



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan) A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. Under the interim final requirements published in Volume 86, No. 76 of the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), an LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Pursuant to those requirements, **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.** The NJDOE intends to make LEA ARP ESSER Fund applications available in EWEG on May 24, 2021 and LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE via EWEG. To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE is providing the following template.

This template incorporates the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan. The questions in the template below will be included in the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG. LEAs will submit responses to the questions within the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG by June 24, 2021. The NJDOE hopes that this template will allow LEAs to effectively plan for that submission and to easily post the information to their websites as required by the ARP Act.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it becomes available.



## **Ventnor City Public Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services**

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*The Ventnor City Public Schools continues to closely monitor the current pandemic under the CDC guidelines as well as the guidelines set forth by the NJDOE and NJDOH. Therefore, the following plan is subject to modifications and revisions as guidelines are ever evolving.*

**LEA Name: Ventnor Public Schools**

**Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 05/25/2021**

**Date Revised (mm/dd/yyyy):12/6/2021**

### **1. Maintaining Health and Safety**

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

#### **A. Universal and correct wearing of masks**

On Friday, August 6, 2021 Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 251, which mandates the wearing of masks. The Executive Order states the following:  
a. All public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools (collectively “school districts”), must maintain a policy regarding mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in the following circumstances: **(If there is a medical condition, please notify your principal/ school nurse by 8/25/21 to provide documentation. No one will be permitted to enter the school without a mask if we do not have the documentation.)** School doctor may be consulted.

- Doing so would inhibit the student’s health.
  - The student is in extreme heat outdoors.
  - A student’s documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of face covering.
  - The student is under the age of two (2), due to the risk of suffocation.
  - During the period that a student is eating or drinking.
  - Face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g. face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time).
  - The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
  - Face coverings may be removed during gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain social distancing
  - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.
- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/CDC mask mandate until further guidelines are released. This is subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
  - All students, staff and visitors will be required to wear face coverings (unless it will inhibit the individual’s health – as specified by a medical doctor’s note) when entering school facilities and on school buses and school property. BOE Policy 5141.3
  - Students will be reminded not to touch their face covering.
  - Masks will continue to be provided for students who are unable to supply or need replacements
  - Signage posted around the building regarding proper mask wearing

## **B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)**

- *Students will be permitted to switch classes as needed. This will be accomplished with teacher supervision to maintain social distancing and avoid hallway congestion to the fullest extent possible.*
- *Students will proceed directly to their classroom upon arrival.*

- *Physical distancing (6 ft.) markings will be placed in areas of potential congestion*
- *Bathroom breaks may be scheduled to the extent possible to avoid crowding.*
- *Middle school students will be permitted to use their lockers with every other locker in use.*
- *It will not be possible to maintain physical distancing of 6 ft. in all classrooms. However, students and staff will maintain the furthest physical distancing possible in all classrooms.*
- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines regarding physical distancing. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
- Social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. Physical barriers between desks and at tables may be used as deemed appropriate.
- All instructional and non-instructional rooms in school and district facilities will comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.
- Signage posted around the building regarding social distancing

### **C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) will be:
  - In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer). At entrances and exits of buildings.
  - Near lunchrooms and toilets.
  - Children ages 5 and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
  - Classrooms that have existing handwashing stations will have soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
- Students will wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.
- Hand Sanitizer may be available upon entry to each school bus as well as entry to the building
- Instruction has been and will continue to be provided on respiratory etiquette
- BOE Policies 3510.2 and 5141.3

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

- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines until further guidelines are released. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
- School buildings, bathroom facilities, classrooms, cafeterias, playgrounds and school buses will be cleaned daily and during the day using EPA/FDA approved cleaning products.

- School personnel and vendors charged with cleaning schools and buses will be required to utilize approved materials and processes designated by the DOH and the Supervisor of Facilities.
- A daily schedule of cleaning, methodologies, cleaning checklists per the Procedural Manual, product lists and related documentation will be maintained by the Supervisor of Facilities and each building main office/lead custodian.
- All classrooms, school buses, cafeterias, gymnasiums, etc. will be cleaned daily utilizing FDA and EPA approved products and high touch areas (door handles, light switches, keyboards, bathrooms, playground equipment, etc.) will be cleaned more regularly throughout the day.
- Staff and Students are encouraged to partner with school cleaning personnel and utilize school provided and personal FDA and EPA approved products to clean individual bus seats, desks and chairs, bathroom/sink knobs, etc.
- The district will use traditional cleaning methods along with pump sprayers and misters to sanitize the schools and district equipment/materials.
- Classroom ventilation systems will be maintained and operated as per NJ guidelines; windows where applicable can be opened to facilitate additional air flow and classroom teachers may hold classes in outdoor spaces.
- BOE Policy 5141.2
- Improving ventilation- the district is currently replacing 39 classroom HVAC units with updated filtration. Replacements will continue according to the district five-year plan.

## **E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments**

**Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines until further guidelines are released. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**

### **Contact Tracing**

Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who come into contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19. Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and their contacts (people who may have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission. For COVID-19, this includes asking cases to isolate and contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily.

All procedures will adhere to applicable federal and state law and regulations regarding privacy and the confidentiality of records.

Contact tracing for COVID-19 typically involves:

- A. Interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone with whom they had close contact during the time they may have been infectious.
- B. Notifying contacts of their potential exposure.
- C. Referring contacts for testing.

- D. Monitoring contacts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- E. Connecting contacts with services they might need during the self-quarantine period.

To prevent the further spread of disease, COVID-19 contacts are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Contacts should monitor themselves by checking their temperature daily and watching for symptoms of COVID-19.

The school nurse shall consult with the local health department in the development, review and revision of the district contact tracing policy and procedures. The school nurse and the building principal are the designated staff liaisons responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components of the board's contact tracing policy.

The school nurse in consultation with the building principal shall establish measures for a system of open communication that allows staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.

A staff member shall immediately notify the principal and the school nurse when he/she observes symptoms consistent with COVID 19 or becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19. The school nurse shall immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality when the COVID-19 test is positive.

When the individual exhibits symptoms the school nurse will ensure that the student is taken to the designated isolation area. The nurse will examine the individual and may refer them for testing and treatment. A student exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 may be required to submit to a COVID 19 test. The school nurse shall require the certification of a physician that the student is contagion free before readmitting a student to school. The nurse shall report all students testing positive for COVID 19 to the health department. The health department shall conduct the contact tracing.

Symptoms of COVID 19 include:

- A. A fever of 100.4° F or greater.
- B. Cough.
- C. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- D. Chills.
- E. Repeated shaking with chills.
- F. Muscle pain.
- G. Headache.
- H. Sore throat.
- I. New loss of taste or smell.
- J. Fatigue.
- K. Congestion or runny nose.
- L. Nausea or vomiting;

## M. Diarrhea.

All school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school and district, shall be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease.

The school nurse or his or her designee shall make information available and/or conduct virtual information sessions to educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing. BOE Policy 5141.2, 5141.3

School nurses and administrators were offered contact tracing training provided by John Hopkins through Coursera in order to facilitate assistance to the Department of Health.

Atlantic County Health Department of Health nurses were specifically further trained in contact tracing and will conduct all contact tracing for Covid positive cases. The program they use is strictly confidential and secure. The Health Department investigates positive cases and interviews any parties that were in contact with the exposed person. The Health Department then notifies the exposed "contacts" without revealing infected persons identity. The Health Department provides the education and instruction e.g. self-quarantine x 14 days, etc.

A "close contact" is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more to an infected person during a 24-hour period in which the infected person is infectious.

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 the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.(updated 8/21 NJDOE The Road Back)

The labs notify the health department of positive Covid cases before the doctors notify the county. The doctors also notify the county of positive Covid cases. Per the Health Department's ongoing protocol regarding communicable disease, the Health Department nurses will continue to notify schools of disease/sickness, including cases of Covid reported in school districts. The Health Department may contact the school to investigate contacts with the assistance of the school if necessary.

## F. Diagnostic and screening testing

- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines until further guidelines are released. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
- Lists of available testing sites will be provided to families with symptomatic students
- Testing sites will be posted on the district website

- As test kits become more readily available, the district will assist families in need to ensure proper diagnostic testing
- The need for screening testing is minimized due to the daily screening completed by all individuals that enter the building. This is reviewed daily by the school nurses who act upon any responses necessary
- The District's COVID-19 screening tool will be distributed to students, faculty, and staff at the beginning of the school year. In addition, weekly reminders and social media posts will be shared with stakeholders to reenforce the District's self-screening expectations for unvaccinated individuals. Faculty and staff will continue to monitor students for any signs of illness and report any concerns to the High School's nurses.
- BOE Policy 5141.3

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

- Ventnor School District is participating in the State-sponsored COVID-19 testing program for unvaccinated faculty and staff. In addition, students and their families were sent information regarding opting-in to participate in the State-sponsored COVID-19 testing program.
- *The Ventnor City School District encourages all eligible students to get vaccinated for COVID-19, but understands that getting vaccinated is a personal decision and that individuals and families will make the decision based on what they believe is in their own best interest.*
- *The Ventnor City School District is asking all families (on behalf of their children) to complete the Vaccination Status survey.*
- **The Ventnor City School District will fully comply with the Executive Order 253 requiring vaccinations or weekly testing for all staff by the mandated deadline of October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**
- *A "Close contact" is anyone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 cumulative minutes over a 24 hour period while the positive person was infectious (2 days before the onset of symptoms or positive test result through 10 days after the onset of symptoms or positive test result).*
- *Fully vaccinated "close contacts" will not be excluded and do not require to self- quarantine if they do not develop COVID-19 symptoms. If they develop COVID-19 symptoms, vaccinated "close contacts" will be required to follow the most current guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health regarding exclusion criteria for self-quarantine and isolation.*
- *Unvaccinated "close contacts" and individuals with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (regardless of vaccination status) will be required to follow the most current guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health regarding exclusion criteria for self-quarantine and isolation.*
- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines until further guidelines are released. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
- Available vaccination centers have been emailed out to all staff weekly
- Coverage continues to be provided for staff members for vaccination appointments
- Once 12-17 year old approval was given, all families were emailed available vaccination center information



- Available vaccination centers have been posted on the school website
- Nurses continue to provide immunization information to parents and answer questions
- Once approval is given for those under 12, information will be provided to those families

## **G. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies**

- **Ventnor City Public Schools will continue to follow the NJDOE/ NJDOH/ CDC guidelines until further guidelines are released. The details are subject to regular changes to remain compliant.**
- **Ventnor City Public Schools partnered with AtlantiCare to host a vaccination clinic on 11/29/21 and 12/20/21 for students, faculty, staff, and community members.**
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies will be based on individual student needs in conjunction with Child Study Team
- Students are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.
  - Exceptions:
    - Doing so would inhibit the student's health.
    - The student is in extreme heat outdoors.
    - A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), precludes the use of face covering.
    - The student is under the age of two (2), due to the risk of suffocation.
    - During the period that a student is eating or drinking.
    - Face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance (e.g. face coverings should not be worn by Pre-K students during nap time).
    - The student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
    - Face coverings may be removed during gym and music classes when individuals are in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance.
    - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

## 2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services. (1000 character limit)

- Free breakfast and lunch will be provided through June 2022.
- Summer school will be provided to students recommended based on district collected data as well as teacher recommendation for students exiting grades K-8
- Based on identified needs, staffing will be increased to provide additional reading intervention, class size reduction for social distancing, additional basic skills support
- Through a contracted service, mental health and social emotional learning supports will be provided through professional development for staff as well as coaching and turnkey training. Staff SEL and mental health will be provided through that avenue
- Food Services will provide summer food as take-home lunches for summer school and food pick up for families in need. All meals will be free of charge for 21-22 school year.
- Community food bank and food distribution sites will be available to families on the school website/social media and through school guidance counselors

## 3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment into account in the development of its plan. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)

- Notification will be provided that the updated reopening plan is posted on the school website.
- Ventnor City Public Schools have been open since September 2020 (A/B cohort hybrid- 2 days in, 3 days remote; those identified in need of 4 days in person, one remote began September 2020), January 2021 began grade band phasing in of all students 4 full days, one remote (all grades in person 4 days, one remote as of March 2021). The public comment on our reopening plan started in July 2020. The details outlined above have evolved from each plan and adjustment based on ever changing guidelines and public input.
- Reopening committee meetings were held on 7/21/2020 and 7/22/2020.
- Presentation of the reopening committee plans were presented at the 8/6/2020 BOE meeting. At that time public comment was invited, questions answered. Questions were also accepted at [questions@veccnj.org](mailto:questions@veccnj.org) after the BOE meeting. Responses to emails and BOE questions were posted on school website in an FAQ
- Expanded reopening planning was presented at the 2/24/2021 BOE meeting. At that time public comment was invited, questions answered.

- The District sought public comment **on updates and revisions to** this plan by sending the plan to all stakeholders through the District's messaging system and provided an email address for stakeholders to forward questions, concerns, and comments. The plan was also posted to the District's website with an email address for stakeholders to forward questions, concerns, and comments.
- All reopening plans listed on district website.

B. 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. (1000 character limit)

- Reopening plan has been posted on the school website in English and Spanish and available to be translated to other languages with Microsoft Translator.
- Parent emails regarding reopening presented in English and Spanish
- Available on school website and ClassDojo which have translation programs to accommodate multiple languages
- Translator available to answer parent and community questions.
- Upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, an alternative format accessible to that parent will be provided.