

# EAST RUTHERFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT SAFE RETURN TO INSTRUCTION PLAN

**UPDATED 6/22/22- APPROVED BY NJDOE 08/01/22**

## 1. Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

As of March 7, 2022, the state mandate requiring school universal masking expired, and East Rutherford School District determined that universal masking was no longer needed. In making this decision, a consultation was conducted with the LHD and school district medical personnel. However, masking is required in the following scenarios:

- During an active outbreak: During an outbreak or a general increase in cases, The District consults with its Local Health Department to determine whether short-term universal masking or masking in affected classrooms should be required to control the outbreak/increase in cases.
- After returning from isolation or quarantine: students and staff who return to school during days 6-10 of isolation or quarantine are required to mask.
- When illness occurs in school: students or staff who become ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in school should wear a mask until they leave the premises.

## 2. Physical distancing (e.g. including the use of cohorts/podding)

- Within classrooms, staff and students are expected to maintain 3 feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable. Combine this with masking for all individuals in high and very high COVID-19 transmission (CALI).
- 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.
- The CDC recommends a distance of at least 6 feet between students and teachers/staff and between teachers/staff who are not up to date with vaccinations in all settings. As feasible, we will maintain cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunch, and while participating in extracurricular activities.
- Cohorting people who are not up to date with vaccinations and people who are up to date with vaccinations into separate cohorts is not recommended. East Rutherford will ensure that cohorts are done equitably.

## 3. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Hand Sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) are placed in the following areas: In each classroom, at entrances and exits of buildings, near lunchrooms and toilets, for preschool classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, the district will prepare stations with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers and all students under 5 years of age will be closely monitored by staff when using hand sanitizers.
- Students will continue to clean hands in the following situations: Upon or before entering the school building, before snack and lunch, after snacks and lunch mainly if hands are sticky and greasy, after using the toilet, or an adult after assisting a child in using the bathroom, when re-entering the building after outside recess, after sneezing, wiping and blowing of the nose.
- Students are encouraged to bring their water bottles to school.
- The District has newly installed no-contact water fountains (bottles).

#### **4. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

- Frequently touched areas such as desks, chairs, door handles, handrails, kitchens, bathrooms, light switches, shared telephones, shared desktops, shared computer keyboards and mice, drinking fountains, school bus seats, and windows will be cleaned daily.
- The district will continue using no-touch foot pedal trash cans when there is a lid on the trash can or as necessary.
- With safety in mind, doors should be propped open to avoid frequent touching of handles.
- Disposable wipes are provided in ALL classrooms and offices so that commonly used areas such as keyboards etc. can be wiped down before use.
- Windows are kept open whenever possible to improve ventilation throughout the buildings.
- The district has increased the number of custodians at each building to provide increased cleaning and disinfection.
- Electrostatic sprayers are utilized for disinfecting purposes.

#### **5. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with state, local, territorial, or Tribal Health Departments**

- While the District no longer requires daily health screenings to be completed through the Genesis Parent Portal, we encourage parents to reference the symptoms checklist provided to monitor symptoms and report to the school if their child(ren) meets the criterion given on the checklist.
- East Rutherford continues to work with parents and local health authorities to ensure that every student tested positive is identified.
- Once parents/guardians confirm a positive result from the MD, contact is made to the local health department for guidance within 24 hours.
- If a staff member who has been working in a district building, or a student participating in an extracurricular activity, receives a positive COVID test result, it is reported to the DOE.
- The district follows the recommendations of the local health department in regards to appropriate measures to take. The district notifies anyone in close contact with the student once a form of confirmation is received.

#### **6. Diagnostic and screening testing**

- Students and staff members no longer need to complete the daily health survey before reporting to their assigned building.
- Parents of students and staff members are reminded to monitor their health and wellbeing and to report any symptoms immediately to the school nurse and main office staff.
- Staff traveling out of state and country must take a COVID19 test before re-entering school unless fully vaccinated (Proof of vaccination is required).
- Students/Staff are asked to leave or not enter the buildings if demonstrating 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.
- An isolation room is provided to isolate those who become ill.

#### **7. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible**

- The district continues to provide staff and parents/guardians with information regarding where vaccines may be obtained. This information is posted on the district nurse's webpage and the district website.
- The district works closely with local hospitals, pharmacies, and healthcare providers to disseminate appropriate vaccine information to staff and parents/guardians.
- The East Rutherford School District has partnered with Dr. Martha Sliowski at 42 Locust Avenue, Wallington, NJ, for any students, parents, or staff members interested in vaccinations. The Pfizer vaccine is administered at this location.

**8. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies**

- Our School District will continue providing free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), consistent with all health and safety guidelines.
- If students with disabilities cannot access the district reopening plan as designed, school teams facilitate individualized and alternative plans based on student needs, present levels of functioning, developmental levels, and student/parent input.
- Students with Disabilities follow the school routines with accommodations and modifications required per the IEP or impact of the student's disability. Related services are provided primarily through individual and small group sessions in a separate setting with staff wearing appropriate PPE.
- Special Education services will be provided as described in the student's current IEP to the maximum extent possible to maintain the safety of the student and staff. Parents continue to be partners in the planning for students with disabilities.

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

- Mental Health & Social Emotional Initiatives: The School Counselors, the Social worker, and School Psychologists who constitute our mobilized crisis recovery team provide emotional and psychological support as needed. In conjunction with pertinent outside providers, school counselors, the social worker, and School Psychologists co-facilitate staff training related to trauma, grief, school avoidance, etc.
- School counselors and district behaviorists consult with classroom teachers about student needs and develop classroom strategies to provide support as appropriate to the age and grade level.
- Our new Social Emotional initiative was launched and has been an area of focus for all District staff. Some goals are: Change or broaden faculty perspectives on SEL, change faculty expectations with SEL, identify and empower like-minded staff interested in change, commitment and consistency with the whole team and focus on all levels of stakeholders in the plan.

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

- Parents are provided a forum to give input at work sessions and public board meetings.

- The District's Safety Committee will meet soon to determine safety procedures for the 2022-2023 school year.
- The District will continue to provide professional development and training for staff members and continue to do so throughout the 2022-2023 school year.
- Furthermore, the Pandemic Response Teams/Committees consisting of multiple stakeholders will continue to meet regularly to keep all relevant stakeholders informed of the changes and upcoming plans of the district. This process will continue until the pandemic has subsided.

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**11. 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.**

- The plan is written in simple language using bullet points to delineate essential information.
- Subheadings, bold, and italics were utilized to highlight essential information.
- The plan is presented in Spanish as well for our Spanish-speaking parents.
- The plan will be translated into other languages as requested on a needs basis.

**12. Briefly describe any guidance, professional learning, and technical assistance opportunities the LEA makes available to its schools.**

- All staff district-wide will receive continuous training during monthly staff meetings.
- Parent sessions will be offered through our parent academies.