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Reopening Plan 2021-2022

Introduction

With the beginning of the school year only weeks away, our excitement continues to build as we diligently plan to welcome students and staff back to school in the safest, most practical way possible. The first day of school for all students is September 9, 2021. While we understand that everyone wants to return to a “normal” environment, unfortunately, we are not there yet. The most recent information on the COVID-19 virus and Delta variant warrants us to be especially mindful of health and safety protocols in place for the 2021-2022 school year.

Our Reopening Plan outlines the Fort Lee Public Schools’ COVID protocols for the 2021-2022 school year. We will continue to consult with the Fort Lee Health Department and rely on the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC - www.cdc.gov), the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH - www.nj.gov/health), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE - www.nj.gov/education) and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](http://www.aap.org) to make adjustments to our plan as needed.

Please note that our plan may fluctuate along a continuum with a fully normal school environment on one end of the continuum, followed by a minimally restrictive, moderately restrictive, and most restrictive environment at the opposite end of the continuum. A fully normal school environment represents what we experienced prior to the COVID-19 health emergency. The most restrictive environment represents a fully remote instructional model. A moderately restrictive environment would include a hybrid instructional model, with all of the health and safety protocols we implemented last school year. The Reopening Plan we are putting forward reflects a minimally restrictive environment. At this point, our plan is to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations with the implementation of safety measures that incorporate the most current COVID-19 health guidance. This plan remains fluid and the protocols listed below are subject to change at any time as a result of new information received from State and local health departments and the New Jersey Department of Education.

The protocols outlined in this plan are subject to change at any time as a result of new information received from the Center for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, State and local health departments, and the New Jersey Department of Education.

General Health and Safety Protocols

I. Masks and PPE

- A. As per Governor Murphy’s announcement on August 6, 2021, all students, staff, outside providers, and visitors will be required to wear masks inside of school buildings for the 2021-2022 academic school year regardless of vaccination status. Exceptions include:
 - 1. When doing so would inhibit the individual’s health
 - 2. When the individual is exposed to extreme heat
 - 3. When the individual has trouble breathing
 - 4. When a student has a documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Plan that precludes the use of a face covering
 - 5. When the individual is eating or drinking
 - 6. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity physical activity
 - 7. When a student, as part of music instruction, is playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering
- B. Individuals who utilize district owned or contracted buses are required to wear masks regardless of vaccination status as per the Governor’s mandate.
- C. Teachers and staff will demonstrate proper mask wearing for students.
- D. The “gaiter”, bandana type, and masks with ventilators are not acceptable types of face coverings and should not be worn to school.
- E. Teachers will identify times during the school day when students will be able to have a “mask break”.
- F. PPE will be provided:
 - 1. Cloth and disposable masks will be available for students, staff members, and outside providers.
 - 2. Nurses and health care assistants will be supplied with gowns, bonnets, and booties.

II. Vaccinations and Testing

- A. There is no requirement for vaccination by either the State of New Jersey or the Fort Lee Public Schools.
- B. There are different quarantine requirements depending on vaccination status. To learn more about these requirements, read Section V, “Isolation/Quarantine Protocols for COVID Exposure and Positive Test Results” below.
- C. There are multiple locations in our communities providing access to COVID tests and vaccines such as CVS, Walgreens, ACME Pharmacy, Royal Pharmacy, and STAR Pharmacy. Click this link for additional vaccination and testing sites in Fort Lee and neighboring communities: [Fort Lee Health Department COVID Testing and Vaccination Locations](#)
- D. Visit [COVID19.nj.gov](https://www.nj.gov/COVID19) to find additional testing sites based on your zip code and the types of tests each site offers.

III. Social Distancing and Daily Screening Procedures

- A. To the extent possible, a physical distance of 3 feet will be maintained between students.

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- B. Signage and markers will be used to promote social distancing in the halls, stairwells and cafeterias.
- C. Desk shields will be placed at each student's seating area in classrooms to promote social distancing and provide an additional barrier and layer of protection.
- D. Individuals will not be required to complete a temperature check when entering the school buildings.
- E. Individuals will not be required to complete a daily COVID symptom screener form. However, it is strongly recommended that individuals stay home when feeling ill.

IV. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- A. Education regarding proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette will continue during the 2021-2022 school year.
- B. Teachers and staff will provide students with opportunities to wash their hands at regular intervals (before eating, after using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/coughing, sneezing, etc).
- C. Soap and/or hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms, bathrooms, offices, and common areas.
- D. In limited cases, an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes, when there is no visible soiling of hands, will be used as alternatives to hand washing with soap and water under the supervision of a teacher.

V. Isolation/Quarantine Protocols for COVID Exposure and Positive Test Results

- A. As recommended in *The Road Forward*, students, staff members, and outside providers who experience symptoms related to COVID during the school day will be safely and respectfully isolated from others in a separate location from the nurse's office and monitored by a Healthcare Assistant.
 - B. There will be an air purifier in each isolation area in every school building.
 - C. In order to determine if a student, staff member, or outside provider is symptomatic, they must be experiencing:
 - 1. **TWO** of these COVID compatible symptoms: fever of 100 or greater, chills, shivers, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose
- OR**
- 2. **ONE** of these COVID compatible symptoms (difficulty breathing, loss of taste, loss of smell, cough, shortness of breath)
 - D. A "close-contact" refers to an individual who is within 6 feet of a COVID symptomatic or positive person for more than 15 minutes during a 24-hour period regardless of setting.

E. Refer to the chart below to determine the appropriate quarantine protocols students, staff members, and outside providers must follow depending on the individual's vaccination status.

If a student, staff member, or outside provider:	Unvaccinated	Vaccinated (14 days after receiving both doses of a two-shot vaccine, or 14 days after receiving a one-shot vaccine)
Exhibits COVID-like symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notify school nurse or direct supervisor of symptoms ● Recommended to see a healthcare provider and get tested for COVID ● NOTE: An alternate diagnosis without a negative COVID PCR test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID exclusion criteria ● Isolate while awaiting test results ● Submit negative test results to the school nurse before returning to school ● For Central Office or District employees, submit negative test results to the Director of Human Resources ● If COVID is not ruled out, isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms ● Must have improvement of symptoms that includes no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notify school nurse or direct supervisor of symptoms ● Recommended to see a healthcare provider and get tested for COVID ● NOTE: An alternate diagnosis without a negative COVID PCR test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID exclusion criteria ● Isolate while awaiting test results ● Submit negative test results to the school nurse before returning to school ● For Central Office or District employees, submit negative test results to the Director of Human Resources ● If COVID is not ruled out, isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms ● Must have improvement of symptoms that includes no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
Tests positive for COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notify school nurse or direct supervisor of the test result ● Isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or the date of the positive test if no symptoms are present ● Must be symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Notify school nurse or direct supervisor of the test result ● Isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or the date of the positive test if no symptoms are present ● Must be symptom free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications
Is a close-contact of someone who tests-positive for COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarantine for 14 days from the last known exposure date ● Follow isolation protocols if COVID compatible symptoms develop ● NOTE: In Moderate to Low COVID community transmission levels and when a 14-day quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarantine not required as long as the individual remains asymptomatic ● Recommended to see a healthcare provider and get tested within 3-5 days of exposure. ● Mask for 14 days following

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	causes a significant burden, quarantine may be shortened to 10 days without testing or to 7 days if a negative PCR test is produced that was collected between days 5 and 7 following exposure. Individuals should mask and physically distance up to 14 days	<p>exposure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow isolation protocols for vaccinated individuals if COVID compatible symptoms develop or test is positive
Is a close-contact of a household member who tests positive for COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine for 24 days from the onset of the symptoms of the household member who tested positive or from the test date if the household member is asymptomatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required as long as the individual remains asymptomatic Monitor for symptoms of COVID for 14 days following the last exposure date Follow procedures for vaccinated individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID if symptoms develop
Is a close-contact of a household member exhibiting COVID compatible symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine until symptomatic household member receives a negative test result If the symptomatic household member tests positive or does not test, follow the quarantine time frame above for household close contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required as long as the individual remains asymptomatic Monitor for symptoms of COVID for 14 days following the last exposure date Follow procedures for vaccinated individuals who exhibit symptoms of COVID if symptoms develop
Is exposed within 90 days of recovery from COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required as long as individual remains asymptomatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required as long as individual remains asymptomatic
Is a secondary contact of someone who tested positive for COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required Monitor and report any symptoms that develop to the school nurse or direct supervisor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine is not required Monitor and report any symptoms that develop to the school nurse or direct supervisor

VI. Contact Tracing

- A. The building principal and the school nurse must be notified as soon as possible if a student, staff member, or outside provider tests positive for COVID, was exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID, or is experiencing COVID compatible symptoms.
- B. The school nurse will conduct the contact tracing and notify all close-contacts in the school building.
- C. A “close-contact” is an individual who is within 6 feet of the symptomatic or positive person for more than 15 minutes during a 24-hour period regardless of setting.

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- D. Upon receipt of notification of a positive test result of a student, staff member, or outside provider, the school nurse and/or principal will contact the Fort Lee Health Department.

VII. Cleaning and Disinfection

- A. The District will continue to adhere to current required cleaning practices and procedures to maintain healthy facilities.
- B. All spaces will continue to be cleaned daily by the custodial department using electrostatic spray applicators and botanical disinfectant.
- C. High touch areas (i.e. railings and door handles) will be cleaned periodically throughout the day.
- D. Each classroom and office will be supplied and replenished when needed with the following:
 - 1. Peroxide wipes
 - 2. Botanical disinfectant
 - 3. Hand sanitizer
 - 4. Paper towels

VIII. Transportation

- A. Bus companies have been informed about recommended guidelines to follow by the NJ Department of Education and CDC. These include the following:
 - 1. Bus personnel are required to wear masks
 - 2. Bus drivers and aides will be reminded to wash their hands frequently
 - 3. Bus companies are required to clean and sanitize their buses
 - 4. Students will be required to wear masks during their bus ride
- B. All buses will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- C. Before the start of the school year, bus drivers will be trained on how to properly spray/wipe down areas with disinfectant once students exit the bus.
- D. Eating and drinking will not be permitted on buses.
- E. Bus drivers will be supplied with hand sanitizer as well as disposable gloves, peroxide wipes, botanical disinfectant, and paper towels to clean in between bus routes.
- F. A paraprofessional will accompany the bus driver on each bus to serve as additional supervision and assist students with mask wearing on buses.
- G. Windows will be open during bus routes to provide ventilation, weather permitting.
- H. Siblings will be seated together on buses where possible.
- I. Students will be assigned seats on buses.

IX. Facilities

- A. Touchless faucets will be installed in all bathrooms by the end of August.
- B. Automatic flushometers will be installed for all toilets and urinals by the end of August.

X. Ventilation and Improving Air Flow

- A. In order to maintain appropriate air quality standards, univent filters will be changed quarterly.
- B. Filters for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

- C. Air purification devices, known as iWave units, will be installed in all school buildings including all classrooms, small group instruction rooms, offices, and hallways to implement a layered approach to improving air quality in our facilities.

Travel

I. Travel Advisory

- A. As of May 17, 2021, New Jersey's travel advisory is no longer in effect. The CDC, however, has quarantine recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers that the District will follow. Please refer to the chart below for more detailed information.

II. Quarantine Protocols After Travel

- A. Domestic Travel as per the CDC and in consultation with the Fort Lee Health Department

NOTE: As per the New Jersey Department of Health, domestic travel is defined as travel lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories other than contiguous states (i.e., Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware).

Unvaccinated	Vaccinated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel. ● Quarantine for a full 7 days after travel. ● Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days. ● If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected. ● If you don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel. ● If COVID compatible symptoms develop, follow isolation protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quarantine is not required. ● Self-monitor for COVID-like symptoms. ● If COVID compatible symptoms develop, follow isolation protocols.

- B. International Travel as per the CDC

Unvaccinated	Vaccinated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel. ● Quarantine for a full 7 days after travel. ● Even if you test negative, stay home and self-quarantine for the full 7 days. ● If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected. ● If you don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel. ● If COVID compatible symptoms develop, follow isolation protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel. ● If your test is negative, self-monitor for COVID symptoms. ● If COVID compatible symptoms develop, follow isolation protocols. ● If your test is positive, isolate yourself to protect others from getting infected. ● Vaccinated individuals do not need to await test results to return to school or work.

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Instruction and Program

I. Schedules and Attendance

- A. Students will return to school for their regular full-day instructional program in September, with all traditional bell schedules, programs, and extracurricular activities in place, provided that regulations do not prevent us from doing so.
- B. Unless otherwise instructed, students will report to their assigned classes at their respective school per the daily bell schedule and the approved school calendar for the 2021-2022 school year.
- C. Board of Education policies and regulations relative to attendance will remain in effect.

II. Classroom Practices

- A. Regular interactions that take place in a classroom (i.e. small group instruction, collaborative group work, laboratory activities) will take place during the school day.
- B. Teachers will continue to post assignments, notices, and classroom materials on Google Classroom or Seesaw (Grades K-2 only).

III. Lunch

- A. Lunch will be administered in building cafeterias. Additional indoor spaces such as the media centers and classrooms will most likely be used to reduce the number of students in the cafeteria.
- B. At the middle and high schools, outdoor spaces may be reserved for eating, weather permitting.
- C. Markers will be used to signify where students should stand to maintain an appropriate distance while in line to select their lunch.
- D. Certified staff members will be assigned to locations to supervise students during lunch.
- E. Additional substitutes will be hired to supplement regular staff and provide adequate coverage.
- F. For grades K-6, lunch will be separated into sessions: one for eating and one for recess.
- G. Areas will be cleaned prior to a new group of students entering the eating area.
- H. Lunch will be served in individually wrapped containers.
- I. Students may drink from their personal water bottles as water fountains will remain closed.
- J. Filling stations will remain open for students to refill their water bottles.

IV. Remote Instruction and Remote Work

As per NJDOE guidance issued on August 11, 2021, “where an individual student, group of students, or entire class(es) are excluded from school due to meeting the NJDOH’s COVID exclusion criteria, LEA’s (Local Education Agency) are strongly encouraged to immediately provide virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction.” Therefore:

- A. There will not be an option to select remote instruction this school year.
- B. Remote instruction will ONLY be made available to students who are required to quarantine due to COVID exposure whether it be as a result of a positive test, or a close-contact situation.
- C. Remote instruction will commence after an individual positive COVID test result is provided to the school nurse, or consultation with the school nurse determines that a student is a close-contact of an individual who tested positive for COVID.

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- D. Remote instruction will be provided through a live-stream of lessons and activities.
- E. Remote instruction will be accessible via a unique link that will be provided to students. Each school building will establish their individual protocol for communicating with parents and students about remote instruction.
- F. Teachers will use a digital platform, i.e., Google Classroom or Seesaw to post assignments, instructional materials, and notices.
- G. Depending on their assignment, staff may be able to work remotely if they are required to quarantine due to COVID exposure.
- H. The District is prepared to transition to full-remote or a hybrid mode of instruction in the event a decision is made to close/quarantine a class/grade/school or the District due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the State or local health department.

Mental Health and Social-Emotional Wellness of Students and Staff

I. Programs and Services for Students

- A. All counseling services, including those that are offered before and after school will continue to be provided in the 2021-2022 school year.
- B. The administration and staff will continue to be available to assist individuals and families in need of referrals for mental health assessments and treatment.
- C. The guidance department will continue to conduct student wellness surveys for students in all grade levels.
- D. The District will implement a series of programs across all grade levels to address student mental health and wellness which will include the following:
 - 1. The Flow and Grow curriculum for grades K-4
 - 2. Reboot curriculum for grades K-8
 - 3. Kid Grit curriculum for identified students in grades 7 and 8
 - 4. Timothy Schumacher's Raising Resiliency Program for students in grades 7-12
 - 5. Dr. Michael Fowlin's presentation to the 10th grade class
 - 6. Additional assemblies will occur in all school buildings focusing on various mental health topics, social-emotional wellness, positive affirmation, and character as well as leadership development.
- E. Training will be made available to staff members to assist with identifying and helping students who are experiencing mental health or addictions challenges or are in crisis.
- F. Our Student Assistance Coordinator (SAC) will be trained as an instructor in Teen Mental Health First Aid which will allow the District to provide additional staff members with this training in subsequent years.
- G. The Guidance Department will provide a parent portal of resources that will be accessible on our website.
- H. Trained staff are ready to assist. Please contact your school's principal for more information or to express a concern.

II. Programs and Services for Staff

The protocols outlined in this plan are subject to change at any time as a result of new information received from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Academy of Pediatrics, State and local health departments, and the New Jersey Department of Education.

- A.** To ease staff anxiety, each school will discuss concerns surrounding the start of the school year. The topics will include but are not limited to social distancing in classrooms, disinfecting plans, substitute process, COVID testing, a quarantine process, and reporting COVID 19 diagnosis.
- B.** Time and space will be provided for staff members to process traumatic events, re-establish connections with each other, and receive support to promote healing.
- C.** We will continue to identify mental and behavioral resources and encourage faculty and staff to use these services.
- D.** The following resources are always available to our staff members:
 - 1. Free access to headspace App through Pure Edge <http://go.headspace.com/pureedge/>
 - 2. Free access to on demand educator focused stress relief webinars through Pure Edge
<https://pureedgeinc.org/pure-community-webinars/#on-demand>
<https://pureedgeinc.org/mindful-mondays-3/>
<https://www.mindfulschools.org/back-to-school/>
- E.** Mental health and social-emotional wellness resources are also available to staff through the Human Resources department.