

POLICY

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The Road Forward COVID-19 – Health and Safety

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:

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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.
- 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.

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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.

Adopted: September 23, 2021

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Appendix A - Vaccination

Although COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective, and accessible, not all school-aged children are currently eligible to be vaccinated. Most K-12 schools will have a mixed population of fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, and unvaccinated individuals at any given time, thereby requiring the layering of preventive measures to protect individuals who are not fully vaccinated. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have been encouraged by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) to have a system in place to determine the vaccination status of students and staff, however, if an LEA is unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals should be considered not fully vaccinated.

Franklin Township Public Schools published a mandatory staff survey in mid August to better determine the vaccination status of staff members. The district has invested in a program which will allow communication between the district's student information system and the NJ State Vaccination Database. This will enable the district to better determine the vaccination status of our students. Individual information about students will not be shared publicly but general results will be published and shared as appropriate when available.

Additionally, in light of Executive Order 253, the district will require all covered workers as defined in that Order and Policy 1648.13, to provide proof of full vaccination status by October 18, 2021. If a covered worker is determined to be unvaccinated by that date, the covered worker will be required to be tested for Covid-19 once or twice a week in accordance with Policy 1648.13 and Appendix A of that Policy.

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Appendix B - Communication with the Local Health Department

School officials and local health departments should maintain close communication with each other to provide information and share resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control measures and to establish procedures for Local Health Department (LHD) notification and response to COVID-19 illness in school settings.

Understanding that COVID-19 may impact certain areas of the state differently, NJDOH provides information on COVID-19 transmission at the regional level, characterizing community transmission as low (green), moderate (yellow), high (orange), and very high (red). This information is posted online every week on the NJDOH CDS COVID-19 website and sent out via New Jersey Local Information Network and Communications System (NJLINCS) to public health and healthcare partners. Municipal level vaccination coverage data is posted online at www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml.

In addition to the Superintendent of Schools, Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Director of School Management; the Franklin Township Public Schools Lead Nurse and Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to be the primary liaisons between the district and the Local Health Department.

Through these individuals, the district will work closely with the Local Health Department to discuss data and make decisions regarding the implementation of mitigation strategies.

These individuals will be aware of the current regional level of community transmission; make recommendations and implement any applicable revisions to the Road Forward Policy and/or any affected protocols.

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Appendix C - Mask Wearing Protocol

While wearing masks is an important prevention strategy to help slow the spread of COVID-19, especially when combined with everyday preventive actions and social distancing in public settings, circumstances may permit a relaxation of the mandatory use of face coverings in the indoor portion of the school district premises.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental, educational and health department guidance with regard to the wearing of masks. It has been announced and is anticipated that Executive Order 251 (August 6, 2021), will be modified or rescinded so that the mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in certain circumstances, will no longer be required.

The NJ Department of Health has released more information for school districts on instances where masks may be mandated. What follows below is consistent with that guidance.

Beginning Monday, March 21, 2022, as long as Somerset County has: a CALI Score of 1 (activity level low/green) or 2 (activity level moderate/yellow) as published by the Somerset County Department of Health *and* a COVID-19 Community Level of low/green as published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Franklin Township Public Schools will no longer mandate the use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises or on school buses and vans.

While the wearing of masks indoor school premises will not be mandatory during this time, no student or staff member shall be prevented from wearing a mask should they choose to do so. The Board prohibits the bullying of students or staff members who wear personal protective equipment (PPE), including face masks. Any individual found to have bullied another for wearing a mask will be disciplined in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct or applicable staff protocol.

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Should Somerset County be considered to be in the high risk category or very high risk category of the COVID-19 Activity Level as published by the Somerset County Department of Health *or* have a COVID-19 Community Level of moderate/yellow or high/orange as published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the mandatory mask requirement will be reinstated as soon as practicably possible. The district administration will provide notice to the school community as soon as practicably possible.

Additionally, should extenuating circumstances, as determined by the district in conjunction with the local health department warrant, Franklin Township Public Schools may reinstate the mandatory wearing of masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises and on all school buses and vans.

Should Franklin Township Public Schools require the mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, there will be exceptions in the following circumstances:

- a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors (where an individual is seeking a medical exemption, documentation from a medical professional supporting this exception);
- b. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face masks without assistance;
- c. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face mask (where an individual is seeking a medical exemption, documentation from a medical professional supporting this exception);
- d. When the individual is under two (2) years of age;

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e. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask;

f. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;

g. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or

h. When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. The CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised. As such FTPS will allow students to remove their masks outdoors in consideration of these recommendations and at the discretion of their teacher whenever mask wearing is considered mandatory.

Schools will continue to use diagrams showing the correct way to wear a face covering and staff and students will be reminded of this requirement using the Positive Behavior in Schools framework as a reinforcement tool.

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Appendix D - Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

Though physical distancing recommendations must not prevent a school from offering full-day, full-time, in person learning to all students for the 2021-2022 school year, LEAs should consider implementing physical distancing measures as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy to the extent they are equipped to do so while still providing regular school operations to all students and staff in-person.

During periods of high community transmission or if vaccine coverage is low, if the maximal social distancing recommendations below cannot be maintained, LEAs should, where possible, prioritize other prevention measures including masking, screening testing, and cohorting.

The LEA may consider implementing one or more of the following strategies to maximize opportunities to increase distance between students:

Consider maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent possible while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.

Consider structural interventions within classrooms to aid with social distancing including:

- Facing desks in the same direction.
- Avoiding grouped seating arrangements.
- Arrange participants of early childhood programs head-to-toe during scheduled naptimes (refer to CDC Guidance for Operating Childcare Programs).

Outside of the classroom LEAs should consider approaches to implement physical distancing in the following areas that may pose greater risk of transmission:

- In common areas, in spaces where students may gather such as hallways and auditoriums.
- When masks cannot be worn.
- When masks may be removed, such as during outdoor activities.
- During indoor activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, sports, or exercise (even if masks are worn).

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Consider maintaining cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunchtimes, and while participating in extracurricular activities.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to physical distancing.

Per the Governor’s current directive, all students will return to in-person instruction every day. The district will return to a full day schedule for all students.

The district will continue to ensure that all instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities comply with physical distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable. Currently those standards recommend a three-foot physical distance in all classrooms and a distance to the greatest extent practicable in all other areas.

Student families will continue to be allowed to opt out of transportation to and from school and where possible students from the same household will be seated together.

Before and after school care options will follow all applicable guidelines.

Within the school day, elementary students will be kept in the same group (cohort) as much as possible and secondary students to the extent possible. Students within a cohort will eat meals together following all applicable physical distance requirements to the maximum extent practicable.

Meals and physical education classes will take place outdoors whenever feasible.

Physical distance will be maintained in the classroom whenever possible and when space limitations prevent the recommended physical distance in the classroom, physical barriers will be utilized.

A limited number of off campus field trips may take place during the 2021-2022 school year.

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Schools will continue to use markers, arrows and other diagrams depicting the preferred physical distance in various areas including the entrance to the building and in the hallways.

Staff and students will be reminded of the physical distance requirements and the Positive Behavior in Schools framework will be used to reinforce compliance with this requirement.

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Appendix E - Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

Local Education Agencies should teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately. Maintain adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no touch trash cans.

Hand hygiene should take place:

- Upon arrival at school.
- Before and after meals and snacks.
- After going to the bathroom.
- Before leaving for the day.
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into tissue.
- When hands are visibly soiled.

Assist/observe young children to ensure proper hand washing.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

This part of the Road Forward will cover handwashing procedures and how the district will respond to situations where students might gather.

The district will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) or other approved sanitizers, when and where appropriate.

These stations will be located: in each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer); at entrances and exits of buildings; near lunchrooms and toilets.

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Children ages five and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.

In classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations will be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) or other approved sanitizers, when and where appropriate.

Each school's pandemic response team, which will be renamed the Safe Return Team, will review and revise, if necessary, its school-wide plan for hand washing.

Schools will continue to use diagrams to depict hand washing practices.

Staff and students will be reminded of those practices and the Positive Behavior in Schools framework will be used to reinforce them.

Meals and physical education classes will be held outdoors whenever possible.

The implementation of the curriculum for physical education and fine, visual and performing arts classes will be revised to comply with applicable health department guidance, if necessary.

Extra and co-curricular activities will be offered in person and will follow all applicable health department guidance.

Athletics will be offered in compliance with the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association rules. Middle school athletics, provided there is sufficient interest, will also be offered.

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Appendix F - Provision of Meals

For meals offered in cafeterias or other group dining areas, where masks may not be worn, schools should consider implementing other layered prevention strategies to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

These strategies include:

- Maintaining physical distancing between students and staff, if possible.
- Considering alternatives to use of group dining areas such as eating in classrooms or outdoors.
- Staggering eating times to allow for greater physical distancing.
- Maintaining student cohorts and limiting mixing between groups, if possible.
- Avoiding offering self-serve food options.
- Discouraging students from sharing meals.
- Encouraging routine cleaning between groups.

Franklin Township Public Schools will offer all students breakfast. Those who elect to eat breakfast in school will do so in the cafeteria, in another large space or in an outdoor area in order to maximize the physical distance available.

Students will be kept with their cohort during lunch periods, whenever possible. Lunch will be served in the cafeteria where the most physical distance possible will be maintained. The district will use additional large spaces inside the school building and outdoor eating spaces, when possible, to maximize the physical distance available.

Students will be encouraged to wash their hands before and after meals.

Food will be served by food service personnel or students will bring their meals from home.

Students will be discouraged from sharing food items.

Eating areas will be cleaned after each meal session.

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Appendix G - Transportation Protocols

School buses should be considered school property for the purpose of determining the need for prevention strategies.

The wearing of face masks will be optional on all school buses and vans beginning Monday, March 21, 2022, as long as Somerset County has: a CALI Score of 1 (activity level low/green) or 2 (activity level moderate/yellow) as published by the Somerset County Department of Health *and* a COVID-19 Community Level of low/green as published by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

If occupancy allows, maximize physical distance between students.

Open windows to increase airflow in buses and other transportation, if possible.

Regularly clean high touch surfaces on school buses at least daily.

For more information about cleaning and disinfecting school buses or other transport vehicles, read Center for Disease Control's guidance for bus transit operators.

Franklin Township Public Schools will allow student families to waive transportation and transport their children.

Physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings will be encouraged at bus stops.

The maximum amount of physical distancing possible on the bus will be maintained and where possible students from the same household will be seated together.

Windows will be opened to the amount safety protocols will allow.

Frequently touched surfaces on the bus will be wiped down after each run and the bus will be more thoroughly cleaned between the morning and afternoon runs and overnight.

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Appendix H - Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

The NJDOE and NJDOH recommend the following with regard to cleaning, disinfection and airflow.

Limited 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 routinely and preferably between use.

Encourage hand hygiene practices between use of shared items.

Discourage use of shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected.

Franklin Township Public Schools will ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of supplies. When supplies or equipment must be shared, staff members will wipe them down between uses by different groups. Students will be encouraged to wash their hands before and after the use of shared supplies or equipment.

Cleaning and Disinfection

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 cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.

If a person exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, school staff should clean and disinfect the spaces occupied by the person. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be reopened for use.

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

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Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) after the person has exited a space before cleaning and disinfecting.

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.

Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.

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 (tunnel that sprays disinfectant when a person walks through it). 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.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to maintaining healthy facilities, including guidance regarding ventilation.

The district is prepared with supplies for the 2021-2022 school year including industrial sanitizing wipes, soap and hand sanitizer.

The district will continue use of its established cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used, which are contained in a procedure manual posted on the district website. This manual will be reviewed and revised as needed.

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Franklin Township Public Schools will sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The district will follow CDC recommendations on the use of hand dryers when feasible.

The district will clean shared surfaces regularly and will investigate ways to reduce the number of staff utilizing the same areas, by eliminating the use of paper for visitor/staff sign in and utilizing best practices with regard to cleaning shared printers and copiers.

The district will continue and expand its use of bottle filters in place of drinking fountains.

Improving Airflow

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 strategies:

- 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.
- 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.
- Use child-safe fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
- Safely secure fans in a window to blow potentially contaminated air out and pull new air in through other open windows and doors.
- Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows. Position fans securely and carefully in/ near windows so as not to induce potentially contaminated airflow directly from one person over another (strategic window fan placement in exhaust mode can help draw fresh air into the room via other open windows and doors without generating strong room air currents).
- Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.

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- 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.

School districts interested in purchasing air purifiers for their schools are encouraged to review NJDOH’s Guidance on Air Cleaning Devices for New Jersey Schools. See the NJDOH Environmental Health webpage for Tips to Improve Indoor Ventilation and Maintaining Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Public School Buildings.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to maintaining healthy facilities, including guidance regarding ventilation.

In the 2020-2021 school year, the Board of Education authorized a field study of the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems in the schools of the district. This study was completed and deficiencies noted in the report were corrected. Other general recommendations found in the report, for system modification are being reviewed and implemented where feasible. This includes upgrading filtration systems, where and when practical, in district HVAC units with containment filtration systems that are designed to filter air equal to or better than a MERV 13 filter. This is the type of filter recommended by ASHRAE who are experts in the field.

Additionally, recirculated air units will have a fresh air component, and windows will continue to be opened, if practical, to further assist in bringing fresh air into indoor spaces. If air conditioning is provided in the space, filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations and in accordance with the district’s preventive maintenance plan.

Air purifiers will be utilized in common areas when possible.

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Appendix I - Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

The NJDOE and NJDOH recommend the following with regard to screening, exclusion and response to symptomatic students and staff members.

Parental Screening

Parents/caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. Schools should strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff.

Schools should educate parents about the importance of monitoring symptoms and keeping children home while ill. Schools can use existing outreach systems to provide reminders to staff and families to check for symptoms before leaving for school.

Schools should provide clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and reasons for absences.

Franklin Township Public Schools will post a message on the district website as well as the website of each school listing the symptoms associated with COVID-19-19 and questions regarding exposure to the virus. Principals will routinely remind their student families to check their children for symptoms and exposure to COVID-19-19 and to keep children who are feeling ill at home.

While the district will not utilize daily screening forms and temperature checks of all staff and students entering the building every day, the district may implement these procedures if circumstances warrant, i.e., if recommended by the applicable agencies in response to an elevated COVID-19 Activity Level or increased cases in a particular school building.

The Board of Education has adopted a policy and regulation which govern the reporting of absences. These documents are posted on the district website. Each school has a dedicated telephone extension for parents/guardians to use to report an absence. Additionally, absence

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reporting procedures have been published on each school website and are reviewed at back-to-school events and new student orientations.

Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

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

Designate an area or room away from others to isolate individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school.

Consider an area separate from the nurse's office to 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.

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 the section regarding Cleaning, Disinfection and Airflow.

Students or staff members who develop symptoms, including a fever of over 100 degrees during the day, will be brought to an isolation room for confirmation of an elevated temperature and a further assessment. Health checks will be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations and results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.

Accommodations will continue to be used when necessary to screen those students with disabilities and/or special needs. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students will continue to be supervised in the isolation area until they can be picked up by a parent/guardian.

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The parents/guardians of students who are placed in the isolation area and exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 consistent with the Criteria for Testing Symptomatic Students Protocol will be given information about the districts' rapid testing resources available at one of the district facilities. The parent/guardian may then proceed to that location with the child for testing or may bring the child home. The isolation room will be thoroughly disinfected after each use.

Staff members who present with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be asked to visit an ambulatory COVID-19 testing site for a COVID-19 test.

Both symptomatic staff, who did not utilize the ambulatory site, and the families of symptomatic students will be encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test from their medical provider.

Any child or staff member with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will continue to be treated in a manner consistent with the recommendations of the local health department and may vary depending upon the current COVID-19 Activity Level.

The district will continue to follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting and any incidences of students sent home will continue to be logged in the Genesis Student Information System.

Exclusion

Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; **OR**
- At least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.

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For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

Franklin Township Public Schools will post a message on the district website as well as the website of each school listing the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and questions regarding exposure to the virus. Principals will routinely remind their student families to check their children for symptoms and exposure to COVID-19 and to keep children who are feeling ill at home.

While the district will not utilize daily screening forms and temperature checks of all staff and students entering the building every day, the district may implement these procedures if circumstances warrant, i.e., if recommended by the applicable agencies in response to an elevated COVID Activity Level or increased cases in a particular school building.

Students and staff who present with symptoms of COVID-19 will be promptly isolated and excluded from school. Isolation protocols will be developed, acknowledged by the Board of Education, posted on the district website and revised as needed, i.e., when the Activity Level changes.

When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms should be separated away from others until they can be sent home. Students who are sick and not already wearing a mask should be provided one to wear unless the student has a contraindication to doing so. If a mask is not tolerated by the ill student or staff member, other staff should be masked and follow maximum physical distancing guidelines (at least 6 feet away).

Ask ill student (or parent/guardian) 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.

If community transmission is low, ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the NJDOH School Exclusion List. No public health

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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 be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.

Schools with testing capacity should test ill students and staff, consistent with any federal and state requirements, including requirements regarding parental consent.

Ill individuals who test positive should be reported to the Local Health Department and contact tracing should begin.

Ill individuals that test negative should be referred to a healthcare provider, who may consider additional COVID-19 testing.

Local Education Agencies should notify Local Health Departments when students or staff:

- Are ill and have potential COVID-19 exposure;
- When they see an increase in the number of persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms.
- Test positive for COVID-19 (when in-school testing is performed).

Local Education Agencies should be prepared to provide the following information when consulting with the Local Health Department:

- Contact information for the ill persons;
- The date the ill person developed symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19 (if known), and was last in the building;
- Types of interactions (close contacts, length of contact) the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations;
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for ill person's close contacts in the school;
- Vaccination status if known
- Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.

Regardless of vaccination status, if a student or staff experiences COVID-compatible symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2.

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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.

District Lead Nurse and Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to work with the Human Resources Department to track symptomatic staff members who are sent home.

The parents/guardians of students who are placed in the isolation area and exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 consistent with the Criteria for Testing Symptomatic Students Protocol will be given information about the districts' rapid testing resources available at one of the district facilities. The parent/guardian may then proceed to that location with the child for testing or may bring the child home.

Staff members who present with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 will be asked to visit an ambulatory COVID-19 testing site for a COVID-19 test. Both symptomatic staff, who did not utilize the ambulatory site, and the families of symptomatic students will be encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test from their medical provider.

Symptomatic staff members and students who were sent home will be allowed to return to district buildings after meeting the criteria specified in the Isolation Protocol which will continue to be posted on the district website, revised and acknowledged by the Board of Education as necessary.

Should the district learn that a staff member or student has tested positive for COVID-19, the District Lead Nurse/Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to work with the Somerset County Health Department to report the case and assist in any contact tracing at the state, county or local level, as needed.

Exclusion

The District will follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria for persons who have COVID-19 compatible symptoms or who test positive for COVID-19 in a manner consistent with the District Isolation Protocol which is developed, acknowledged by the Board of Education, posted on the district website and revised as needed, i.e., when the COVID Activity Level changes.

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An alternate diagnosis (including a positive strep test or influenza swab) without a negative COVID-19 test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school earlier than the timeframes above.

The COVID-19 Exclusion Table described in NJDOH guidance for Local health departments can be used to determine the need for and duration of school exclusion based on the level of COVID-19 community transmission in their region. In order to facilitate rapid diagnosis and limit unnecessary school exclusion, schools may consider implementing school-based diagnostic testing for students and staff.

Should Franklin Township Public Schools district learn that a staff member or student has tested positive for COVID-19, the District Lead Nurse/Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to work with the Somerset County Health Department to report the case and assist in any contact tracing at the state, county or local level, as needed.

The staff member or student who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be notified of the appropriate isolation period and the required documentation, if any, needed to return to the building. This information will be consistent with the Isolation Protocol which will be developed, acknowledged by the Board of Education, posted on the district website and revised as needed, i.e., when the Activity Level changes.

COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts

The District will follow COVID-19 exclusion criteria for persons are considered close contacts of an individual with COVID-19 compatible symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 in a manner consistent with the District Isolation Protocol which is developed, acknowledged by the Board of Education, posted on the district website and revised as needed, i.e., when the COVID Activity Level changes.

Should Franklin Township Public Schools district learn that a staff member or student has tested positive for COVID-19, the District Lead Nurse/Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to work with the Somerset County Health Department to report the case and assist in any contact tracing at the state, county or local level, as needed.

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The staff member or student who has been identified as a close contact of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be notified of the appropriate quarantine period and the required documentation, if any, needed to return to the building.

This information will be consistent with the Isolation Protocol which will be developed, acknowledged by the Board of Education, posted on the district website and revised as needed, i.e., when the Activity Level changes or if the exposed close contact has been fully vaccinated.

Staff or students who have been made to isolate or quarantine will be allowed to return to the district building in accordance with the Isolation Protocol. Additionally, applicable staff and student families will be notified of a positive case. The case will be included in a chart on the district website.

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Appendix J - Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading. Finding people who are close contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and therefore at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, can help prevent further spread of the virus.

Per the CDC, 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.

School staff should identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.

As with any other communicable disease outbreak, schools will assist in identifying the close contacts within the school and communicating this information back to the Local Health Department.

With guidance from the Local Health Department, schools will be responsible for notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

The Local Health Department contact tracing team will notify and interview the close contacts identified by the school and reinforce the exclusion requirements.

Should the district learn that a staff member or student has tested positive for COVID-19, the District Lead Nurse/Assistant Lead Nurse will continue to work with the Somerset County Health Department to report the case and assist in any contact tracing at the state, county or local level, as needed.

The staff member or student who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be notified of the appropriate isolation period. Staff or students identified as close contacts will be notified of the appropriate quarantine period.

Students who are unable to participate in in-person learning due to quarantine will be eligible for home instruction which will take place virtually after the school day has concluded. Additionally, these students will

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be able to “listen live” to their scheduled classes. Teachers will virtually connect with the student who is in quarantine so that the student may hear what the teacher and students in the class say. The student in quarantine will not interact with his teacher or other students in the classroom during this time, but will monitor the class using audio means only.

Staff or students who have been made to isolate or quarantine will be allowed to return to the district building in accordance with the Isolation Protocol.

Additionally, applicable staff and student families will be notified of a positive case. The case will be included in a chart on the district website.

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Appendix K – Testing

When schools implement testing combined with key prevention strategies, they can detect new cases to prevent outbreaks, reduce the risk of further transmission, and protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

In some schools, 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 after obtaining 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 laboratory for testing, if trained in specimen collection, but without having a CLIA certificate of waiver. It is important that school-based healthcare professionals have access to, and training on the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Diagnostic Testing

At all levels of community transmission, NJDOH recommends that schools work with their local health departments to identify rapid viral testing options in their community for the testing of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to diagnostic testing.

The district will utilize some of the same procedures with regard to diagnostic testing of staff and students as were used in the 2020-2021 school year. The district utilized an ambulatory COVID-19 testing site to provide testing for symptomatic staff members in the 2020-2021 school year and will continue to utilize those services in the 2021-2022 school year.

Additionally, in the 2021-2022 school year, parents/guardians of students who were placed in the isolation area and exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 consistent with the Criteria for Testing Symptomatic Students Protocol will be given information about the districts’ rapid testing resources available at one of the district facilities. The

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parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to have their child tested at that location.

Both symptomatic staff, who did not utilize the ambulatory site, and the families of symptomatic students will be encouraged to seek a COVID-19 test from their medical provider.

Testing results will be reported to public health authorities by the entity conducting the testing as required.

Screening Testing

Some schools may also elect to use screening testing as a strategy to identify cases and prevent secondary transmission. Screening testing involves using SARS-CoV-2 viral tests (diagnostic tests used for screening purposes) intended to identify occurrence at the individual level even if there is no reason to suspect infection—i.e., there is no known exposure. This includes, but is not limited to, screening testing of asymptomatic individuals without known exposure with the intent of making decisions based on the test results.

Developing and implementing a screening testing strategy is particularly important during periods of high community transmission when physical space limitations prevent the implementation of maximal social distancing practices. Testing strategies in K-12 schools should be developed in consultation with local health departments.

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to screening testing

Franklin Township Public Schools has worked with Franklin Township to advertise and provide a site for a weekly COVID-19 testing site for the majority of the 2020-2021 school year and will continue to do so as those testing opportunities arise. Additionally, the district will provide information on other testing sites if known.

The availability of screening tests and the interest of staff and student families will determine if and the manner in which the district provides screening testing in the 2021-2022 school year. Pursuant to this Policy at Appendix A and Policy 1648.13 School Employee Vaccination Requirements, covered workers

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who are not fully vaccinated must be tested for COVID-19 once a week following established procedures. Additionally, vaccinated staff and students will be allowed to register for weekly testing opportunities. Registration for this testing program will occur periodically during the school year.

Testing results will be reported to public health authorities by the entity conducting the testing as required.

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Appendix L – Student and Staff Member Travel

Franklin Township Public Schools will continue to follow the applicable Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance with regard to student and staff member travel protocols.

During the 2020-2021 school year a travel protocol was developed in accordance with Federal, state and local governmental and health department guidance. The District Travel and Quarantine Protocol was updated as necessary, acknowledged by the Board of Education and posted on the district website. Staff and student families were notified of the Protocol and any revision.

The district will follow the same procedure in the 2021-2022 school year with regard to the development, revision, acknowledgement and communication concerning a District Travel and Quarantine Protocol.