

# THE ROAD FORWARD

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## **The Road Forward Remote Instruction Plan**

### **Bethlehem Township School District Board of Education**

**Note:**

As of August 10, 2021, the only mandatory requirements are included in Appendix C – Mask Wearing Protocol and Appendix G – Transportation Protocols. The school district should anticipate potential updates to The Road Forward Guidance as additional guidance becomes available.

# Bethlehem Township School District

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## Fall 2021

### 1648.11 THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Board of Education plans to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. In June 2021, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) worked collaboratively to develop guidance, The Road Forward – Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year (The Road Forward).

The Road Forward replaces the mandatory anticipated minimum standards outlined in the NJDOE’s “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” (June 2020) and provides a range of recommendations rather than mandatory standards. These recommendations are meant to assist school districts in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

The Board considered many factors as they prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and the school community.

For the purpose of this Policy, “Order” shall mean any Governor of New Jersey Executive Order, New Jersey State Agency mandate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, New Jersey statute, or administrative code requiring compliance by the school district.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop health and safety protocols. The Board will consider all recommended Orders and comply with all mandatory Orders when developing health and safety protocols and reviewing them periodically.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the school district’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas and included in corresponding Appendices:

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### The Road Forward COVID-19 – Health and Safety

- A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors
  - 1. Vaccination – See Appendix A.;
  - 2. Communication with the Local Health Department – See Appendix B.;
  - 3. Mask Wearing Protocol – See Appendix C.;
  - 4. Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols – See Appendix D.;
  - 5. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols – See Appendix E.;
  - 6. Provision of Meals – See Appendix F.; and
  - 7. Transportation Protocols – See Appendix G.
- B. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow – See Appendix H.
- C. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members – See Appendix I.
- D. Contact Tracing – See Appendix J.
- E. Testing – See Appendix K.
- F. Student and Staff Member Travel – See Appendix L.

The absence of one or more of the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward and/or in the school district's health and safety protocols will not prevent the reopening of the school(s) in the district for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff members present.

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The Road Forward COVID-19 –Health and Safety

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. N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(b) indicates when a school 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 toward the school district's 180-day requirement.

The school district may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases among 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 possible exposure to COVID-19, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the school district may 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 toward the school district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The school district anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this Policy is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of this Policy. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy and corresponding Appendices shall be reviewed by the Superintendent with the Board Attorney, School Physician, and Board of Education, if appropriate. The Superintendent may revise the health and safety protocols included in any Appendix as necessary and appropriate. All students, parents, and staff members will be notified of any changes to school district-developed protocols implemented as a result of this Policy, as appropriate.

- Quarantined students will be provided with a school issued iPad for instruction.
- Students will participate in live-streaming for the grade 5-8 for daily instruction.
- PreK- 4 students will receive daily virtual Home Instruction with a certified teacher.

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## Appendix A

### Vaccination

#### 1648.13 SCHOOL EMPLOYEE VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with Executive Order No. 253 signed by the Governor of New Jersey on August 23, 2021, the Board shall adopt and maintain a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at a minimum of one to two times each week.

This requirement shall take effect on October 18, 2021, at which time any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof to the school district that they are fully vaccinated must submit to COVID-19 testing at a minimum of one to two times each week on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

For purposes of Executive Order 253 and this Policy, “covered workers” shall include all individuals employed by the Board of Education, both full and part-time, including, but not limited to, administrators; teachers; educational support professionals; individuals providing food, custodial, and administrative support services; substitute teachers, whether employed directly by the Board of Education or otherwise contracted; contractors; providers; and any other individuals performing work in the school district whose job duties require them to make regular visits to the school district, including volunteers. Covered workers do not include individuals who visit the school district only to provide one-time or limited duration repairs, services, or construction.

A covered worker shall be considered “fully vaccinated” for COVID-19 two weeks or more after they have received the second dose in a two-dose series or two weeks or more after they have received a single-dose vaccine. Individuals will only be considered fully vaccinated after they have received a COVID-19 vaccine that is currently authorized for Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or the World Health Organization (WHO), or that are approved for use by the same.

Workers who are not fully vaccinated, or for whom vaccination status is unknown, or who have not provided sufficient proof of documentation, shall be considered unvaccinated in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 253.

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School Employee Vaccination Requirements

Covered workers shall demonstrate proof of full vaccination status by presenting any of the following documents if they list COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for EUA by the FDA or the WHO, or that are approved for use by the same, along with an administration date for each dose:

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Card issued to the vaccine recipient by the vaccination site, or an electronic or physical copy of the same;
2. Official record from the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS) or other State immunization registry;
3. A record from a health care provider's portal/medical record system on official letterhead signed by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, registered nurse, or pharmacist;
4. A military immunization or health record from the United States Armed Forces; or
5. Docket mobile phone application record or any State specific application that produces a digital health record.

The Board of Education's collection of vaccination information from covered workers shall comport with all Federal and State laws, including, but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, that regulate the collection and storage of that information.

To satisfy the testing requirement of Executive Order 253 and this Policy, an unvaccinated covered worker must undergo screening testing at a minimum of one to two times each week, to be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.

An unvaccinated covered worker is required to submit proof of a COVID-19 test. The unvaccinated covered worker may choose either antigen or molecular tests that have EUA by the FDA or are operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

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Where a Board of Education provides the unvaccinated covered worker with on-site COVID-19 test(s), the school district may similarly elect to administer or provide access to either an antigen or molecular test.

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School Employee Vaccination Requirements

If the covered worker is not working on-site in the school district during a week when testing would otherwise be required, the Superintendent or designee may not require the worker to submit to testing for that week. This requirement shall not supplant any requirement imposed by the Board of Education regarding diagnostic testing of symptomatic workers or screening testing of vaccinated workers.

The Board of Education shall track test results required by Executive Order 253 and must report those results to the local public health department.

## Appendix B

### Communication with the Local Health Department

- The district will follow all Department of Education and Department of Health guidelines.
- The school nurses will report all reported positive COVID-19 cases of staff and students to the Hunterdon County Health Department,.
- School nurses will follow all guidelines and guidance for contact tracing from the New Jersey Department of Health.

## Appendix C

### Mask Wearing Protocol

- Students and staff will follow requirements of New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) regarding mask wearing for bus, classroom, hallways, cafeteria and outdoors.
- Teachers and the school nurse will periodically review proper mask wearing with students.



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## Appendix D

### Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

- Students and staff will be physically distanced (three feet) as per NJDOH and NJDOE requirements on busses and in classrooms, lunchrooms, lunch room area, therapy rooms, hallways, and recess.
- Alternate classroom spaces and alternate cafeteria spaces will be used, if necessary.
- Plastic barriers may be used in other one-to-one and small group encounters.
- If a student needs to travel to a different room that area will have been sanitized.

## Appendix E

### Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

- Disinfectant and wipes will be available in every room and office.
- Hand sanitizing stations using a solution of at least 60% alcohol will be in each classroom and in hallways.
- Students and staff will be asked to wash their hands upon arrival for at least 20 seconds and at regular intervals including after eating, after re-entering a room, after using a restroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Teachers and the school nurse will review proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette with students periodically.
- Classroom sinks and sanitizing stations will be continually inspected.
- Existing signage will be updated if worn.

## Appendix F

### Provision of Meals

- The district will follow all mandates by the Department of Education and the Department of Health
- Lunch will be offered to all students at no cost via the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands before and after meals. In addition hand sanitizer will be provided upon entry and dismissal from cafeteria.

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## **Appendix F - continued**

- Maschio's will continue to be our Food Service Provider. They will frequently sanitize areas, and wear approved PPE.
- Meals will be pre-bagged or boxed for easy handling.
- Students may bring lunch from home.
- Students will be spaced 3 feet apart and plastic dividers will be used whenever possible.

## **Appendix G**

### **Transportation Protocols**

- Students and drivers are required to wear masks on school buses
- Students will be separated 3 feet apart to the maximum extent possible

## **Appendix H**

### **Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow**

- Custodial schedules will continue to be adjusted to enhance cleaning in all areas while students and staff are in the building and out of the building.
- Objects touched often will be cleaned and sanitized at least daily.
- Janitorial cleaning checklists will continue to be used.
- An electrostatic sprayer in addition to manual cleaning using CDC and EPA recommended cleaning and disinfecting products and methods will continue to be used to sanitize student and staff contact areas daily, in and outside the building.
- Checklists will be used to assure completeness
- Air purifiers will be utilized in all classrooms and office spaces
- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned at regular intervals on a rotating schedule.
- Water fountains will remain shut down and students will be allowed to have water bottles in their possession.
- All classrooms will have doors open. Windows will also remain open, when possible.
- The HVAC maintenance plan will continue with filters being changed regularly.
- Room air-conditioners will be installed wherever possible.

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## Appendix I

### Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

- Although the NJDOE Guidance does not include any “anticipated minimum standards” for contact tracing, all school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee should utilize information provided by State, county, and local officials regarding the role of contact tracing.
- The school nurse will attend Hunterdon County Department of Health and Hunterdon County School Nurses’ Association meetings.
- The school nurse will adhere to annual diagnostic and screening testing as required by the NJDOH.
- School officials will engage the expertise of their school nurses to determine the necessity and extent of contact tracing.
- In the event of a positive COVID-19 exposure, the school nurse will conduct contact tracing based on guidance from the Hunterdon Department of Health, CDC Guidelines and District policies.
- Students and staff identified as close contacts and unvaccinated will quarantine as per guidance from health department.
- COVID -19 testing is strongly encouraged to prevent a lengthy quarantine period.
- If a negative test result is received after 5-7 days after exposure, the student or staff member can return on day 8.
- If no test is conducted and student or staff is asymptomatic, they may return after 10 days.
- Quarantining specifics depend on the COVID activity levels and public health information which is subject to change.

## Appendix J

### Contact Tracing

- Contact tracing will be conducted by school nurse based on close contacts within 3 feet of exposure and based on public health recommendations.
- Parents of identified students will be called to pick up students and encouraged to get COVID-19 testing after 5-7 days.
- Vaccinated students or staff do not have to quarantine as per district policy and CDC guidance when masks are worn consistently and properly.

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## Appendix K

### Testing

- To satisfy the testing requirement of Executive Order 253 and District Policy 1648.13, an unvaccinated covered worker must undergo screening testing at a minimum of one time each week, to be determined by the Superintendent of Schools.
- An unvaccinated covered worker is required to submit proof of a COVID-19 test. The unvaccinated covered worker may choose either antigen or molecular tests that have EUA by the FDA or are operating per the Laboratory Developed Test requirements by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.
- The district offers weekly COVID-19 testing conducted by Mirimus, Inc for unvaccinated staff.
- The school nurse will provide families and staff members the surrounding pharmacies or locations where COVID-19 tests can be obtained/administered.

## Appendix L

### Student and Staff Member Travel

- The district will follow mandates by the Department of Education, Department of Health and the CDC.
- Out of state travel does not require quarantining or testing at this time.
- Travel outside of the United States requires a negative COVID-19 test upon return to school.