

# PLAINFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION

1200 Myrtle Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey  
Diana Mitchell, Ed.D., Superintendent

# The Road Forward



Health and Safety

Guidance for the

2021-2022

School Year



# Full-Day, In-Person Learning for September 2021

On Monday, May 18, 2021, Governor Murphy announced schools must fully open for in-person instruction in the fall, and virtual learning will not be an option in New Jersey. His Executive Order from August 2020 will expire at the conclusion of this school year.

\*The following plan was created in accordance with current Executive Orders and NJDOH / NJDOE Guidance and is subject to change\*

## 1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

### 1.1 Vaccination – See Board Policy # 5141.11

1. **Staff Vaccinations** – It is the expectation of The Plainfield Public Schools that all staff members are vaccinated. Staff will be asked to provide proof of vaccination prior to the return of students for the 2021-2022 school year. Unvaccinated staff will need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test weekly.
2. **Student Vaccinations** – 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. The Plainfield Public Schools will have a system in place to determine the vaccination status of students and this status will be stored with all health-related vaccine information, however, if unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals will be considered not fully vaccinated.

### 1.2 Communication

The Plainfield Public Schools and The Plainfield City health departments will 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](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml).

### **1.3 Masks – See Board Policy # 5141.10**

1. Plainfield Public Schools will require all staff and students to wear masks in all buildings.
2. The district will evaluate guidance as updates are made to adjust district policies and procedures.
3. Staff and students are expected to provide their own masks. The District will give all staff and students 2 reusable masks at the beginning of the year. Masks will be provided to staff and students when necessary.
4. Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some individuals, unless a mask cannot be safely worn, such as: For individuals who would not be able to remove a mask without assistance, mask must be worn at all times. For individuals with medical conditions or disabilities as reflected in federal disability laws that preclude the use of a mask, when wearing a mask would be considered unsafe.

***Masks will be worn in all buildings at all times.***

### **1.4 Technology – Remote Learning will occur per Board Policy # 6173.1**

All students will be issued a District approved iPad to ensure student access to remote curriculum.

## 1.5 Maintain Physical Distancing and Cohorting

The District remains committed to maintaining 6 ft. distance whenever possible. At a minimum, students will be physically distanced according to the CDC/NJDOH guidelines which are currently:

- **Elementary Schools: (Low, Moderate, & High-Risk Transmission Levels):** Recommend full in-person instruction with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students maintained in classrooms with strict adherence to mask-wearing in Low, Moderate, & High-Risk Levels.
- **Secondary Schools (Low and Moderate Risk Transmission Levels):** Recommend full in-person instruction with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students maintained in classrooms with strict adherence to mask-wearing in Low and Moderate Risk Levels.
- **Secondary Schools (High-Risk Transmission Levels):** While in High-Risk Level, consider in person instruction if able to maximize physical distancing of 6 feet or more. Recommend 6 feet of physical distancing between students to the maximum extent practicable with strict adherence to mask-wearing.

## 1.6 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

1. Hand sanitizing stations have been installed in hallways, entrances/exits, lunch areas, and restrooms.
2. CDC recommendations on proper hand washing are posted throughout the schools.

## 1.7 Meals

Each school will provide parents with specific guidelines for their building.

- 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.
- For students learning Virtual on Quarantine, meals will be provided at a coordinated time once a week.

## 1.8 Transportation

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

- Masks must be worn by all passengers on buses, regardless of vaccination status per CDC's Federal Order.
- 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 CDC's guidance for bus transit operators.

## 1.9 Visitors

Visitors will be allowed into buildings by appointment only and will need to follow all rules set forth by the NJDOH. All visitors must wear a mask at all times.

## 2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

### 2.1 Limit 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

## **2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection:**

The Plainfield Public Schools will 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.

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 will clean and disinfect the spaces occupied by the person. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be re-opened for use.

## **2.3 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.

## **3. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

### **3.1 Parental Screening**

Parents/caregivers are 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 will strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff. Schools will also educate parents about the importance of monitoring symptoms and keeping children home while ill. PPSD will use existing outreach systems to provide reminders to staff and families to check for symptoms before leaving for school.

Parents should call their children's school nurse for any questions or concerns. Parents/caregivers must also update their contact information in Genesis. Persons identified as a contact must be available and willing to pick up the student who is not feeling well. Work numbers must also be listed for parents/caregivers in the event a phone usage is prohibited during parents' working hours.

### **3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

Plainfield Public Schools will ensure that procedures are in place to identify and respond to a student or staff member who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms. A designated area or room away from others to isolate individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school will be identified. The school nurse in each building will make the determination if a student or employee needs to be excluded or if testing for COVID-19 is indicated.

#### **Exclusion**

Staff shall not report to work when sick. Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students and staff 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.

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

#### **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 will 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 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.
  - ill individuals who test positive should be reported to the Plainfield Health Department and contact tracing will begin.
  - ill individuals that test negative will be referred to a healthcare provider, who may consider additional COVID-19 testing.

The Plainfield Public Schools will notify The Plainfield Health Department:

- When they see an increase in the number of persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms.

**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.**



## **COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19**

Ill individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result or in accordance with the NJDOH guidelines. 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.

## **COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts**

Excluded individuals who are close contacts of staff or students who tested positive for COVID-19 may be considered for a reduced exclusion period based on community transmission levels as follows:

**High (orange) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days.**

**Moderate or Low (yellow or green) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days (or 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days)**

**Exposed close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms: Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested 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. (as of July 21, 2021).**

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.

#### **4. 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. Upon notification that a student has tested positive for COVID-19, the local district nurses in collaboration with the Health Department will investigate to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus. A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

- The Plainfield Public School District will implement contact tracing procedures and policies created by the NJDOH, CDC and the Plainfield Health Department.
- The school nurses will lead the contact tracing efforts occurring within the District in partnership the Plainfield Health Department.
- The District will maintain cohorts to the greatest extent possible in Grades PK-5. Schedules for Grades 6-8 will be available to the school nurses via Genesis in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.
- The school district shall assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.

- The school district shall ensure adequate information and training is provided to the nursing staff as necessary to enable district nurses to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them.
- The school district shall be responsible for providing notifications in a prompt and responsible manner.
- Quarantine requirements for students and staff will be followed per CDC, NJDOH and local procedures in place at the time of reopening.
- The District has established mechanisms for staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.
- **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.

- **Testing**

- **4.1 Diagnostic Testing**

At all levels of community transmission, The Plainfield Public Schools will work with our city health department to identify viral testing options in the community for the testing of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Results of all testing will be reported to public health authorities by the entity conducting the testing.

### **Remote Instruction/180-Day Requirement**

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.

Section (b) notes that where a 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 towards the district's 180-day requirement.

LEAs may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If an LEA is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the LEA should be prepared to 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 towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.2