



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA (Local Education Agencies) that receives ARP ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) 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 (Local Education Agencies) must submit to the NJDOE (New Jersey Department of Education) 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 (Electronic Web Enabled Grants) 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that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.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 (Centers for Disease Control) 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: 05/25/2021**

**Date Revised:12/14/22**

### **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**

*Face masks are optional for all staff and students effective 3/7/22.*

#### *Update BOE policy 5141.10*

*Any face covering requirement shall comport with the mandates of any Federal directive, executive order of the Governor, administrative order of the State Director of Emergency Management, or order of a state, county or local health department having jurisdiction over the school district with the goal of protecting the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors on district premises.*

*The board acknowledges the extraordinary circumstances arising from the global COVID-19 pandemic and that the response to those circumstances warranted unprecedented actions by federal, state, and local authorities. On March 6, 2021, the Governor of New Jersey issued Executive Order 251 which mandated the maintenance of a policy regarding the mandatory use of face covering by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portions of school district premises, which mandate expired on March 7, 2022. The board further acknowledges that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New Jersey Department of Health and the New Jersey Department of Education have issued guidance which informs this policy. As such, the scope of this policy is intended to address those circumstances and, if necessary, similar future events. Accordingly, the board hereby directs the chief school administrator to:*

- A. Remain informed of CDC, New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) guidance regarding mitigation strategies and recommendations;*
- B. Monitor local COVID-19 conditions through the local or county health department;*
- C. Consult with local health officials regarding the need to reimplement mitigation strategies;*
- D. Report to board when changing conditions indicate that there may be a risk of an outbreak in any of the district schools; and*
- E. Report to the board before district conditions require reimplementation of universal face covering or other social distancing measures.*
  - For students who opt to wear masks
    - 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.*
- *Bathroom breaks may be scheduled to the extent possible to avoid crowding.*
- *Middle school students will be permitted to use their lockers*
- **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.**

#### **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 office/lead custodian.
- All classrooms, school buses, cafeterias, gymnasiums, etc. will be cleaned daily utilizing FDA (Food and Drug Administration) 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 (New Jersey) 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- definitions and details regarding steps to follow please refer to NJDOE and NJDOH guidelines

## **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
- district will provide tests for symptomatic students and close contacts to assist-families in need to ensure proper diagnostic testing
- BOE Policy 5141.3

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

- *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 asked all families (on behalf of their children) to complete the Vaccination Status survey. 21-22*
- **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.**
- Nurses continue to provide immunization information to parents and answer questions

## 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 five and up, 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
- *If face coverings are mandated or required by the district*  
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 covering 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 (Social Emotional Learning) 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 the 21-22 school year. Breakfast will be available July 2022.
- 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 comments 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 (Frequently Asked Questions)
- 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.
- Public comment portion of the Ventnor Board of Education meetings are available for community to comment on plan

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, 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.