



**Plumsted Township Board of Education
Health & Safety Guidance
Fall 2021**

Plumsted Township: The Road Forward

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, **with the exception of the mandatory masking requirement for all individuals in public, private and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, per Executive Order 251**. These recommendations are meant to assist our school community in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

We considered many factors as we prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community.

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

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

We considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the school district’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas as outlined within each.

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A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors

1. Vaccination:

The District will share vaccination information/opportunities with staff, members of the Board of Education, and members of the community, in accordance with state and local regulations. The district will support any and all interested stakeholders securing vaccination. The district will be in compliance with staff vaccination or weekly testing as mandated.

2. Communication with the Local Health Department:

The School Security and Safety Officer and/or Superintendent will be the primary liaison(s) with the Ocean County Department of Health and/or school nurses will be support the liaisons as needed. The District will maintain open lines of communication with the Ocean County Department of Health in order to update contact tracing protocols as needed. Procedures for quarantine and isolation will be updated as needed in accordance with guidance and data from the State and County as well as the Township and District data. If students and/or staff present with symptoms, the District will maintain a space in which they may be isolated so as to reduce possible contagion. In the event of identified positive (or presumed positive, depending on activity level) COVID case, the district will ensure the individual is instructed to isolate and will report to the Ocean County Department of Health and County DOE. COVID positive individuals will be permitted to return to school after 10 days if fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medicine and a marked improvement of symptoms (or in compliance with updated NJDOH recommendations for schools.)

3. Mask Wearing Protocol:

Plumsted Township School District will comply with Executive Order 251 requirements with respect to universal and correct wearing of masks by all staff and students when indoors. Masks will be required by all staff and students for entrance to school buildings and busses. Anyone without a mask will be denied entrance. Mask breaks will be provided throughout the day. As the mandated regulations evolve, in turn, so will the district. The District will continue to allow for the mask wearing exceptions delineated by the State of NJ as indicated below, all medical related requests will require a medical note provided by a doctor :

- a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- 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;
- 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.

The District will ensure that staff and students are reminded that proper fit is an integral part of masking and that gaiters/bandanas are not acceptable. Professional staff who may require different types of masks and/or face protection (i.e. face shields, goggles etc.) because of the type of work they do with specialized populations will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Masking outdoors is optional unless otherwise ordered or mandated. The district 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.

4. *Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols:*

Students will not be cohorted as all students will be expected to attend school in person for a full day. Middle and high school students will switch classes based on their schedules. Students will be distanced to the extent possible within each classroom and learning setting. When possible, classroom desks will be facing the same direction and group interaction will be limited. Distancing will be prioritized during indoor activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, sports, or exercise and will take place outside when possible. Staff and students will be encouraged and reminded to maintain physical distancing when possible. Teachers will maintain seating charts to support accurate contact tracing. Seating charts will be maintained on school buses. Desk barriers may be used on a limited and targeted basis.

5. *Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols:*

Students/staff will be reminded of the importance of hand washing because keeping hands clean is integral to prevent illness from spreading. For example, germs spread when people touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands and/or blow their nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects. Key times to wash or sanitize hands includes but it not limited to: touching one's eyes, nose, or mouth, touching one's mask, entering and leaving a public place, touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, before/after eating, after using the restroom. Additionally, staff and students will be reminded of appropriate respiratory etiquette. To help stop the spread of germs during the limited times individuals are unmasked: cover one's

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mouth and nose with a tissue during a cough/sneeze and throw used tissues in the trash. If one does not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into one's elbow.

6. *Provision of Meals*

Students will be provided federally funded breakfast and/or lunch and will also be permitted to bring lunch from home. Meals will be individually wrapped and there will be no salad bar/self-service type options. When not eating or drinking during lunch students will be expected to be masked. Sharing of food and/or utensils will be prohibited. To the extent possible students will be encouraged to distance. Elementary students will eat in the cafeteria one grade level at a time and cleaning will take place in between lunches. Kindergarten will begin the year eating in the classroom. Middle school and high school students will eat as a unit (all students at the same time) and will be able to distance throughout available space and be supervised outside when done eating. Elementary students will have recess outside.

7. *Transportation Protocols:*

Students are expected to sit in assigned seats and bus drivers will maintain accurate and up to date seating charts to support contact tracing efforts if necessary. Students will most likely not be socially distanced on busses however, if possible students will be distanced to the extent possible. Students will not be permitted entrance to the bus without a mask. Busses will be cleaned in between runs.

B. *Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow*

District cleaning practices include: building sanitizing on an ongoing basis throughout the day, nightly sanitizing of surfaces, sanitizing high touch areas with frequency throughout the day, ideally every 20-30 minutes. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizers will be provided in classrooms and strategic locations across each school. All schools will be sanitized each evening. A [Hydroxyl generator](#) for each nurse office and other areas as needed. Further, all HVAC units will be checked biweekly for functionality and quality, filters for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations. HVAC units will circulate air at least 2 hours prior to the start of each school day and HVAC units will incorporate fresh air as part of their regular cycle. A COVID confirmed case is confirmed while in school: the relevant areas will be closed off, custodians will wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfecting, outside windows will be open to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, custodial staff will wait up to 24 hours to clean.

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

All parents/guardians will be required to read the [“screener letter”](#) and check off in the Genesis Parent Portal that they understand the requirements and expectations. Staff will complete a Google Form indicating their understanding of the same expectations. Guests will be required to complete a COVID screener and temperature check.

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. The close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. If a student is identified as having been in close contact with a COVID positive case, and *the district determines* that the student must quarantine, the student will attend school remotely. If the parent produces proof of vaccination to the school nurse (or proof of being COVID positive and recovered within 3 months of exposure), If exposed and fully vaccinated and asymptomatic there is no need to quarantine. The nurse will advise the parent of any additional protocols. Quarantine timelines will be based on Regional Transmission Risk Level data at the time and the New Jersey Department of Health Covid Exclusion Criteria Guidelines. For example, when the region is in “yellow” or moderate risk, recommended quarantine is 10 days without testing OR 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days of exposure. If the region is in “orange” or high risk the recommended quarantine is 14 days. School nurses will provide scenario specific details on a case by case basis. Siblings of a student or other household member who has symptoms will be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result. If the symptomatic individual tests positive, the sibling will need to self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms.

Individuals exhibiting symptoms, without a known contact to a COVID positive individual, as indicated below, will need to quarantine and will be notified to be tested for COVID. A negative test will be required to return to school. School nurses are available for support and to answer questions.

COVID Symptoms and Protocol:

- **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. (For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.) Individuals who test positive or had symptoms but did not test, can return when all the criteria has been met:
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving

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D. *Contact Tracing*

The School Security and Safety Officer has been trained to be aware of contact tracing protocols. The School Security and Safety Officer and/or Superintendent will be the liaison between the Plumsted Township Police Department. If a staff member or student is tested positive for COVID-19 contract tracing will be protocols will ensue to identify all individuals who have been in close contact, as defined as within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more over a 24 hours period, within 48 hours of the positive individual showing symptoms or within 48 hours of an asymptomatic individual being tested) with the positive individual. The close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. Close contacts will be expected to quarantine and monitor for symptoms. Vaccinated individuals will follow vaccinated specific protocols: monitor for symptoms and quarantine if symptomatic. Proof of vaccination will be required to be shared with the school nurse (student) or human resources (staff.)

E. *Testing*

Individuals with Covid symptoms and individuals who have been in close contact with a Covid positive individual will be sent home or will remain home and will be referred to a healthcare provider for testing. (Vaccinated close contact individuals will follow vaccinated-specific guidance.)

F. *Student and Staff Member Travel*

Staff members are essential to daily operation of school and the continuity of instruction. Unless COVID symptomatic staff members are expected to be present. *As of May 17, 2021, New Jersey's travel advisory is no longer in effect. Students/Families* are encouraged to follow the [CDC guidance for travel](#). For those who may be traveling internationally, please schedule a phone call with the school nurse to discuss specifics. If the NJDOH updates their guidance with respect to specific domestic locations, the District *may* make adjustments as well.

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

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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. If directed to quarantine by the school, students will be provided assignments and synchronous classroom attendance. Quarantined students will also be provided additional support beyond the school day as needed. 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. Attendance will be taken each day. *Any student who is not physically present in school will be marked absent and makeup work will be provided as has been done in the past. Any student or students (or classes) that may be directed to be on remote instruction **due to COVID-19 circumstances** will be provided a combination of synchronous and asynchronous work as well as an opportunity for after hours support. Details for synchronous times will be provided by each school and asynchronous assignments will be available via Google Classroom and/or the Platform. Attendance will be taken each day and for each class for students directed to be on remote. If a student is not present on the Google Meet the student will be marked absent.*

The school district anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this document and related policies are subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of policies. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy may 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 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.