

Saddle River School District - Wandell School
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August 26, 2021

RE: Health/Safety Guidance Update

Dear Wandell School Family,

On August 20, 2021, the NJDOE, NJDOH, CDC, and the Governor's Office issued new guidance for the Health and Safety for K-12 schools. Our administrative, support, and custodial staff have been very busy this summer getting the building and grounds ready for everyone. As you know, we still are dealing with after effects of the pandemic and as such must follow the state and local health protocols. We understand this is still a difficult situation to deal with, but we must comply with the mandates that are bestowed onto us. Enclosed are the specific guidelines we must follow as outlined in the [NJDOE The Road Forward 8.20.21](#) and CDC [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#). We anticipate potential updates to this guidance prior to the start of the new school year and will communicate necessary updates as soon as possible. As of now, we wanted to communicate this information to you so that you are aware of what guidelines we must follow. We thank you for your partnership and support. Please do not hesitate to contact us. For your convenience, below is a list of contact information for you.

Enjoy the rest of your summer,

Dr. Gina Cinotti

Dr. Gina Cinotti
Superintendent

Contact Information

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2021-22 Health & Safety Guidance As of August 26, 2021

The NJDOE and NJDOH released [The Road Forward](#) on August 20, 2021 which includes a range of strategies that school districts should consider implementing to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for fulltime in-person learning. The absence of one or more of the strategies outlined in this document does not preclude the reopening of a school facility for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff present. While the State is committed to a resumption of normalcy for next school year, we will continue to monitor the data and our decisions will be guided by science to ensure that we maintain safe and healthy school communities.

This guidance document is intended to supplant health and safety protocols outlined in Executive Order 175 and the Road Back. The document contains recommendations for public schools rather than mandatory standards, with the exception of the mandatory masking requirement for all individuals in public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools, per [Executive Order 251](#). Schools should anticipate potential updates to this guidance prior to the start of the new school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become available.

1. General Health & Safety Guidelines

a. Masks

i. Indoors

In alignment with recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, on August 6, 2021, Governor Murphy signed [Executive Order 251](#) which requires that all staff, students, and visitors wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status, in the indoor premises of school buildings. As outlined in the Executive Order, there are limited exceptions to this requirement (see full list below).

ii. Outdoors

In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. The CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.

iii. The most effective fabrics for cloth masks are tightly woven such as cotton and cotton blends, breathable, and in two or three fabric layers. Masks with exhalation valves or vents, those that use loosely woven fabrics, and ones that do not fit properly are not recommended. Masks should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled or damp/wet. Disposable face masks should be changed daily or when visibly soiled, damp or damaged. Adult and child sized masks are available to staff, students, and visitors in case a back-up mask is needed. Additionally, the district has clear masks that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face that may be considered in certain circumstances including for the teaching of students with disabilities, young students learning to read, or English language learners.

iv. [Appropriate and consistent use](#) of masks may be challenging for some individuals, however mask use is required for all individuals in indoor school settings with the following exceptions:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
- When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;

- When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face covering;
 - When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
 - When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
 - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- v. Further information on mask-wearing in schools can be found here: [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

*** As per Governor Murphy's [Executive Order 253](#) all all preschool to Grade 12 school personnel must either be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or be subject to COVID-19 testing at a minimum of one to two times per week by October 18, 2021. We will continue to comply with this mandate and adjust such compliance if the Order changes.

b. Social Distancing & Cohorting

- i. We have established policies/practices to implement structural interventions to promote social distancing and small group cohorting. During periods of low, moderate, or high community transmission, we will continue social distancing and other prevention measures. The guidance suggests :
- Within classrooms, maintain 3 feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable, while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students
 - 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 fully vaccinated in all settings.
 - 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.

c. Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

- i. Annually the School Nurse teaches and reinforces [handwashing](#) 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 can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- ii. Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue during those limited instances when the individual may be unmasked.
 - Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Assist/observe young children to ensure proper hand washing.

d. Student Lunches

- i. Lunch will be held in the student's grade level classroom
- ii. Recess will be in designated areas
- iii. The playground will be used sporadically and on a rotating basis
- iv. No Fuss Lunch is our food service provider coordinated by PAWS and they offer lunches to students at the expense of the parent. Go to www.nofusslunch.com and create an account. A flyer will be posted on our website when the portal has opened for orders.

e. Transportation

- i. [Masks must be worn by all passengers on buses](#), regardless of vaccination status per [CDC's](#) Federal Order

2. Cleaning, Disinfecting, & Airflow

a. Limit Use of Shared Supplies & Equipment

- i. All classrooms have 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 maybe clean/disinfect routinely and preferably between use.
- ii. We encourage hand hygiene practices between use of shared items.
- iii. We discourage use of shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected.

b. Cleaning & Disinfecting

- i. We will continue our strict 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, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.
 - 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 should clean and disinfect the spaces occupied by the person. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
 - Close off areas used by the person who is sick or positive and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) after the person has exited a space before cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC settings to increase air circulation in the area.
 - Use products from EPA List according to the instructions on the product label.
 - Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
- ii. The effectiveness of [alternative surface disinfection methods](#), such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been fully established. The use of such methods to clean and disinfect is discouraged at this time by the guidance noted in [The Road Forward](#). Additionally, the same guidance notes that in most cases, fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying is not recommended as a primary method of surface disinfection and has several safety risks to consider.

c. Improve Airflow

- i. The guidance we have received focuses on having fresh air flowing in and out of the building. Schools without ventilation units or outdated ventilation systems do not have this feature. Therefore, you will see the guidance suggests opening windows to bring in fresh air.

All stakeholders should be aware that our new HVAC system has a built-in DOAS system (Dedicated Outdoor Air System) which circulates fresh air in and out. All rooms are air conditioned and we have purchased a monthly maintenance system along with our annual maintenance system. Therefore, our ventilation system is ideal for keeping air flow at a maximum.

3. Screening, Exclusion, & Response to Symptomatic Students & Staff

a. Parent Screening

- i. We ask parents to monitor their children each morning and complete our [Daily Health Checklist](#). Students must have this form completed and signed by their parents to enter the building.
- ii. Staff/Students will also be required to have temperature screenings each morning before entering the building.

b. Response to Symptomatic Students & Staff

- i. Our Isolation Room (1N) will continue to be separate from the School Nurse's Office, so we can isolate individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school.

c. Exclusion

i. Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students 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 with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria

ii. 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. Staff/Students/Parents/ will be asked 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.
 - a. If [community transmission is low](#), ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#) to determine when they may return to school. 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.
 - b. If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if [community transmission is moderate or high](#), they should continue to be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.
- The School Nurse will send staff/students to get tested
 - a. Ill individuals who test positive should be reported to the local health department and contact investigation will begin.
 - b. Ill individuals that test negative should be referred to a healthcare provider, who may consider additional COVID-19 testing.
- The School Nurse will notify the local health department when students or staff:
 - a. Are ill and have potential COVID-19 exposure;
 - b. When they see an increase in the number of persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms.
 - c. Test positive for COVID-19 (when in-school testing is performed).
- When the School Nurse contacts the local health department, the following information must be prepared:
 - a. Contact information for the ill persons;

- b. The date the ill person developed symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19 (if known), and was last in the building;
 - c. Types of interactions (close contacts, length of contact) the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations;
 - d. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for ill person's close contacts in the school;
 - e. Vaccination status if known
 - f. Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.
- The School Nurse is encouraged to report weekly staff/student case counts to NJDOH through the Surveillance for Influenza and COVID-19 (SIC) Module in CDRSS.
 - a. Registration and training on the data elements to report, timelines, and instructions on using the surveillance module can be found at <https://cdrs.doh.state.nj.us/cdrss/common/cdrssTrainingNotes>

iii. Exclusion

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.
- 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.

Exception:

During periods of low community transmission, ill individuals excluded for COVID-19 compatible symptoms who are not tested and do not have a known COVID-19 exposure may follow NJDOH School Exclusion List to determine

when they may return to school.

The [COVID-19 Exclusion List](#) 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

CDC released guidance with options to shorten the [quarantine](#) time period following exposure to a confirmed positive case. While CDC and NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days as the preferred quarantine period– and thus the preferred school exclusion period – regardless of the community transmission level, it is recognized that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus. Additional information is described in [NJDOH quarantine guidance](#).

To that end, 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)

Schools serving medically complex or other high-risk individuals should use a 14-day exclusion period for the exclusion of these individuals or those who work closely with them when identified as close contacts in all levels of [community transmission](#).

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.

- 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 12 status at the time of presentation to care.

4. 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.

Wandell School may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If we are 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, Wandell School is 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

For full details and guidance on Remote Instruction, please see the [Emergency Virtual/Remote Instruction 21/22](#).

5. 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.

Per the CDC, close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

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

School staff should identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.

- As with any other communicable disease outbreak, schools will assist in identifying the close contacts within the school and communicating this information back to the local health department.
- With guidance from the local health department, schools will be responsible for notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.
- The local health department contact tracing team will notify and interview the close contacts identified by the school and reinforce the exclusion requirements.

6. Testing

Wandell School is in the process of gathering various local testing facilities. In the meantime, we suggest you work with your child's pediatrician or medical professional for official testing facilities.

At all levels of [community transmission](#), NJDOH recommends that schools work with their local health departments to identify rapid viral testing options in their community for the testing of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.