Executive Orders (EO).

Masks must be worn indoors by staff, students, and visitors in all situations except as delineated in EO 251. This includes physical education classes, prior to boarding the school bus, while on the bus and until they are completely off the bus.

In general, students or staff do not need to wear masks outdoors, including during outdoor physical education classes or school sports. However, the BOE may encourage the use of masks during outdoor activities that involve sustained close contact with other individuals or during periods of high community transmission.



Appendix D

Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

The school district has implemented locally developed protocols to:

- a. Implement physical distancing measures as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy.

- (1) Maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings.

Within classrooms, students maintain 3 feet of physical distance from one another to the greatest extent practicable, combined with masking for all individuals as per EO 251.

To the extent practicable, students will remain in rows all facing forward.

- (2) Consider structural interventions within classrooms to aid with social distancing.

To the extent practicable, students will remain in rows all facing forward. If certain classrooms require additional physical barriers/partitions which provide effective COVID mitigation, the district will provide them (e.g.: a physical therapy room may require different paraphernalia of this nature than a regular classroom)

- (3) Outside of the classroom, a school district should consider approaches to implement physical distancing.

The district will follow the most current NJ DOH physical distancing guidelines for K-12 schools. We previously marked our hallway floors with indicators for 6' distancing as well as stairways that have been dedicated to one direction use only.)

- b.. Address the use of cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day.

Whenever feasible, we will maintain cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunch times, and while participating in extracurricular activities.



Appendix E

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

The school district may include in Appendix E the locally developed protocols to:

- a. Teach and reinforce hand washing.

Frequent and proper handwashing has been emphasized throughout the pandemic. All lavatories have working faucets, antibacterial soap and either paper towels or hand dryers. Proper hand washing posters will be displayed near all sinks. We will continue to have hand sanitizer stations positioned throughout the buildings.

- b. Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask.

Students and staff are encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask.

- c. Maintain adequate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette supplies.

The district will keep an adequate supply of hand hygiene supplies as well as respiratory etiquette supplies for all buildings and classrooms. The Business Administrator will assist department Directors and building Principals in this process.



Appendix F

Provision of Meals

The school district may include in Appendix F the locally developed protocols to:

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

The district will utilize as many layered prevention strategies as feasible to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

These include:

Maximizing physical distance as much as possible when moving through the food service line and while eating (especially indoors).

Alternative dining areas such as eating in classrooms, gymnasiums or outdoors will be utilized when practical.

Stagger eating times to allow for physical distancing.

Maintain students in cohorts and limit mixing between groups if possible.

Food will not be ‘self-serve’

Students will be discouraged from sharing meals.

Routine cleaning between groups will be performed by appropriate staff members.

Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned. Surfaces that come in contact with food should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before and after meals.



Appendix G

Transportation Protocols

The school district shall include in Appendix G the locally developed protocols to:

Address the use of masks on school buses.

Masks must be worn by all passengers on buses, regardless of vaccination status per CDC's Federal Order.

If occupancy allows, physical distance between students will be maximized.

Windows in buses and other transportation will be opened to improve air circulation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk.

The school district may include in Appendix G the locally developed protocols to:

Address mitigation strategies to reduce the risk of infection on a school bus.

Regularly clean / sanitize high touch surfaces on school buses at least daily or between uses as much as possible.



Appendix H

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

The school district may include in Appendix H the locally developed 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.

Our Facilities Manager will continue to follow best practices and proper sanitizing protocols in the maintenance and cleaning of the schools. This includes use of sanitizing solutions, antibacterial soaps, and electrostatic sprayers on high use touch surfaces.

The extent possible the District shall adhere to NJDOH recommendations regarding limiting the use of shared equipment and related mitigation procedures listed below.

Limit use of shared supplies and equipment:

Ensure adequate supplies (i.e., classroom supplies, equipment) to minimize sharing of high touch materials or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

Encourage hand hygiene practices between use of shared items.

Discourage use of shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected. Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. This means at least daily disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys. o If there has been a person with COVID-19 compatible symptoms or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in the facility within the last 24 hours, spaces they occupied should be cleaned and disinfected.

Close off areas used by the person who is sick or positive and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.



Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before cleaning and disinfection.

Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC settings to increase air circulation in the area.

Use products from EPA List according to the instructions on the product label.

Staff cleaning the space should wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.

Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use. The effectiveness of alternative surface disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been fully established. The use of such methods to clean and disinfect is discouraged at this time. CDC does not recommend the use of sanitizing tunnels. Currently, there is no evidence that sanitizing tunnels are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Chemicals used in sanitizing tunnels could cause skin, eye, or respiratory irritation or injury. In most cases, fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying is not recommended as a primary method of surface disinfection and has several safety risks to consider.

- b. Improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants.

Improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several actions:

Bring in as much outdoor air as possible.

If safe to do so, open windows and doors. Even just cracking open a window or door helps increase outdoor airflow, which helps reduce the potential concentration of virus particles in the air. If it gets too cold or hot, adjust the thermostat.

Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (such as falling, exposure to extreme temperatures, or triggering asthma symptoms), or if doing so would otherwise pose a security risk.



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Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.

*Consider having activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.
Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety
risk. Even just cracking windows open a few inches improves air circulation.*



Appendix I

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

The school district may include in Appendix I the locally developed protocols to:

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

The district will follow the latest CDC / NJ DOH guideline pertaining to contact tracing, isolation and quarantine protocols. As these have also changed quite a bit throughout the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, we will continuously monitor and keep abreast of ANY chances the federal and state health authorities recommend.

When COVID-19 activity/levels warrant and/or local health officials recommend it, the following mitigation measures will be in place:

All staff, students and visitors will complete a screening tool prior to entering a school building. Should an individual answer “Yes” to any question, they should stay home and contact the school nurse for further guidance.

Should a staff member, student or visitor begin to show symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, while in a school building, on a school bus, at a school activity or athletic event, the individual should report to the school nurse or athletic trainer immediately. The individual will then be isolated until such time as it can be determined that the individual may be showing compatible symptoms of COVID-19 regardless of vaccination status. The school nurse and/or athletic trainer will exclude the individual from school until appropriate testing is completed and/or quarantine time is completed.

Unvaccinated siblings of a student who has symptoms and meets COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria should be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result. If the symptomatic individual tests positive, the sibling will need to quarantine. Unvaccinated individuals who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 90 days do NOT need to be excluded from school if:



- 1) they have engaged in domestic and/or international travel; or*
- 2) if they have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are asymptomatic.*

Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Schools should ensure that procedures are in place to identify and respond to when a student or staff member becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.

Closely monitor daily reports of staff and student attendance/absence and identify when persons are out with COVID-19 symptoms.

Designate an area or room away from others to isolate individuals who become ill with COVID19 symptoms while at school.

Consider an area separate from the nurse's office so the nurse's office can be used for routine visits such as medication administration, injuries, and non-COVID-19 related visits.

Ensure there is enough space for multiple people placed at least 6 feet apart. o Ensure that hygiene supplies are available, including additional cloth masks, facial tissues, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

School nurses should use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions based on the care and tasks required.

Staff assigned to supervise students waiting to be picked up do not need to be healthcare personnel but should follow physical distancing guidelines.

Follow guidance in Cleaning, Disinfection and Airflow section.

When illness occurs in the school setting children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms regardless of vaccination status should be separated away from others until they can be sent home. If a mask is not worn by the ill student due to an exemption or exception described in EO 251, other staff should be sure to adhere to the universal mask policy and follow maximum physical distancing guidelines (6 feet away).



Ask ill student (or parent) and staff whether they have had potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days meeting the definition of a close contact.

Individuals should be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider. Persons with COVID-19- compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing regardless of vaccination status.

If community transmission is low, ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should use the NJDOH School Exclusion List to determine when they may return to school. No public health notification is needed UNLESS there is an unusual increase in the number of persons who are ill (over normal levels), which might indicate an outbreak.

If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if community transmission is moderate or high, they should continue to be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.

Schools should notify LHDs when students or staff:

Are ill and have potential COVID-19 exposure;

When there is an increase in the number of persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms;

Test positive for COVID-19 (when in-school testing is performed).



Appendix J

Contact Tracing

The school district may include in Appendix J the locally developed protocols to:

- a. Identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

- b. Notify parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

Staff and parents/guardians will be notified via email and/or phone call in the event that they are deemed a close contact and/or in the event that a class, activity, school needs to close.



Appendix K

Testing

The school district may include in Appendix K the locally developed protocols to:

- a. Identify rapid viral testing options in their community for the testing of individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

The district will utilize the most current recommended diagnostic / screening tests which the [CDC outlines for K-12 schools](#) . If the need/opportunity arises to secure these services in-district, we will employ them.

- b. Develop and implement screening testing as a strategy to identify cases and prevent secondary transmission.

School-based healthcare professionals (e.g., school nurses) may perform SARS-CoV-2 antigen testing in school-based health centers if they are trained in specimen collection, conducting the test per manufacturer's instructions, and obtain a Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA) certificate of waiver. Some school-based healthcare professionals may also be able to perform specimen collection to send to a lab for testing, if trained in specimen collection, without a CLIA certificate. It is important that school-based healthcare professionals have access to, and training on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Any healthcare provider or laboratory performing COVID-19 testing, including K-12 schools, are required to report all COVID-19 laboratory test results, both positive and negative, electronically into the NJDOH Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS). Access to CDRSS requires the completion of training available on the CDRSS home page.



Appendix L

Student and Staff Member Travel

The school district may include in Appendix L the locally developed protocols to:

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

