

Bergen County Special Services Safe Return to School Plan September, 2021

Introduction

The Bergen County Special Services Safe Return to School Plan describes the district's health and safety protocols for the opening of school in September, 2021. These protocols are based on recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) outlined in [The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#). All schools will be open for full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school.

BCSS Schools will follow all current health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-12 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and the Bergen County Health Department. As per the Road Forward document, schools should anticipate potential updates to the guidance prior to and over the course of the 2021-2022 school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become available.

1 Masks

- As per Governor Murphy's Executive Order No. 175, maintain a policy, as of the start of school in September 2021, requiring all to wear masks indoors. This would apply to all staff/students in BCSS & Host school programs.
- Revisit September mask policy on October 15, 2021 (1st benchmark) and discuss whether district should/can ease up on mask policy. If so, district nurses to track vaccination status of students and staff in their schools. Disclosure strictly voluntary.
- Once information regarding vaccinations has been obtained, look at Nov. 1 as the date on which mask wearing could be optional for fully vaccinated individuals. All students under the age of 12 would continue to be required to wear masks since unable to be vaccinated at this time.
- This is all dependent upon the conditions at the time of these benchmarks in conjunction with the recommendations of the BCDOH as well as updates from the CDC and the Governor's office.
- Masking outdoors is optional while maximizing social distancing

2. Distancing:

- 3 ft. distance or close to it with all wearing masks to start; after reassessment of masking at the Nov.1 benchmark, then possibly only the unvaccinated would need to wear mask, for vaccinated it would be optional
- Again, this is dependent upon the conditions at the time of these benchmarks in conjunction with the recommendations of the BCDOH

3. Facilities

- **Ventilation – Continue to maintain and check as per COVID protocols**
- **Cleaning protocols:**
 - Return to pre-COVID cleaning protocols, except for areas where a person has been sick or tested positive for COVID positive case, then COVID cleaning protocols apply

- Common areas should be cleaned more frequently especially in between cohort groups
- Checklists can be utilized as needed for common areas
- If a program requires additional protocols, due their specific student population, those can be included
- Custodians must be given cohort schedules for common areas so that in-between cleaning can be done
- Utilize signs to indicate whether or not an areas or room is ready to be occupied.
- Staff training on the transmittal of COVID to be done as part of orientation
- Each school will develop their protocols regarding common areas in conjunction with their Pandemic Response Teams
- Bathrooms try to limit to cohorts with flexibility
- Hallways – maintain dividing lines, social distancing, signage, etc. no need to change this
- Common areas: ADL, Gym, Cardio, Therapy Rms, Special Rms, Kiosks

4. Provision of Specials – (Music, Art)

- Prefer to do in-person as much as possible
- Where possible the cohorts would come to the “specials room”.
- Cleaning in between
- Some schools may need to do some in-person and some remote sessions

5. Handwashing & Respiratory Etiquette:

- All protocols remain the same

6. Cafeteria/Food Service

- **Continue with current protocols:**
 - No buffet/self-service options to start
 - Students eat outdoors within their cohorts when possible and/or in classrooms
 - Schools should begin to plan for a transition back to eating in commons areas, maybe starting with one group at a time.

7. Transportation

- Masks must be worn at all times
- 3 ft. distance on vehicles
- We had already revised our Transportation protocols to enable our EYP programs to engage in CBI, WBL and some Field Trips. Stacey P. had given us the numbers of occupants allowed based on the size of the vehicle and the distancing requirements in the spring
- Stacey P. revised numbers:
 - white Ford vans can fit 3 passengers, Dodge Caravan 1 driver, 1 passenger
 - 16 passenger buses 8 passengers
 - 24 passenger bus 10 passengers
 - 29 passenger bus can fit 12 passengers
 - Large Bus 22 passengers

8. Health Screenings

- Schools will continue student temperature checks to begin the school year.
- Parents will be reminded through correspondences of all COVID protocols regarding symptomatic students including the need for them to check for symptoms daily and to keep their child home if exhibiting even one symptom.
- Staff will continue the utilization of the staff daily health checklist to start the year.
- The need for temperature taking and the staff health checklist will be reviewed at our first benchmark date, October 15. After review of these procedures, their effectiveness and the COVID status in our schools and the community on 10/15, perhaps there could be recommendation to discontinue both around November 1.

9. Exclusion

- Parents should not send students to school when sick (have a single symptom(s) as outlined by NJDOH document
- If student displays a single symptom while in school, same protocol followed
 - Isolation
 - Exclusion
 - COVID testing
 - Any situation that warrants a test – DOH will be notified
- **Exclusion policies (per CDC & DOH guidelines) remain the same for one COVID symptom**
 - **Symptom: All apply regardless of vaccination status**
 - If symptom and not tested – 10 days quarantine and 24 hours fever free before return
 - If tested and negative with symptom improvement may return
 - If test positive remain out for 10 day quarantine and 24 hours fever free
 - **Close Contact:**
 - If close contact with no symptoms 10 days; may test day 5-7 and return on day 8 if negative result received (If Local status Low/Moderate)
 - If close contact with no symptoms 14 days (If local status High or above)
 - If close contact and fully vaccinated - no quarantine needed
 - If close contact and have symptoms refer to symptoms above
- District will have ongoing discussions with the NJDOH to see where county is heading with regard to COVID cases (e.g., low/moderate/high)
- District will provide a letter to program administrators to send out to parents/guardians prior to the start of the school year
- District will send out a letter to staff regarding policies prior to orientation
- Principals/supervisors will review all protocols with staff during the annual orientation in each school/program.

10. Contract Tracing

- All protocols remain in place
- Quarantine requirements outlined above
- BCSS nurses can inquire if student/staff are vaccinated & enter in district tracking mechanism as a starting point for collecting this information
- Technology to provide mechanism that gives edit privileges to nurses & viewing privileges to administrators
- NJIIS is available to nurses to as a resource to check immunizations for students; not 100 % reliable as some doctors don't enter COVID vaccination data

12. Visitors

- Limit visitors in the building, but can make exceptions as needed
- Allow for student evaluations/testing in our buildings follow COVID protocols
- Behaviorists to start offering home visits to families
- Ed Enterprises has protocols/safety measures staff follow when going to local districts and homes
- EE will forward those protocols to our administrators

13. Other Items

A. Remote Instruction

- Remote instruction will only be available for students with COVID related absences

B. Parent Letter

- A letter reviewing all protocols will go out to parents/families before the start of school
- Letter will be similar to the one sent last year but also include that “we will only offer remote instruction for COVID related absences” (e.g., COVID symptom or close contact).

C. Host Sites

- District will work with principals/supervisors on a case-by-case basis
- District awaiting final guidance from most host districts

D. Staff Notification

- Letter to all staff from the Superintendent before start of school
- A review of these protocols needs to be part of the Annual Building Level Orientation Meetings for staff which is scheduled in each school on either September 2nd or 3rd.

As we continue to monitor COVID rates in our schools & community and in conjunction with BCDOH we will adjust these protocols accordingly.