

Addendum to the Ewing Township School District's
Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen Schools

BOE Acknowledgement Updated: June 26, 2023

Overview

In July of 2020, the Board of Education approved a comprehensive school district reopening/reentry plan that detailed how the district would safely return students to school and provide high quality instruction during a public health crisis. That comprehensive plan was designed with the assistance of our district Return to School Transition Team and school-based Pandemic Response Teams. The plan was approved by the New Jersey Department of Education and guided our work as we provided high-quality instruction during the pandemic.

As the Ewing Schools ends the 2022-2023 school year, we note again that our "Return to School" plan is a "living document," and have amended our plan in accordance with the most recent guidance as the COVID-19 public health crisis has ended. We have worked with our stakeholders with relevance and knowledge, and consulted expert advisors, all while closely evaluating public health developments, in developing this addendum and our current practices.

The U.S. COVID-19 public health emergency declaration expired May 11, 2023.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations remain the best defense against COVID-19.

The Executive Order requiring all staff to be fully vaccinated or test weekly has been eliminated by the Governor in August 2022. Policy has been abolished.

Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines

(CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Update June 7, 2023)

- Everyone aged 6 years or older should get 1 updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date.
- Children aged 6 months-5 years may need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccine to be up to date, including at least 1 dose of updated Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, depending on the number of doses they've previously received at their age.
- COVID-19 vaccine recommendations will be updated as needed.

Testing

The Ewing Schools believes that testing combined with key mitigation strategies, can detect new cases to prevent outbreaks, reduce the risk of further transmission, and protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

COVID-19 Testing: What You Need to Know (CDC Updated May 11, 2023)

When you get tested:

- Make sure to test at the right time
- Choose the right type of test for your circumstance
- Follow test directions as recommended by FDA

If you do not, your test results may be less likely to be correctly indicate whether you have COVID-19 or not.

Testing after a COVID-19 exposure:

Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. Asymptomatic students and staff who were exposed to COVID-19 should continue to test and wear a mask for 10 days and wait at least 5 full days after exposure before taking a test.

Communication

The Ewing Schools and local health departments continue to maintain close communication with each other to provide information and share resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control measures.

Mask Wearing

Masks are not required.

Masking though does continue to be an important part of the layered prevention strategies central to the prevention of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and is recommended by CDC for all individuals (age 2 years and older), including in schools/ECE when COVID-19 community levels are high.

Wear a Mask to Protect Yourself and Others (NJDOE Update May 23, 2023)

- Masking is a critical public health tool and it is important to remember that any mask is better than no mask.
- Wear the most protective mask you can that fits well and that you will wear consistently.
- Wearing a high-quality mask along with vaccination, self-testing, and physical distancing, helps protect you and others by reducing the chance of spreading COVID-19.

The Ewing Schools will be prepared for the emergence of new variants or substantial waning immunity that could result in greater morbidity, mortality, and disruption, and require returning to additional mitigation measures.

Individuals (including parents/guardians) should make decisions to mask even when school/ECE policies may not require masking based on their specific situation (e.g., if they or their family members are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19).

Physical Distancing

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, as well as influenza and other respiratory viruses, minimizing crowded settings can help reduce transmission. Greater physical distances are more important when there is inadequate ventilation and in crowded indoor settings, especially in communities with high levels of circulating virus.

The Ewing Schools will continue to emphasize ventilation and preventing crowding during medium and high community levels.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

The Ewing Schools will teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

The Ewing Schools will maintain adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

Cafeteria

Meals offered in cafeterias or other group dining areas, resumed normal pre-pandemic operations.

For our free and reduced Federal lunch programs, it is highly encouraged that all eligible families fill out a free and reduced lunch application.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The Ewing Schools has a dedicated custodian and maintenance staff that works hard to make sure our schools are as clean and sanitary as possible. The district follows standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with EPA-registered products for use against SARS-CoV-2.

Transportation

When possible, we will open windows to increase airflow in buses and other transportation.

The district and contractors will strive to regularly clean high touch surfaces on school buses.

Screening

Staff and students are expected to screen themselves daily each and every day for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposure.

COVID Screening Form

Have you experienced any of the following symptoms that are not attributed to a chronic or known condition?

- * Cough
- * Sore throat
- * Muscle aches
- * Loss of smell or taste
- * Shortness of breath or Difficulty breathing
- * Nausea/Diarrhea

Yes No

Have you had close contact with or cared for someone who is currently sick?

Yes No

Have you or someone in your household, been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

Yes No

Is there any reason to believe anyone in your household may have COVID-19?

Yes No

Do you have a temperature above 100.4?

Yes No

If any indicator is checked, that individual should not report to school/work.

Parents/caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children.

The Ewing 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. The district will do the following:

Exclusion and Quarantining

Individuals regardless of vaccination status who test positive with confirmed COVID-19, and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who have not been tested and do not have an alternative diagnosis from their healthcare provider should:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days after the onset of symptoms or if asymptomatic after the positive test (day of symptoms is day 0; if asymptomatic, day the test was performed is day 0).
- If they have no symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days and are fever-free (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for 24 hours, they can leave their home and should;
 - Wear a mask when around others at home and in public (indoors and outdoors) for an additional (5) days. For these additional 5 days, schools/ECE should have a plan to ensure adequate distance during those activities (i.e., eating) when mask wearing is not possible. Time without a mask being worn should be kept to minimum possible.
 - On days 6-10, limit participation in extracurricular activities to only those activities where masks can be worn consistently and correctly or physical distancing can be established. Masks should be worn in school/ECE on days 6-10. Those students who are unable or unwilling to mask should stay home for the full 10 days and not return to school/ECE until day 11.

COVID-19 exclusion criteria for close contacts (quarantine) guidance:

Parents should not send students to school when sick or if identified as potentially being exposed to a COVID case.

When illness occurs in the school setting, children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be separated away from others until they can be sent home.

Extracurricular Activities

The Ewing Schools is committed to our extracurricular program, as we recognize the significant benefits they have on our student’s academic growth and social-emotional wellness.

Remote Instruction/180-Day Requirement

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, it is acknowledged that the Ewing 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. The Ewing Schools may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst 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 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.