



LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Local Education Agencies (LEA) must plan to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) worked collaboratively to develop the following guidance to operationalize that goal. This guidance includes a range of strategies that LEAs should consider implementing to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for fulltime in-person learning. The absence of one or more of the strategies outlined in this document does not preclude the reopening of a school facility for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff present. This document contains expectations for the fall learning environment. This guidance document is intended to supplant health and safety protocols outlined in Executive Order No. 175 and the Road Back. The document contains recommendations rather than mandatory standards. Schools should anticipate potential updates to this guidance prior to the start of the new school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become available.

MARGATE: LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: MARGATE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Original Date: 6/24/21

Date Revised: 7/7/21

1. Maintaining Health and Safety - *(based on CDC guidance...it will be updated to reflect new guidelines as they are released)*

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

The following principles apply to the use of masks in schools:

- The mask decision for students will be made by their guardians. The school will support any student that continues to wear a face mask while in school to ensure they do not feel uncomfortable or ridiculed due to their mask.
- School staff that are fully vaccinated do not need to wear masks. Our district expects non-vaccinated staff to continue to wear masks

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around students.

- Masks and/or barriers do not preclude an individual from being identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case.
- Information should be provided to staff and students on proper use, removal, and washing of masks.
- The most effective fabrics for cloth masks are tightly woven such as cotton and cotton blends, breathable, and in two or three fabric layers.
- Masks should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled or damp/wet.
- Students, teachers, and staff should have access to additional disposable or cloth masks in case a back-up mask is needed (e.g. mask is soiled or lost during the day).
- Clear masks that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face may be considered in certain circumstances including for the teaching of students with disabilities, young students learning to read, or English language learners.
- Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some individuals, however mask use is encouraged for individuals who are not fully vaccinated unless a mask cannot be safely worn, such as:
 - For individuals who would not be able to remove a mask without assistance.
 - For individuals with medical conditions or disabilities as reflected in federal disability laws that preclude the use of a mask.
 - When wearing a mask would be considered unsafe.

Transportation and Masks

School buses should be considered school property for the purpose of determining the need for prevention strategies.

- Masks must be worn by all passengers on buses, regardless of vaccination status per CDC's Federal Order.
- If occupancy allows, maximize physical distance between students.
- Open windows to increase airflow in buses and other transportation, if possible.
- Regularly clean high touch surfaces on school buses at least daily.

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

Though physical distancing recommendations must not prevent a school from offering full-day, full-time, in person learning to all students for the 2021-2022 school year, LEAs should consider implementing physical distancing measures as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy to the extent they are equipped to do so while still providing regular school operations to all students and staff in-person. During periods of high community transmission or if vaccine coverage is low, if the maximal social distancing recommendations below cannot be maintained, LEAs should, where possible, prioritize other prevention measures including masking, screening, and cohorting.

The LEA may consider implementing one or more of the following strategies to maximize opportunities to increase distance between students:

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- **Consider maintaining three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent possible while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.**
- **Consider structural interventions within classrooms to aid with social distancing including:**
 - Facing desks in the same direction.
 - Avoiding grouped seating arrangements.
- **Outside of the classroom LEAs should consider approaches to implement physical distancing in the following areas that may pose greater risk of transmission:**
 - In common areas, in spaces where students may gather such as hallways and the cafeteria.
 - When masks cannot be worn.
 - When masks may be removed, such as during outdoor activities.
 - During indoor activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band practice, sports, or exercise (even if masks are worn).
 - Consider maintaining cohorts or groups of students with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day, including at recess, lunchtimes, and while participating in extracurricular activities.

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Physical Desk Barriers

- Hard plexiglass physical barriers on teacher desks or other staff areas, where needed, to facilitate small-group instruction/evaluation/communication

Class Size

- Addition of classes and sections to reduce class size to accommodate the need for three feet social distancing
- Approximate class size 12-16 students in all grades
- Amount of teacher/student contact will depend on particular teaching assignments/duties, but will be limited.

Room Arrangement

- Desks will be 3 feet apart, facing the same direction (depending on Smartboard location), as much as feasible
 - Teacher decides room arrangement to effectively use classroom space
 - Furniture removal may be required to accommodate spacing needs
 - Certain classrooms, such as the science labs and art room, will space students at lab tables and art stations to the greatest extent possible

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- Wide aisles for teacher/student movement, when necessary, and storage of backpacks.

Sharing Items, Books, and Supplies

- Teachers can limit the need for sharing items through instructional choices
- Technology
 - 1:1 device distribution (Chromebooks)
 - Limit the sharing of ipads in K-1
- Supplies
 - All student supplies should be stored in a container (limit sharing of pencils, crayons, markers, glue, etc.)
 - Frequently sanitized supply cups (pens/pencils) for classrooms and office use if sharing is required
 - Prepare individual sets of supplies, as is reasonable, for art, science lab, and math (individual math manipulatives kits for each student)
- Frequent cleaning of items that must be shared
 - Provide staff with cleaning supplies and “Spot cleaning” training
- Instructional material alternatives (examples include)
 - Digital workbooks, digital textbooks (for grades 2 and up)
 - Google slides turned into classroom conversations (Pear Deck)
 - Online book websites to substitute for library books and/or classroom library
 - Raz-Kids, Epic!, Vooks, Readworks, MobyMax
 - White boards (digital whiteboards)
 - Worksheets in page protectors for easy cleaning and reuse
- Assignments and Assessments
 - Incorporating digital options (i.e. Google Classroom) to :
 - Easily transition to remote schooling in the event of a health-related school closure
 - Turn hard copy pages or PDFs into editable digital worksheets (may use PDF editing software such as Kami or DocHub)
 - Homework ideas:
 - K - 1: homework can be sent home, but Class Dojo to screenshot/scan to send work back to teacher
 - Grades 2 -8: homework could be all digital via Google Classroom
- Rewards: limit treasure boxes where students place hand in to choose
- Snacks: must be individually wrapped if provided by the classroom

Student Belongings

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- Middle school: Using digital textbooks and other electronic means to the fullest extent possible, students may carry backpacks with chromebooks, and limited other supplies and personal items. Allow students to keep backpacks at their desks. **Locker use still under development**
- Elementary School: Keep small personal supplies in the student desk/bins and/or in a backpack next to their desk. Optional use of large ziploc bags to hang backpacks, coats, etc in cubbies is a consideration for kindergarten.
- Family notice for weekend cleaning of backpack, coat, lunchboxes, etc. before the next week of school
- Students encouraged to limit the amount of personal items/books they take to and from school

Snacks/Water in the Classroom

- Water bottle filling stations are available; water fountain access will be eliminated.
- Students should bring their own healthy snack daily and water bottle filled from home
- If a student forgets a snack/water, only individually packed snacks can be provided
- Ross snack time is incorporated into their daily schedule

Student Lunches and Recess Times

- **Our administration is actively investigating options to safely hold daily lunch and recess for the students, as they will be in school for a full day next year. We may need to split lunches and limit the contact between children during these two times of the school day. More details to follow!**

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

The following guidance will be followed in our district:

- LEAs should teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
- Maintain adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

Hand hygiene should take place:

- Upon arrival at school.
- Before and after meals and snacks.

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- After going to the bathroom.
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into tissue.
- When hands are visibly soiled.

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Hand-Sanitizing Stations and Clearing of High Touch Surfaces

- Stationary hand sanitizer stations are installed/available in every classroom, at primary entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and bathrooms
- District-wide routines for students to sanitize/wash their hands before they exit a room and before entering any room, when using the lavatory, and before and after eating.
- Teacher/student workspaces and/or materials should be cleaned before and after use on a regular basis

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Schools should follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. This means at least daily cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.

If a person exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, school staff should clean and disinfect the spaces occupied by the person. Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be re-opened for use.

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick or positive and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) after the person has exited a space before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC settings to increase air circulation in the area.
- Use products from EPA List according to the instructions on the product label.
- Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.

Improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several strategies:

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible. This will be done through our ventilation system in both schools without opening windows.

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- Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (such as exposure to extreme temperatures, humidity, or triggering asthma symptoms), or if doing so would otherwise pose a security risk.
- Use exhaust fans in kitchens.
- Consider having activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Classroom Ventilation

Board Policy adopted September 2020: #3510 Operation and Maintenance of Plant

- HVAC and air handling units will be inspected frequently to ensure proper air flow-before September and every other week thereafter following ASHRAE guidelines
- Classroom windows cannot be open without adversely affecting the HVAC and ventilation to the rest of the building
- Ventilation will be increased by bringing in more outside air
- Operational runtime will be increased as needed
- Controls will be modified to prevent system economy overrides

Frequent Sanitizing

- daily electrostatic spraying completed each day when students are in session

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

Daily Student Screening

Parents/caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. Schools should strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff. Schools should educate parents about the importance of monitoring symptoms and keeping children home while ill. Schools can use existing outreach systems to provide reminders to staff and families to check for symptoms before leaving for school. Schools should provide clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and reasons for absences.

Student Illness

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Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least TWO of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; OR
- At least ONE of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.
- For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

If Student or Staff Become Ill at School

Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms should be separated away from others until they can be sent home. Students who are sick and not already wearing a mask should be provided one to wear.

- Ask ill student (or parent/guardian) or staff whether they have had potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days meeting the definition of a close contact.
- Individuals should 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.

Procedure for Positive Students

Ill individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.

Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result. The COVID-19 Exclusion Table described in NJDOH guidance for Local health departments can be used to determine the need for and duration of school exclusion based on the level of COVID-19 community transmission in their region.

Procedure for Close Contacts

CDC released guidance with options to shorten the quarantine time period following exposure to a confirmed positive case. Individuals who are close contacts of staff or students who tested positive for COVID-19 may be considered for a reduced exclusion period based on 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)

Exposed close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms:

- Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
- If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is a strategy used to determine the source of an infection and how it is spreading. Finding people who are close contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, and therefore at higher risk of becoming infected themselves, can help prevent further spread of the virus. School staff should identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school.

- As with any other communicable disease outbreak, schools will assist in identifying the close contacts within the school and communicating this information back to the LHD.
- With guidance from the LHD, schools will be responsible for notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.
- Schools should closely and regularly monitor the numbers of students, teachers, and staff with COVID-19, as well those in isolation and in quarantine. In collaboration with the local health department, decisions should combine information about levels of community transmission with school-specific factors, such as implementation of prevention strategies and the number of cases among students,

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teachers, and staff. As levels of community transmission increase, schools should further strengthen prevention strategies and monitor cases to reassess decisions.

Remote Instruction

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.

LEAs may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If an LEA is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the LEA should be prepared to 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 towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Coordination with Atlantic County Board of Health

- Atlantic County Board of Health conducts the contact tracing with the involvement of school administration or designees
- The school district will assist with providing records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff, and daily attendance

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

We most likely will not be handling testing.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

We most likely will not be handling vaccinations.

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H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies

Federal and state disability laws, to the extent applicable, require an individualized approach for students with disabilities consistent with the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. Educators and school leaders must remain aware of their obligations under federal and state disability laws and should also consider adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies, while maintaining efforts to protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19. Margate Schools staff, led by the Child Study Team case managers, will ensure the proper delivery of services and supports to all students with IEPs or 504 Plans.

Additionally, schools are encouraged to consider a phased prevention approach to fully reopening this upcoming year. A phased prevention approach for K–12 schools relies on several core concepts as dictated by the CDC.

- K–12 schools should be the last settings to close after all other prevention measures in the community have been employed, and the first to reopen when they can do so safely. This implies that decision-makers and communities should prioritize schools for reopening and remaining open for in-person instruction over nonessential businesses and activities, including indoor dining, bars, social gatherings, and close contact sports as community transmission is controlled.
- In-person instruction should be prioritized over extracurricular activities, including sports and school events, to minimize risk of transmission in schools and protect in-person learning. Prolonged periods of remote or virtual learning can have negative effects on educational progress for students, potentially slowing or reversing academic gains. Students from low-resourced communities, English learners, and students with disabilities might disproportionately experience learning loss due to limited access to remote learning technology and fewer learning support systems and services outside of schools. Safe in-person schooling can also offset the negative social, emotional, and mental health impacts of prolonged virtual learning. Minimizing the risk of spread during extracurricular activities and social gatherings outside of school can help maintain in-person instruction. Some close-contact sports might not be able to be implemented at any level of community transmission given the risk of transmission and the inability to implement prevention strategies.¹ Schools may consider using expanded screening testing for sports and extracurricular activities to identify cases and reduce risk of transmission from people who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic.
- Lower susceptibility and incidence among younger children compared to teenagers suggests that younger students (for example, elementary school students) are likely to have less risk of in-school transmission due to in-person learning than older students (middle schools and high schools). In addition, younger children may benefit more from in-person instruction and are less independent than older students.
- Families of students who are at increased risk of severe illness (including those with special healthcare needs) shall be accommodated to the greatest extent possible, regardless of the mode of learning offered.

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- Schools are encouraged to use cohorting, especially in areas of substantial (orange) and high (red) transmission, to facilitate testing and contact tracing, and to minimize transmission across cohorts.

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)

School Climate and Culture

- Prioritize health and emotional well being over everything else.
- Assess school climate to identify vulnerabilities via SSIS SEL screening tool

For underserved populations

Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19. People who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native, Black, and Hispanic are disproportionately affected by COVID-19; these disparities have also emerged among children. The absence of in-person educational options might disadvantage children from all backgrounds, particularly children in low-resourced communities who might be at an educational disadvantage. To enable in-person learning in schools that serve racial and ethnic groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19, school administrators and public health officials can work together to help schools plan and implement comprehensive prevention strategies, engage community partners, and assist with referrals to medical care. It is important that these schools have the resources and technical assistance needed to adopt and diligently implement actions to slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 among people inside the school and out in the community. Schools play a critical role in promoting equity in education and health for groups disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Margate Schools staff will work in tandem with our School Physician, Dr. Budnick, to ensure proper access to health care and services.

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)

The Plan to Reopen was be posted on the district website in June 2021. A discussion was be held during the Board of Education meeting on June 9, 2021 to share the plan with the public and invite comments and feedback. A link to a survey will also be provided on our district website, which

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allowed members of the community to share comments in addition to the public board meeting. Public comment was considered and included in our planning process, as appropriate. We uploaded our original plan to the NJDOE by the June 24 deadline.

July update - with the release of new guidance, our plan was updated to reflect the new guidelines. The plan was shared at the July 7, 2021 BOE meeting and posted on the district website for parental review.

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)

Any parent requiring a translation can simply contact either schools' main office for assistance.