

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding The 2021-2022 School Year

## **Daily Screening and Temperature Checks**

***Will I still have to fill out the Covid-19 screening form and will temperatures still be taken at the door?***

Based upon current health dept guidance, the district will no longer require daily screening forms to be completed prior to attending school or daily temperature checks to enter buildings. Students and families are asked to monitor their health and comply with prudent safety measures to ensure that anyone who is suspected of having COVID 19 stays home and gets tested. Weekly reminders via the Principal's Office will be sent to parents requesting parents be diligent about the daily monitoring of symptoms.

## **Drills in School Buildings**

***Will safety drills be conducted?***

As of today, August 26, 2021, the NJ Department of Education has advised that all emergency drills are to be conducted as normal. This means students will evacuate the building during a fire drill and react as normal for all other drills such as lockdowns and such. We will ask faculty to be mindful of keeping students masked and socially distant especially during drills.

## **Face Coverings**

***Will my child and his/her teacher be expected to wear a face covering?***

Per Executive Order 251, as of Monday, August 9, 2021, face coverings are mandated in the indoor premises of all school buildings. All students, staff and visitors must wear a face covering. There is a list of exceptions listed in the district Road Forward Policy, vaccination status is not an exception.

Students will be offered opportunities for mask breaks during the school day, including lunch breaks and outdoor breaks. Mask breaks will be authorized by faculty when deemed necessary.

## **Grading Policy**

***What will the grading policy look like this year? What supports will you provide to students returning to in person instruction?***

Our grading policy returns to a traditional method, with student workloads and expectations being more closely aligned to preCovid-19. If a student misses instructional time due to being quarantined or being sick, the student will be supported with home instruction. While on home instruction the days missed will count as days present for attendance purposes.

With that said there will be a large emphasis placed on supporting the emotional needs of students. Faculty and staff have been working this summer to undergo additional Social, Emotional training to help support students. Administration has gone through Resilience Training to help support both staff and students. We have plenty of supports in place such as mentoring programs, formal Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs, and we have once

again engaged agencies like Rutgers Behavioral Health, Effective School Solutions (ESS) and others to help provide Social and Emotional Learning supports.

## **Instruction**

### ***What will classroom instruction look like this school year?***

Instruction will be more traditional with less emphasis being placed on group work and more emphasis on individual work in order to help maintain social distancing. At the elementary level, students will receive a full program with teachers moving about more than students. However for certain special area subjects, like art and music for example, students will need to move in order to meet the goals of those courses.

Special precautions will be taken such as limiting the sharing of materials and when that is not possible those items shared will be sanitized in between uses. In music classes special devices have been ordered for example, devices will be used that will allow the use of wind instruments but help to contain aerosoles leaving the instruments. More information on the guidelines we plan to follow regarding FVPA can be found online in a document titled Arts Ed NJ Covid-19 Resources and have been provided by Arts ED NJ organization.

## **Kindergarten & Pre-K**

### ***What will the Kindergarten and Pre-K program look like this year?***

The Kindergarten and Pre-K program will be typical, offered for the same amount of time and utilizing the same curriculum as preCovid-19. The one difference is we have added 50 Pre-K3 (three year old) general education students who have been assigned to a section (15 students per section) and assigned to a school nearest to their attendance zone or to the early childhood program at Franklin High School.

## **Locker Usage**

### ***Will my child have use of his or her locker?***

As of today, August 26, 2021, we are planning to allow the optional use of lockers for secondary students. We intend on spreading students out as much as possible by utilizing the entire lot of lockers in each building. Locker sharing will be prohibited. Lockers will be periodically disinfected throughout the day utilizing a spray disinfectant and disinfected again each evening.

## **Meals**

### ***Will meals be free for all students again this year?***

Free meals will be available for all students in the 2021-2022 school year. However a full meal must be taken. A student cannot bring a meal from home and request just a free drink or side order. Milk will be available for purchase for (.50 cents) for those who do not take the meal. A limited number of snacks will also be available for purchase starting in mid-September. Student families may wish to consider this information when funding their child's meal account.

***What will the cafeteria procedures look like this year?*** Breakfast and lunch will be served in the cafeteria or other large area. Breakfast items will be individually wrapped with a selection of items similar to that of a traditional school year and students will eat breakfast according to a

schedule developed by the principal in the school cafeteria or large area rather than the classroom.

Lunch menus will be more closely aligned to a traditional year except there will not be any self-serve or buffet stations and sharing of food is absolutely not allowed. K- 8 students will be assigned to a seat while Franklin High School (FHS) students will select a table. FHS students, after selecting a table, will register themselves to that table using a QR code affixed to the table.

In grades K - 12, Students will be expected to sit socially distanced and tables will be marked to assist. Each of the schools have identified additional spaces inside the building to supplement their cafeterias and each of the schools have also established outside eating areas to support both the lunch and breakfast programs.

### **Notification Procedures for Reported Positive Cases**

#### ***How will I know if my child was exposed to a person who tested positive for Covid-19?***

When district personnel become aware of a potential COVID 19 exposure, the lead nurses contact the County Health Department for guidance. The nurses then begin to follow a series of protocols including contact tracing that allows the district to identify who might potentially have been exposed and to respond accordingly.

When a potential exposure occurs, parents/guardians and/or staff members will be notified that the exposed person may need to quarantine. Based on current health department guidance (August, 2021), fully vaccinated staff and students DO NOT need to quarantine if exposed. They will be encouraged to get a Covid-19 test 3-5 days after exposure and monitor themselves for symptoms. Unvaccinated students and staff are required to quarantine for 14 days after a known exposure.

### **Orientations**

#### ***Can my child and I see the school before he or she returns?***

We have arranged for additional orientation days this year. We typically host an orientation for families with students in Pre-K, K, 6, and 9. This year we are hosting orientations for families with students in Grade Pre-K, K, 1, 6, 7, 9 and 10. Dates for these orientations have been communicated by the schools to the appropriate grade levels. If you have yet to be informed of your orientation date you will be notified soon or you can check with your child's building Principal.

### **Positive Behavior Supports in Schools in Supporting Order & Operation**

#### ***What will be the Role of PBSIS?***

PBSIS goals will be established to support positive behavior with regard to mask wearing, social distancing, etc. Respectful and safe behaviors will be taught, demonstrated, expected, and recognized; while negative behavior will be addressed and corrected.

### **Remote Learning**

#### ***Will there be a remote learning option this year?***

As of today, there will be no virtual learning, instruction will be in person only. Schools are to open full day, five days per week according to the BOE approved school calendar for the 2021-2022 school year.

There is no virtual option available for the 2021-2022 school year as per the latest NJDOE guidance and newest laws governing the use of remote instruction.

The only time remote instruction can be counted as a school day is when and if:

- the governor declares a health emergency and shuts schools via executive order like occurred last school year and ended in June 2021 or;
- the local health department forces a school shut down for one reason or another and approves remote instruction.

It is anticipated that local health departments will provide that flexibility when whole classes, multiple classes, whole schools or whole districts need to be shut for Covid-19 related reasons.

***For individual students*** who are required to quarantine, home instruction is to be offered to help provide continuity for learning. Home instruction is governed by N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-10.1 and 10.2 and allows for the delivery of instruction at home for individual students in a variety of formats including virtual instruction. However, the instruction does not typically take place synchronously with the class but usually at a time other than class time. The instruction is usually delivered by the child's teacher or another appropriately certified teacher in coordination with the child's teacher.

### **Symptoms of Covid-19**

#### ***When should I keep my child home from school?***

If your child, or a close household/ family member is experiencing symptoms of COVID 19, please have them stay home and contact your doctor's office. Contact your child's school nurse to make them aware and to receive guidance and support.

#### **Symptoms of COVID 19 include:**

Fever or chills	Cough
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Fatigue
Muscle or body aches	Headache
New loss of taste or smell	Sore throat
Congestion or runny nose	Nausea or vomiting
Diarrhea	

### **Transportation**

#### ***What will be the physical distance and capacity of the to and from schools buses as well as the late buses?***

For district to and from school bus runs, our goal is to cap the bus capacity to allow for one student to sit in a single seat and two students to sit in a three person seat. Currently we have some busses over subscribed so we are encouraging those who can transport their child to and

from school to notify their building principal to assist in reducing the number of students on busses especially at the high school level. We currently have surveys out in those buildings that have busses over prescribed. At this time we cannot say how many students will be on each bus but we are working toward a goal of no more than 40 students on a bus.

Since we do not know at this time how many students will be involved in extracurricular activities, we cannot say what the physical distance or capacity amounts will be on a late bus.

***How will buses be cleaned?***

As was the protocol last year, busses will be sanitized between morning runs and afternoon runs and again each evening. Common touch areas will be sanitized utilizing district issued sanitizing wipes between tiers.

***Will all bus drivers/aides be vaccinated?***

On August 23, Governor Murphy mandated that all school district staff be vaccinated or undergo weekly Covid-19 testing. This requirement goes into effect on October 18, 2021. The bus company employees would be held to this same standard, vaccination or weekly testing. Due to privacy issues, the specific information about the vaccination status of any employee or vendor cannot be shared.

**Vaccinations**

***Do students need the Covid-19 vaccination to return to school?***

No, the vaccine is not mandatory for students, but is recommended for students 12 years of age or older. The district provides information about vaccination opportunities on the website and has, in conjunction with the Somerset County Department of Health, offered in district opportunities for our secondary students to be vaccinated.

***Do staff members need to be vaccinated for Covid-19?***

On August 23, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that effective October 18, 2021, all staff members of schools in NJ must be vaccinated or go through weekly testing for Covid-19. The district is taking a survey of all staff members to determine their vaccination status, this first survey of the 2021-2022 school year will close on Sunday, September 5, 2021.

***Will there be vaccination opportunities for staff and students?*** Ongoing opportunities for vaccination will include Monday, August 30th where secondary students aged 12 and older and unvaccinated staff members will be eligible to get vaccinated between 7am - 12pm. The Somerset County Department of Health will set up a pop-up vaccine clinic in the events lobby of Franklin High School. The Pfizer vaccine will be given to those FTPS students and staff registered to receive the vaccine. A link for registration is available on the district website.

Additional Local Vaccination sites include: Somerset Park Pharmacy Easton Ave; CVS Elizabeth Ave; Walgreens Route 27 and Stop and Shop Rt 27.

We are partnering with the Township once again to host weekly testing at the Hamilton Street Campus starting this Sunday, August 29, 2021 from 11am to 7pm. Those interested in testing via the Township Program can register online on the Township's website. There is a flyer about these testing opportunities on the district website as well.

### **Water Fountain Usage**

***Will the water fountains be open for my child to use during the day?***

The use of water fountains will be prohibited as it was last year, however, students will be able to utilize the bottle filler stations that have been installed in each of the schools.