

**Scotch Plains-Fanwood  
Public Schools**



**The Road Forward  
2021-2022**

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The Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District reserves the right to modify this document so that it reflects up to date information and guidelines from the Governor's office, the New Jersey Department of Education, the New Jersey Department of Health, CDC, the district's local health agency (officer) as well as the most recent local decisions.

## Introduction

Scotch Plains Fanwood Public Schools Road Forward Plan describes the district's health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year, based on recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) outlined in [The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#). Ending the 2020-2021 school year strong, with all K-8 students back in our buildings full time, gave us the blueprint we needed to successfully and safely start school in September 2021. All schools will be open for full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year with the goal of operating at pre-pandemic norms.

Scotch Plains Fanwood Public Schools will follow all current health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-12 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and our local Health Department. SPF will collaborate with the local Health Department, School Physician, and District Counselors to determine local guidelines while considering the risks/benefits of the physical/mental health needs of the students and staff. As per the Road Forward, schools should anticipate potential updates to the guidance prior to the start of the school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become available.

## 1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

### 1.1 Vaccination

According to the CDC, vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, can reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19, and are effective against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19, including the Delta variant. Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccination. While vaccinations are not mandatory, they are an effective means to help prevent outbreaks within the school community. Learn more about the [COVID-19 vaccination](#).

On August 23, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that **all employees** in public schools must be vaccinated for COVID-19 by October 18, 2021. Unvaccinated staff must be tested on a regular basis in accordance with [Executive Order 253](#).

**To assist with contact tracing, copies of staff vaccination records must be submitted to HR. Student vaccination records should be submitted to the School Nurse.**

On August 17 and 24, 2021 the District hosted the Union County Mobile Vaccination Pop Up Clinic. Pre-registration and walk-ups were welcome. Over the two days 124 people were vaccinated. The district has and will continue to promote vaccination availability through our social media channels.

## 1.2 Communication

- The Superintendent of Schools communicated the first draft of this reopening plan at the June 17, 2021 Board of Education meeting.
  - This plan remains a fluid document. If changes are recommended and adopted, revisions will be posted on the district website.
  - The Superintendent of Schools will communicate this plan to families via email, social media, and the district website ahead of the start of school.
  - This updated Operation Plan will be presented to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education at their regular meeting on September 1, 2021.
- Communication of Positive COVID-19 Cases
    - Positive cases of COVID-19 and quarantines will be updated each Friday on the COVID-19 dashboard which is located on the [district website](#).
    - The district will report daily through Swiftk12 the number of positive cases and the schools. School officials will advise families and staff if they have a direct exposure to a confirmed case.
    - All cases will be reported to the local health departments.

## 1.3 Masks

[Governor Murphy announced](#) and signed [Executive Order 251](#) that all students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks in school buildings for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. The Executive Order is effective on Monday, August 9, 2021. The District will continue to monitor guidance from the State and collaborate with our local Health Department to monitor local data should districts be permitted to make decisions on the local level.

Masks are recognized as an effective strategy in the prevention of spreading the virus and therefore it is strongly recommended that masks be worn outdoors on school grounds when social distancing is not possible, and for the unvaccinated.

Masks are required on school buses as per the [Federal Order](#).

PPE will be provided to staff and students whenever necessary. Staff and students will continue to be encouraged to utilize their own PPE.

Learn more about the proper use, removal, and washing of masks on the [CDC website](#).

## 1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing and Cohorting

All instructional and non-instructional spaces will be configured to maintain physical distance to the maximum extent practicable while considering best instructional practices and the risk/benefit for the physical, mental, and social-emotional health of students and staff.

During periods of high community transmission, SPF will collaborate with the local Health Department to prioritize other prevention measures if the maximal social distancing

recommendations cannot be maintained. These measures include mask wearing, structural interventions within classrooms, and cohorting.

### 1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Staff will be trained on proper handwashing practices and PPE as prescribed by the CDC and other infection control precautions.

CDC resources and guidance documents that promote proper handwashing etiquette will be hung throughout school buildings.

Hand sanitizing stations will be available in building hallways, classrooms, and lunch areas.

Students will be provided with intermittent mask breaks when building conditions warrant such as in high heat conditions.

### 1.6 Meals

- Students may either bring a bagged lunch from home OR families can preorder a cold lunch from Pomptonian, which will be brought to your child's school and delivered to your student.
- We are strongly encouraging bringing lunch from home if possible, as the logistics of delivering many lunches will be a challenge.
- Pack allergy-free lunches (this includes all nuts) if your student is bringing lunch from home.
- Pomptonian will expand lunch options to include hot lunches when all safety protocols are working and in place. It will be our next step.

**Elementary and Middle Schools:** Lunch set up will vary based on school layouts and will be communicated by building principals.

#### **High School:**

Senior students will be permitted to leave the school building and campus for lunch with parent permission.

There is seating available for all students in the areas listed below:

- Cafeteria
- MPR (reserved for Freshmen only)\*
- 2nd Floor Media Center
- 2nd Floor Walk-Way
- Auxiliary Gymnasium
- Main Gymnasium Bleachers
- Courtyard (Weather Permitting) - This area is accessed through the 170's section of the building. While there are no seats at this time, students can bring picnic blankets. Picnic tables are on order.
- 9th graders can eat lunch in any location, however, the MPR is reserved for only 9th graders.

## **1.7 Transportation**

Transportation will resume with universal masking, assigned seats, social distancing, and open windows.

# **2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow**

## **2.1 Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment**

Classroom materials, physical education supplies, art supplies, and playground equipment will be used in accordance with pre-pandemic norms. Proper hand washing practices will be encouraged, and shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected.

Water bottle filling stations will be available for use and will be cleaned frequently during the school day. Drinking fountains will be turned off and not available for use.

## **2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection**

- District custodians will conduct increased cleaning and disinfecting with special attention paid to classroom desks and chairs, door handles and push plates, handrails, bathrooms, light switches, and other frequently touched surfaces.
- Each building will be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected on a daily basis. Certain frequently used surfaces will receive more frequent wipe down.
- The District also will continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures.

## **2.3 Improving Airflow**

- 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.
- All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component. Windows will be opened, if practical, if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units will be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
- The district has procured air purifying units that are in place in classrooms and offices throughout the district where needed.

### **3. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

#### **3.1 Parental Screening**

- The COVID-19 symptom attestation will need to be signed once in the beginning of the school year by students/parents and staff.
- Parents and students are asked to keep students' home from school when symptomatic.
- When reporting absences to the school, parents should provide information about symptoms. School nurses will follow-up with the family when COVID-related symptoms are present. Temperature checks will not be taken as students enter school.

#### **3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff**

##### Health Office: Non-related COVID Symptoms/Illnesses

Non-related COVID symptoms and non-emergency related symptoms will be treated in a separate space. Such scenarios would include minor first aid, bloody nose, etc. This space may be different in each school building, depending upon the layout of the health office area.

##### Health Office: Procedures for COVID-Related Symptoms

All school nurses are in regular contact with the School Physician and the principals. When a student or staff member comes to the health office and presents symptoms typical of the COVID-19 disease, following the NJDOH guidelines:

- Students will be placed safely and respectfully in isolation. This isolation will be supervised in a reasonable manner, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, and appropriate PPE will be worn to protect the staff member.
- Once identified, communication will be made to appropriate parties and COVID-19 testing and contact tracing can begin, if deemed necessary
- The parent/guardian will be notified and instructed to pick up the child promptly.
- Should the parent/guardian not be reached, the emergency contact person will be contacted and notified to pick up the child.
- Upon being sent home, the student shall be in consultation with their home physician in order to determine the appropriate diagnosis and recommended treatment plan, which may result in a required COVID-19 test.

### 3.3 Exclusion

#### 3.3.1 Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

As per the [Road Forward](#), parents should not send students to school when sick.

District Exclusion Criteria:

**If your child exhibits the symptoms below (regardless of vaccination status), remain home and contact the school nurse.**

##### List A (2 symptoms)

- chills
- rigors (shivers)
- myalgia (muscle aches)
- headache
- sore throat
- rash
- fatigue
- congestion or runny nose
- runny/red eyes

##### List B (1 symptom)

- fever (100.0 or higher)
- cough
- shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- new loss of taste or smell
- nausea/ vomiting
- diarrhea
- tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days

If **TWO OR MORE symptoms in list A** are exhibited OR **AT LEAST ONE symptom in list B** is exhibited, **keep your child home and notify the school nurse for further instructions.**

*For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.*

#### 3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Following the NJDOH guidelines, students and staff members with COVID-19 symptoms will be placed safely and respectfully in isolation. This isolation will be supervised in a reasonable manner, maintaining appropriate physical distancing, and appropriate PPE will be worn to protect the staff member. School nurses commence contact tracing and collaborate with the local Health Department.

Individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider. Persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing.

- If community transmission is low, ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#). 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.
- If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if community transmission is moderate or high, they should be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.

Regardless of vaccination status, if a student or staff member experiences COVID-compatible symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2.

### 3.3.3 Exclusion

- **Close Contacts**
  - As per the [NJDOH Exclusion Criteria](#), individuals who are identified as close contacts of an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 must quarantine based upon 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)
  - **Vaccinated Individuals Who Are Close Contacts**
    - Proof of vaccination must be provided in order to be excluded from quarantine requirements. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.
    - The individual should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If symptoms are present, the individual should be excluded from school and be evaluated by a health care professional for COVID-19.
- **Sick or COVID Positive**
  - Staff and students who are ill with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested OR individuals who have tested positive may not attend school and must complete a 10-day quarantine from the onset of symptoms and have been fever free for at least the last 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, and their symptoms have greatly improved
  - Athletes testing positive for COVID-19 need medical clearance to return to play.
- **Positive and Asymptomatic**
  - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic must stay home for 10 days from the positive test result.
- **Exception as per the Road Forward**
  - During periods of low community transmission (green), 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.

*\*In all risk levels, students and staff who are not fully vaccinated and who are household members of a person with COVID-19 compatible symptoms that meet COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria, should be excluded from school until the symptomatic individual receives a negative test result.*

*\*A COVID negative test is required for symptomatic individuals even with an alternate diagnosis, such as a positive strep test or influenza swab.*

For more details, visit the [NJDOH website](#).

#### 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.

As per the Governor's current guidelines, parents and guardians will not be able to opt out of in-person instruction.

In order to facilitate a seamless transition back to the classroom following a quarantine, the district will use Google Classroom and other communication strategies to provide for continuity of learning while students are at home.

In grades P-4, virtual teachers will be assigned to support student access to materials and to ensure student engagement in and completion of activities and assignments determined by their regular classroom teachers. The virtual teacher will serve as a liaison between the student and his/her classroom teacher.

In grades 5-8, remote learning monitors will be assigned to support student access to materials and to ensure student engagement in and completion of activities and assignments determined by their classroom teachers. Learning monitors will ensure that students are able to access daily assignments and resources and are able to complete them.

In Grades 9-12, students quarantined by the district will complete work and synchronously listen to scheduled class audio as needed and as directed to do so by their teachers. Each high school department will identify teachers to provide synchronous small group or individual support as needed throughout the quarantine period.

### **3.4 Travel**

**The CDC recommends that travel be delayed for those who are not fully vaccinated.**

Current district practice regarding travel:

**Vaccinated Individuals:**

**Domestic/International Travel-No quarantine required**

- Individuals should monitor for any signs of illness for 14 days. If symptoms arise immediately get tested and isolate until test results are available
- COVID-19 testing is recommended 3-5 days after returning to NJ, even if asymptomatic

Unvaccinated Individuals:

**Domestic travel- No quarantine required.**

- Individuals should monitor for any signs of illness for 14 days. If symptoms arise immediately get tested and isolate until test results are available
- COVID-19 testing is recommended 3-5 days after returning to NJ, even if asymptomatic

**International Travel-Quarantine/Testing required**

- Quarantine for 7 days. Individuals may return on day 8 with a negative PCR test received 3-5 days after returning to NJ, as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Quarantine for 10 days. Individuals may return on day 11 without testing, as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Monitor for any signs of illness for a full 14 days.

Individuals should confer with either the school nurse or Human Resources regarding any emergent travel plans.

## 4. Contact Tracing

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 per the Road Forward: 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.

- Upon notification that a student, staff member or parent/guardian has tested positive for COVID-19, the District will coordinate with the local health department to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus. Quarantine persons will be based on NJDOH and CDC guidelines at the time.
- The District will assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.
- The District will ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.
- A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee and shall be responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.

- The District will allow staff, students and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.

## **5. Testing**

### **Diagnostic Testing**

- As was the case during the 2020-2021 school year, school nurses will play a critical role in connecting families with options for obtaining COVID-19 testing.
- The district is working with local vendors to determine the viability of offering testing on-site in each school building.
- Testing will continue to be recommended in cases of exposure in coordination with local health departments.
- PCR or Rapid tests are accepted for Positive results.
- Negative Tests for clearance to return to school due to illness/close contact exposure/travel requires a PCR test. If a rapid antigen test is performed, an additional clearance note from a healthcare provider (i.e MD, DO, APN or PA) will be required to return to school.
- Home based testing kits will not be accepted, for return to school clearance.
- The district will continue to educate the community about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- District nursing staff will make referrals to local agencies that offer COVID testing.

## **6. Additional Local Planning**

### **6.1 Addressing Academic Need**

Student growth and learning acceleration will be monitored and instruction adjusted through the use of on-going formative assessments and evidence-based interventions.

- Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) in Reading and Mathematics
- Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA)
- District-Created Benchmarks
- Intervention and Acceleration
- Individualized Education Meetings will continue to be held to address the individual needs of students.
- Each buildings Intervention and Referral Service Team will meet routinely to identify areas of need and/or support
- Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings will continue to be held to address the individual needs of students.

## 6.2 Coordination of Services

Building based administrators will coordinate the efforts of teachers, school counselors, Child Study Team members to identify trending student needs and develop interventions.

School Counselors (Grades 5-12) will review student progress, attendance and discipline routinely.

Student Assistant Specialists will deliver curricular lessons to all elementary classrooms.

## 6.3 SEL and Mental Health

The district has a partnership with Effective School Solutions which will continue to provide wrap-around mental health services for students identified as needing a high level of support.

The district has also formed a partnership with Rutgers University Behavioral Health care, which will continue to provide:

- Individual, Family and Group Counseling
- Psycho-educational groups for children, families and school staff
- After-school programs and in-school suspension counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Psychiatric Consultation
- Staff development workshops and consultation
- Case management and integration with community programs