

Safe Return Plan Summary

December 13, 2021



**HACKENSACK
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

Safe Return Plan Review

- School districts must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023 review and as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.
- After taking public comments into account, the only revisions to the Safe Return Plan reflect the changes that were made by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) “*The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year*” published document.



Safe Return Plan Summary

Current as of December 13, 2021

- This presentation is intended to provide a summary of the Safe Return Plan. Please visit our District website to view this plan in its entirety.
- Please note this plan is subject to change based upon any revisions to the regulations set forth by the New Jersey Department of Health and/or New Jersey Department of Education.



Safe Return Plan

In accordance with the New Jersey Department of Education and New Jersey Department of Health's "*The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year*" document, **Hackensack Public Schools is open for full time, full day, in-person instruction with no remote option.**



Maintaining Health & Safety

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

All students and staff are required to wear masks that adequately cover both the nose and mouth at all times with a few exceptions. For example:

- 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;



A. Universal and correct wearing of masks (continued)

- 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.
- Where an individual is seeking a medical exemption from the masking requirement pursuant to the first or third bullet above, documentation from a medical professional supporting this exception is required pursuant to Executive Order No. 253. (updated November 2021)



Maintaining Health & Safety

B. Physical distancing

All classrooms, cafeterias, testing and therapy rooms at Hackensack Public schools will have students seated according to NJDOH regulations **between three and six feet apart wherever practicable**. When schools cannot maintain three to six feet of social distancing, schools, as deemed appropriate by Building Principals, will implement strategies to maximize opportunities to increase distance between students such as:

- Face desks in the same direction
- Avoid grouped seating arrangements
- Have students sit only on one side of the table
- Use physical barriers or desk shields



Maintaining Health & Safety

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Students will continue to receive training and reinforcement on proper hand washing techniques with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Hand sanitizing stations containing at least 60% alcohol have been placed strategically in all classrooms, high population areas such as, offices, entrances/exits, restrooms, and cafeteria.

Signage on proper handwashing technique is posted in all bathrooms and above all hand washing stations.



Maintaining Health & Safety

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

All classrooms, and other areas occupied by students or staff, shall be routinely cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2.

All custodians have been trained in proper cleaning procedures.

Frequently touched areas such as doorknobs, lockers, water fountains, sinks, light switches, railings, elevators, lab equipment, etc. shall be cleaned multiple times per day whenever possible, but at least once daily.



Maintaining Health & Safety

D. Continued

HVAC equipment is regularly inspected, repaired, and replaced as required.

The District is actively looking to install new classroom unit ventilators, and improved HVAC systems for all instructional spaces over time with the current Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) project and new ESSER funds. These improvements should begin during the upcoming school year and be completed within the next three years.



Maintaining Health & Safety

D. Continued

Schools will improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This will be achieved through several strategies:

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible by opening windows and doors to increase outdoor airflow, where possible. Schools will 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.
- Consider having activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.



Maintaining Health & Safety

E. Contact tracing is a strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading.

All HPS nurses completed a contact tracing certification course.

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.

Exception: In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 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.(updated 8/21)



With guidance from the LHD, schools will notify parents and staff of close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

Maintaining Health & Safety

F. Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Parents/caregivers (and Staff) were asked to complete a COVID-19 screener attestation form at the beginning of the school year or commencement of their child's schooling (employment) to ensure that their child (they) will not attend school if they are ill.

Parents/caregivers (Staff) are strongly encouraged to monitor their children (Self) for signs of illness on a daily basis as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children (themselves). Students (staff) who are sick should not attend school. All schools will strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff.



Maintaining Health & Safety

F. Diagnostic and Screening Testing (continued)

COVID-19 Testing will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11 am to 6 pm at no cost to students or staff at the following locations as indicated below:

- Mondays – Hackensack High School
- Wednesdays – Hackensack Middle School
- Fridays – Jackson Avenue School



Maintaining Health & Safety

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

Hackensack Public Schools will continue to share where vaccines are administered and seek out opportunities for students and staff to be vaccinated.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 253, Hackensack Public Schools requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at minimum once to two times weekly.



Maintaining Health & Safety

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

Accommodations for children with disabilities are and will continue to be made according to their Individualized Educational Plans.



Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staffs social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.

A few examples:

- After school tutoring is being offered to targeted students from October through May 3 days/week.
- Food services including free breakfast and lunch will continue throughout the 2021-22 school year.
- Intramural sports are being offered at the middle school.
- The district is in the process of hiring an ELA Coach, Math Coach and additional social workers at the elementary schools to focus on learning loss and to support student and staff mental health respectively.
- District partnered with Care Solace to support student and staff mental health needs.



Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment into account in the development of its plan.

In November 2021, the District sought public comment on the proposed revisions to the Safe Return Plan.

A Google Form that includes a link to the plan was shared with all stakeholders to obtain public comment on any and all sections of the plan.

The plan has been reviewed at the June 21st, August 23rd, and December 13, 2021 Board of Education meetings.



Public Comment

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practicable written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, will be orally translated for such a parent; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

Hackensack Public Schools has followed the suggested template provided by the New Jersey Department of Education for this plan. The District Reopening plan is accessible in Spanish and English on our website. Parents with disabilities will be provided with an alternative format accessible to that parent upon request.

Furthermore, Principals invited parents and families to Reopening Meetings prior to the first day of school to explain the Reopening Plan and provide opportunities for parents and families to ask questions. Meetings were offered in English and Spanish.



Thank

You