

1648.11 THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

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. These recommendations are meant to assist school districts in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

The Board considered many factors as they prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and the school community.

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

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

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the school district’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas and included in corresponding Appendices:

- A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors
 - 1. Vaccination – See Appendix A.;
 - 2. Communication with the Local Health Department – See Appendix B.;



3. Mask Wearing Protocol – See Appendix C.;
 4. Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols – See Appendix D.;
 5. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols – See Appendix E.;
 6. Provision of Meals – See Appendix F.; and
 7. Transportation Protocols – See Appendix G.
- B. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow – See Appendix H.
- C. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members – See Appendix I.
- D. Contact Tracing – See Appendix J.
- E. Testing – See Appendix K.
- F. Student and Staff Member Travel – See Appendix L.

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 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



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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 toward the school district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The school district anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this Policy is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of this Policy. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy and corresponding Appendices shall be reviewed by the Superintendent who may consult with the Board Attorney, School Physician, and Board of Education, if appropriate. The Superintendent may revise the health and safety protocols included in any Appendix 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.

Adopted:



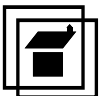
Appendix A

Vaccination

- Any staff vaccination requirements will adhere to the guidelines set forth by the New Jersey Department of Health or the New Jersey Department of Education.
- District staff, employees, and vendors will be asked to voluntarily provide information on status and proof of vaccination to the Department of Human Resources for the purpose of maintaining health records in the event of an exposure. Vaccination verification can be satisfied by providing:
 1. A copy of the staff member's vaccination card; or
 2. A district-made form that includes staff member's name, school official's name, dates of vaccination, and signatures.

All information will remain confidential as aligned with the maintenance of other health information.

- Staff that are unvaccinated or wish to not disclose vaccination status, will be subject to weekly testing as set forth by Governor Murphy's NJ Executive Order 253.
- Eligible students will be asked to voluntarily provide information on status and proof of vaccination to the school nurses, for the purpose of maintaining health records in the event of an exposure. All information will remain confidential as aligned with the maintenance of other health information.
- At this time, vaccinations are not required for students' attendance or participation in activities.
- In collaboration with county and township health officials, the District will inform parents and community members of vaccination availability and testing through our website, email blasts, and social media.



Appendix B

Communication with the Local Health Department

- The district will maintain regular communication with the Montgomery Township Health Department, the Somerset County Health Department, and our school physician. The district will notify the appropriate agencies in a timely manner.
- Updates and information will be shared with staff, parents, and the school community through the district's website, BOE meeting updates, email blasts, newsletters, social media and other means.
- The district will hold regularly scheduled meetings with the Montgomery Township Health Department.



Appendix C

Mask Wearing Protocol

Montgomery Township Schools will implement masking mandates that are in effect at the time school is in session. Currently, Executive Order #251 is in effect and requires the following:

- Masks will be required for all staff/students/visitors regardless of vaccination status to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our school community.
- Limited exceptions to this requirement will be applied as identified in Executive Order #251
- Students will not need to wear face masks when eating/drinking during lunch or snack times and will be seated socially distanced to minimize close contact concerns.
- In collaboration with the local health department, the district may enact mask-wearing protocols including, but not limited to recess, sporting events, and school-related activities.
- Masks will be required at all times on school buses, for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, as per federal requirements unless alternate arrangements have been made through the district due to medical necessity or student disability.



Appendix D Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

- Physical distancing of 3 feet between rows of desks will be implemented to the greatest extent possible in classrooms and lunchrooms in order to alleviate close contact concerns.
- The district maintains accurate and up-to-date seating charts on all district buses.
- As feasible, the district directs teachers to maintain seating charts.
- As feasible, maintain cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunch times, and while participating in extracurricular activities. Cohorting people who are fully vaccinated and people who are fully vaccinated into separate cohorts is not recommended.
- Arrival/Dismissal procedures will be implemented for each building to reduce close contact.
- Signs will be placed as needed to remind students/staff/visitors of the use of face coverings and social distancing
- Restroom procedures will be in place to minimize the number of students at a time.
- The District will limit nonessential visitors.
- Any additional use by outside organizations will be determined on a case-by-case basis by administration and the Board of Education. If use is granted, the outside organization will agree to follow all district guidelines pertaining to physical distancing, the use of masks, and sanitization.
- Staff members and other adults are required to maintain 6 feet of physical distance per the CDC definition of a close contact.



Appendix E

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

- The MTSD School District will promote the following behaviors that reduce the spread of contagious viruses such as COVID-19:
 - Alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations are set up at every building entrance, in every classroom/instructional space, and outside every restroom. Many elementary and some middle / high school rooms are also equipped with sinks. A combination of touch-free dispensers and manual pump bottles will be supplied and maintained by the schools.
 - Students and staff are encouraged to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer upon arriving to and leaving each instructional space.
 - Students and staff are encouraged to wash hands upon entering and exiting restrooms and the health office.
 - Signage is displayed throughout the school prompting and reminding staff and students to wash hands and use hand sanitizer.
 - Frequent hand washing is encouraged before and after snack/lunch/recess, using the restroom and any other activity that has students handling any equipment necessary for learning.
 - Proper respiratory etiquette will be reinforced through signage, teacher instruction, and reminders from the health office.



Appendix F

Provision of Meals

- The district will follow the protocols outlined in Appendices C and D for mask wearing and social distancing.
- The District will participate in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) program for the 2021-2022 school year which will allow all students to receive a free breakfast and a free lunch.
- Tables are cleaned between lunch periods.
- Food service areas will be frequently sanitized including wiping down counters, preparation areas, and serving areas.
- Food service staff are required to follow the same masking and screening procedures as other district staff. In addition, they will continue to wear the required personal protective equipment (e.g., hair nets, proper slip resistant footwear, gloves).



Appendix G

Transportation Protocols

- Masks will be required at all times on school buses, for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, as per federal requirements unless alternate arrangements have been made through the district due to medical necessity or student disability.
- Drivers are required to have their mask on at all times, unless a health concern is documented.
- Students will be provided with assigned seats.
- Physical distancing will be applied whenever feasible given bus capacity and number of students present.
- Bus seating charts will be updated regularly and shared with administrators and school nurses.
- Buses will be sanitized between routes and will be disinfected after the mid-day routes are completed. Additional disinfecting will be completed at the end of the daily routes to prepare for the next day. Proper disinfecting will consist of a disinfectant utilized on all touch points (rails, seatbelts, seats, etc.).
- Weather permitting - drivers will ensure as many windows as possible are open prior to student pick-up to provide additional ventilation.



Appendix H

Cleaning, Disinfecting and Airflow

- Effective sanitizing cleaning products are used to clean and disinfect rooms and surfaces.
- Routine cleaning and disinfection of common touchpoints and high traffic areas will occur throughout the day.
- Classrooms, lunchrooms, restrooms, common areas, and frequently touched surfaces are cleaned daily by the custodial staff, including but not limited to:
 - classroom desks and chairs
 - lunchroom tables and chairs
 - floors
 - door handles and push plates
 - handrails
 - light switches
 - telephones
 - computer stations
- All areas will be sanitized daily following our COVID-19 cleaning protocol strategies.
- Large “air scrubbing” High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters will be used in all cafeterias during serving times for increased air quality while the students are unmasked and eating & drinking.
- The custodial staff will disinfect all areas of the building that are affected in the event of an outbreak, utilizing all appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- The Montgomery Township School District’s Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems include controls that monitor and adjust fresh air flow in the buildings.
- Filters for the HVAC systems are cleaned and maintained four times per year, which is twice the frequency of the manufacturers' recommendations based on the type of equipment.



Appendix H

(Continued)

- Based on specific HVAC equipment, the highest rated Minimum Efficiency Reporting Values (MERV) filters will be utilized.
- As weather conditions permit, additional fresh airflow will be obtained through the use of open windows.



Appendix I

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

Screening Procedures for Students and Staff

- Adhering to the policies and protocols made available via the district's website, parents/guardians will screen and monitor children daily.
- Upon entering the buildings, staff will visually observe students for symptoms. Anyone observed displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be sent, with a mask, to the Health Office for assessment. The Health Office personnel will notify the affected staff when a student is being sent home due to complaint/observed COVID-19 symptoms.
- On a daily basis, staff members will self-screen for COVID-19 compatible symptoms and will inform the human resources department and building administration in the event that they display any symptoms.

Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff

- Students and staff should remain home if sick or exhibiting symptoms.
- Any student observed displaying COVID-19 symptoms will be sent to the Health Office for assessment.
- For screening and seclusion purposes during the school day, nurses will utilize Health Offices or an auxiliary nursing location staffed by health professionals. Students who are presenting symptoms of being sick will be screened and sent home as soon as possible if potential COVID-19 symptoms are identified. Each school will feature an isolation area where students adhere to social distancing protocols, wear appropriate PPE, and will be continuously monitored.



Appendix I (Continued)

- Parents and guardians will be immediately notified by a member/designee of the building's Pandemic Response Team to pick up the student within one hour of the call.
- Exclusion criteria as provided by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) will continue to be strictly enforced.
- Montgomery Township School District (MTSD) will update its screening protocol and procedures as new recommendations arise and will address these changes with the Montgomery Township Health Department as needed.

Exclusion

- Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis - The District will enforce a 10-day exclusion period from onset of symptoms or positive test result if asymptomatic.
 - The school nurse shall immediately notify the local health official and building principal of a confirmed case when a COVID-19 test is positive.
 - MTSD will immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case, while maintaining confidentiality.
- COVID-19 Exposure: Unvaccinated students/staff who are identified as close contacts will need to complete a 10-day isolation prior to their return. Unvaccinated students/staff who are identified as close contacts and receive a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test days 5-7 will be excluded for a minimum of 7 days' isolation (return on day 8) based on current CDC guidance.
- In the event that the District returns to a high (orange) level of community transmission, close contacts will be excluded for 14 days.
- FULLY vaccinated close contacts **do not** need to quarantine as long as they do not exhibit any symptoms.
- Unvaccinated students or staff who have household members experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and meet COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria should also be excluded from school. If the symptomatic household member tests positive for COVID-19, the student/staff member will need to quarantine.



Appendix J Contact Tracing

The Montgomery Township School District will collaborate with the local health department and our school nurses to educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing. All contact tracing will be in collaboration with our school nurse, district administration, and the Montgomery Township Health Department. All procedures will adhere to applicable federal and state law and regulations regarding privacy and the confidentiality of records.

Once a positive case is confirmed, the Contact Tracing Team (Overseen by the Director of Safety and Security and comprised of a building's school nurse, Vice Principal and/or additional designees) will:

- Ensure confidentiality is maintained.
- Confer with the Montgomery Township Department of Health if they were not the individual/agency that informed the school.
- Provide the Montgomery Township Department of Health the contact tracing information including, but not limited to:
 - Bus lists
 - Class lists
 - Sports team list
 - Club/activity member list
 - Related Services/Academic Support Groups
- A member of the Montgomery Township School District's Pandemic Response Team/Montgomery Township Public Health Contact Tracers will make the phone calls to those individuals identified.
- The school community will be alerted as determined by the Montgomery Township Health Department.
- If a COVID positive staff member case is confirmed, contact tracing will be conducted by the Director of Safety and Security in collaboration with the Human Resources department.



Appendix K

Testing

Executive Order 253 requires eligible staff, contracted employees, vendors, volunteers, providers, and any other individuals working in the schools where regular visits to the schools are part of the individual's job duties, to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or be subject to routine COVID-19 testing.



Appendix L

Student and Staff Member Travel

- The district is following the [CDC Travel Guidelines](#).
- With regard to student travel, the days coinciding with the travel are unexcused absences. The resulting travel quarantine upon return from travel are considered excused absences and students will be provided asynchronous instruction while in quarantine.
- School nurses should be notified of any travel plans.
- Staff members should notify Human Resources of any travel plans and follow quarantine guidelines as outlined in the CDC Travel Guidelines.

