

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service

Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Introduction and Background

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)'s [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#), in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides an additional \$122 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation's students. As with the previous ESSER funds available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy [announced](#) that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health have released additional information regarding State requirements and guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year available [here](#).

Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

Name: Y.A.L.E. Schools

Date: **09/20/2021**

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe how the school will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC. [The Y.A.L.E. School COVID-19 Decision Tree](#) will be updated to reflect NJDOH recommendations.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

- In alignment with recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, on August 6, 2021, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 251 which requires that all staff, students, and visitors wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status, in the indoor premises of school buildings.
- Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors, but may choose to do so, particularly during crowded, outdoor gatherings.
- All staff and students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health and under the following

conditions:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
- 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 covering;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- 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 covering;
- When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- 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
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- For those medically unable to wear a face covering, a medical note by a licensed healthcare provider is required.
- Face coverings may be removed when outdoors on school property.
- Masks must be worn on buses regardless of vaccination status. Bus windows are required to remain open, unless doing so presents a safety risk.

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)

- Within classrooms, maintain 3 feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable, while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.
- Outside of classrooms including in hallways, locker rooms, indoor and outdoor physical education settings, and school-sponsored transportation, maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable.
- A distance of at least 6 feet between students and teachers/staff and between teachers/staff who are not fully vaccinated in all settings.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- As part of the Mandatory In-service for all staff in September, healthy personal hygiene practices will be defined and reviewed with staff members by the school nurse so they can reinforce these practices with students.
- Appropriate signage will be displayed in school buildings reinforcing proper personal hygiene.
- Proper handwashing strategies include:
 - washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - after using the bathroom
 - before eating
 - after nose blowing, coughing, or sneezing
- If soap and water are not available, students and staff will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or sanitizing wipes
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms, at building entrances and other needed areas of the school building.
 - Sanitizing wipes will be provided in all classrooms
- Hand hygiene should take place:
 - upon arrival to school
 - before and after snacks
 - when entering/departing classrooms

- after nose blowing, sneezing, or coughing
 - when hands are visibly soiled
- Students and families will be reminded to wash their reusable face masks to keep them clean. Students and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

The Y.A.L.E. Schools are committed to facilities cleaning procedures to reduce the spread of contagion. The maintenance supervisor in consultation with the building principals will continue procedures for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. These procedures include cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used, and address:

- Routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
- Using all cleaning products in accordance with directions on the label. For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Whenever possible the list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 (available on the EPA's website) shall be used. The manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.) shall be used.
- Sanitizing bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Cleaning and sanitizing drinking fountains and encouraging staff and students to bring their own water to minimize the use and touching of water fountains; furthermore water fountains will be converting to bottle filling stations to reduce spread of contagions.
- Making hand sanitizer available at the school bus entrance for each student to use when boarding. Similarly, students must be required to wear face coverings while riding on the bus if social distancing or physical barriers cannot be maintained, but may not be required to wear masks if it is determined to be consistent with the Governor Executive Orders;
- Maintaining hand-sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
- Supervising children ages 5 and younger when using hand sanitizer;
- For classrooms with existing handwashing facilities, preparing stations with soap, water and alcohol based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol);
- Reminding bus drivers to take certain personal hygiene actions (e.g., frequent hand washing) and affording them the opportunity to do so (such as having sufficient time between routes);
- Cleaning and sanitizing district vehicles including seats, rails and any highly touched surfaces.
- In the event contracted transportation providers are utilized the district will require them to clean and sanitize seats, rails and highly touched surfaces touched before each run. The district shall collaborate with the contracted service provider to develop these procedures and ensure that they are consistently followed; a checklist may be developed to ensure compliance. The contracted service provider shall collaborate with the districts in establishing cleaning/sanitation protocols that are consistent with social distancing practices. The contracted service provider shall ensure that employees are fully trained in the implementation of the established protocols:
- Routinely cleaning and disinfecting furniture, recognizing the varying materials used in furniture in each school building;
- Providing EPA-registered disposable wipes to teachers and staff so that commonly used surfaces (e.g., keyboards, desks, remote controls) can be wiped down before use;
- On a regular basis, ordering and stocking adequate supplies to support cleaning and disinfection practices.
- Ensuring that cleaning and disinfection supplies are used and stored correctly and safely. This includes storing products securely away from children, while ensuring appropriate ventilation so students and staff are not exposed to toxins or fumes.

- Placing physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, in classrooms, school buses, restrooms and other areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Cleaning and disinfecting a school building after a person has been identified as COVID-19 positive: The district may need to implement short-term closure procedures in a school regardless of community spread if an infected person has been in a school building. If this happens, the CDC- recommended procedures shall be followed.

Ventilation/Ventilation Improvements

The Y.A.L.E. School buildings maintain quality ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems in all indoor facilities. Filter(s) for HVAC units are maintained according to manufacturer recommendations by certified HVAC staff, when required. HVAC Filters have been purchased for all classroom unit ventilators. HVAC upgrades to district systems are ongoing. Y.A.L.E. School maintains high quality and well maintained HVAC systems and air-conditioned units for all school buildings.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribalhealth Departments

- Exposed close contacts who have no COVID-like symptoms and are either fully vaccinated or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 90 days:
 - Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, but should be tested 3-5 days following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
 - Should wear a mask in other indoor public settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
 - If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.
- Contact tracing will take place in consultation with the Department of Health (DOH).
 - In the PreK-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- Adherence to all applicable federal and state requirements regarding the privacy of educational records (e.g. FERPA) will be maintained.
- Written notice to all those identified as close contacts is provided and includes criteria for school return.
- 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 listed on the Y.A.L.E. COVID Decision Tree.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

All students and staff members are required to [screen at home](#) before leaving for school every day.

Do you have any of these symptoms that are not caused by another condition?

<u>Category A</u>		<u>Category B</u>	
Chills	Sore Throat	Fever (100.0 or higher)	Shortness of breath
Rigors (shivers)	Nausea	Vomiting	Difficulty breathing
Myalgia (muscle aches)	Fatigue	Diarrhea	New loss of smell
Headache	Congestion or runny nose	Cough	New Loss of taste

- Students who are sick should not attend school in-person. If **two or more** of the fields under **Category A** are checked off OR at least **one** field under **Category B** is checked off, please keep our child home, notify their health care provider for additional guidance, and follow up with your school. For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms, or symptoms worse than baseline, should be used to fulfill these criteria
- Within the past 14 days, have you had contact with anyone that you know had COVID-19 or COVID-like symptoms?
 - Contact is being 6 feet (2 meters) or closer for more than 15 minutes with a person, or having direct contact with fluids from a person with COVID-19 (for example, being coughed or sneezed on).
- Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past 10 days?
- Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?
- Any student or staff member who is exhibiting possible symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to the nurse's office for additional screening and continuous monitoring of symptoms. Each school will have a medical isolation space for any student or staff member who is exhibiting possible symptoms of COVID-19. The individual will be monitored by the nurse and will be required to leave the school facility to see their primary care physician.
Any positive report of a case of COVID-19 for a student or a staff member will immediately be reported to the school nurse. The school nurse will notify the Department of Health and will follow the direct guidance from the Department of Health regarding next steps.
- All staff will be required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 – details pending Governor Murphy's official announcement.
- Vaccination is currently the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

- The School Health Offices at each campus location worked with the Rite Aid flu vaccine coordinator and local Departments of Health to assist staff with scheduling appointments for COVID vaccines, at local Rite Aids, County Mega Sites in Camden County, Atlantic County and Burlington County.
- Parents of students 12 years of age and older were assisted with vaccine location finders and appointment set up instructions through the school website and personal assistance via phone calls from the school nurses.
- The School Health Office and School Nurses will continue efforts to provide available opportunities for staff and students to be vaccinated during the coming 2021-2022 school year and as the younger age groups become eligible for vaccines.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies

Incorporation of IEP/504 Accommodations

- The Y.A.L.E. Schools remain committed to providing meaningful access for all students including our students with disabilities. This includes providing a free and appropriate public education while recognizing the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to these students.
- Students will receive needed accommodations, supports and services outlined in their plans, to the maximum extent possible.
- Special education staff work on accommodations and modifications to assignments to ensure access to the general education curriculum.
- Special education staff provide instruction in areas identified within the student's IEP.
- Related Services such as Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy will be provided in addition to consultation.
- IEP and 504 meetings will continue to be held both virtually and in person as requested.

Special Education and Related Services

- Students in special class programs will have the opportunity to participate in instruction like their typically developing peers. They will continue the programs of study as identified in their IEPs including related services.
- Behavioral and therapeutic services will continue for students who have the service identified in the IEP or as part of their special education program.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

Describe how the school will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' And staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs.

- Y.A.L.E. Schools will continue tutoring interventions in the Fall and Spring of the school year as well.
- Students will receive Extended School Year Services (ESY) as per their needs outlined in their IEPs. Programs are offered for differing durations (4 weeks; 5 weeks, and; 6 weeks) depending on the student's disability and need.
- School counselors and mental health professionals are provided during summer school programs as well as during the school year.
- As per directive from the NJDOE students who meet the NJDOH COVID-19 exclusion criteria will be provided virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction.

Student Social, Emotional, Mental Health

- All professionals are available to support students, staff, and families. This support network includes, but is not limited to, teachers, school counselors, Child Study Team, nurses and mental health professionals.
- Counselors will continue to provide direct counseling as well as check-ins. Special consideration will be given to students who struggle to acclimate to the in-person setting.
- The district will be offering a mental health concierge service via Care Solace which is a 24/7 multilingual Care Concierge team that connects students, families and staff with available, verified mental health providers and substance abuse treatment programs matched to their needs.