

Township of Union School District Safe Return to School 2021-2022 Plan

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Maintaining Health and Safety

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

- Masks are a required part of the K-12 school day for students, personnel, and visitors regardless of vaccination status.
- Masks are always required when being transported on school buses. Students, drivers and bus aides must wear a mask at all times and be forward facing.
- Masks must cover face so that nose and mouth are always covered.
- Bandanas, gaiters, etc. will not be accepted as masks.
- Masks are considered dress attire; dress code guidelines will apply.
- Guidelines will continue to be based on state, federal, and local policy regarding mask requirements for Pre-K - 12 settings. All students will be allowed to remove their masks to eat. Elementary students will be provided physical distant “mask break” opportunities when possible. Pre-K students will not be wearing masks during nap time.
- Signs will be posted throughout the school building on rules for the correct wearing of masks.

Physical Distancing

- Guidelines will continue to be based on state, federal, and local policy regarding physical distance requirements for Pre-K-12 settings.
- Student desks will be as far apart as allowable in each classroom; every effort will be made to provide three feet of space among students in a classroom.
- Masks will be required when a student is not actively eating during snack (elementary schools) and lunch.
- Students will not use lockers so that students do not congregate in the hallways.
- Students will not change for physical education and are prompted to wear clothing that will allow them to participate in physical activities to the greatest extent possible. Physical education teachers will adapt lessons accordingly.
- Open Houses will be virtual.

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

- Guidelines will continue to be based on state, federal, and local guidance regarding handwashing and respiratory etiquette recommendations for Pre-K-12 settings.
- Schools will reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, build time into the day for washing hands, make hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol content available in all classrooms, offices, and in hallways, and promote hand hygiene, including the advertisement of the district’s handwashing video. and will be stored appropriately to prevent poisoning.
- To avoid poison emergencies, hand sanitizers will be stored away and out of sight of children under six years of age and will be used with adult supervision.
- Personnel will continue to demonstrate proper coughing/sneezing etiquette, especially in elementary schools.

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation

- Each custodian will be equipped with an electrostatic sprayer and will use BruTabs to sanitize every space in all the schools and respective offices each afternoon after the school day has ended. All schools will be sanitized.
- The facilities department will continue to update heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, including the replacement of filters throughout the school year.

- Personnel will be encouraged to keep classroom and office windows open at all times except when the weather does not permit. Classes and offices without windows will be moved to spaces with windows if possible and/or hydroxyl generators will be made available.
- Guidelines will continue to be based on state, federal, and local guidance regarding cleaning and ventilation requirements for Pre-K-12 settings.

Contact Tracing, Quarantine, and School Closures

- Contact tracing guidelines and practices will continue to be based on state and local as well as CDC guidelines regarding requirements for Pre-K-12 settings.
- Isolation areas will be established in each school building.
- Virtual instruction may be offered only to students who are mandated to quarantine for an extended period.
- Continuous monitoring of the CALI Report (<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>) recommendations regarding transmission rates relative to the recommendations for length of quarantine time and close consultation with the Township of Union Board of Health will be the catalyst for quarantine time recommendations throughout the District.
- To date current recommendations do not require a quarantine period, regardless of vaccination status, as long as the criteria specified below, have been met.
- In the event an individual (student or personnel) tests positive for COVID-19 there will be a mandatory 10 day quarantine period, regardless of vaccination status. Day 0 will be defined as the date symptoms first appeared OR, if no symptoms manifest, the date of the positive test results were received.
- A close contact is defined by the NJDOH and CDC. If a student or staff member is in contact with an individual for more than 15 mins, cumulatively, with a mask and less than 3ft away OR have been in the same area unmasked for any period of time.
- Close contacts, who are not vaccinated, will be required to quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. These individuals will be allowed to have a PCR test between days 5-7. If the PCR test result is negative, they may return no sooner than day 8.
- If a staff member or student is traveling outside of the designated approved states by the NJDOH (<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>) for more than 24 hours they will be required to quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. These individuals will be allowed to have a PCR test between days 3-5. If the PCR test result is negative, they may return no sooner than day 7.
- No quarantine will be necessary for anyone who can prove they have had COVID in the last 90 days OR is fully vaccinated for more than 2 weeks.
- In the event a student or staff member is sent home because of reported symptoms linked to COVID-19 they must quarantine for 10 days OR produce a negative PCR test. A doctor's note can not override the quarantine period unless accompanied by a negative PCR test.
- An assessment of the health status of the other schools will be conducted and a decision on whether the district will return to virtual learning, if so allowed, will be made by a consultation between the superintendent, Township of Union Health Department, and the school board.
- The superintendent will review local COVID-19 infection data on a regular basis and may make the decision to close schools if necessary.
- Per the CDC, once a school is open, that school may remain open for in-person instruction even in cases of "substantial" or "high" community transmission if the school strictly implements mitigation strategies and as long as remaining open would not violate the above protocol on in-school transmission.

Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to District Community

- The district will cooperate with borough officials to provide vaccine clinics to both the district and the resident community.
- The district will continue to encourage all eligible people to receive vaccinations and will advertise opportunities for vaccination.

Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities With Respect to the Health and Safety Policies

- If a student cannot wear a mask due to a medical reason, medical documentation must be submitted.
- If a student cannot wear a mask due to disability, medical documentation must be submitted and the student's assigned case manager will be contacted, and an Individualized Education Program Meeting may be convened. The school nurse will be contacted in case of medical considerations.
- Physical distancing per CDC, state and local guidelines will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. When physical distancing cannot be maintained, various PPEs will be provided.
- The protocols will be updated according to CDC, state and local guidance as it becomes available.

Protocols Regarding Social Events

- All participants in social events that are supported by the school and/or facilitated by volunteers (i.e., parents, guardians, etc.) must follow the school's visitor rules.
- Social events such as classroom parties, dances, etc. will be approved pending confirmation of acceptable COVID-19 transmission levels in the local community.
- All social events must be approved by school principals so the numbers of activities occurring at the same time can be considered.

Ensuring Continuity of Services

The school district is committed to providing full day in-person teaching and learning for all students starting September 8, 2021. The following academic, social-emotional, and mental health supports will be provided to make sure students are able to be successful as they transition to a post-pandemic school year.

Academic Support

- Teachers will differentiate instruction to address student's specific learning gaps.
- The Intervention and Referral Services Team (I&RS) will review a student's academic progress when he/she/they is referred by a teacher or counselor because classroom instruction support did not have a positive impact on learning growth.
- Academic needs of students will continue to be assessed using diagnostic and formative assessments and support programs/resources (including ESY, after-school programs, etc.) will continue to be developed/provided based on identified needs.

Social-Emotional, Mental Health, and Food Service Support

- Faculty will be responsible for integrating activities that emphasize social and emotional wellness. Supplemental activities, including counseling programs will focus on enhancing relationships and connections among all stakeholders.
- Normalizing the conversation about mental health and wellness will be a priority.
- Parent academies will continue to address topics related to adolescent mental health and wellness, including, but not limited to, suicide prevention, and support for LGBTQIA+ communities.
- School meals will continue to be provided free to all students based on state/federal guidelines. The district will continue to encourage all families to complete Free and Reduced Meal Application.

Stakeholder Collaboration and Communication

Public Comment and Development of Plan

- Public comment was requested via survey distributed to all stakeholders and posted on the district website.
- Multiple surveys asked stakeholders to identify levels of concern for various areas and space was provided for stakeholders to write in their own areas of concerns and/or comments for consideration.
- Survey data was reviewed by members of the Safe Reopening Plan team, the School Reopening Task Force, the board of education and the general community and have been utilized to develop and update the Safe Reopening Plan.
- The district distributes phone messages and emails to the community on a weekly basis to provide updates about district-level COVID-19-related data.
- Principals in all the schools distribute emails daily to students, parents, and guardians providing updates about school-level COVID-19-related data.

Plan Accessibility

- The Safe Reopening Plan is provided to stakeholders via the district website and its social media outlets.
- A translation (oral or written) or alternative format (video or audio) may be provided upon request if a parent with limited English proficiency and/or an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA requests such; requests should be made to the building principal.