



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

Pursuant to those requirements, **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.** 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that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.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.

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 (mm/dd/yyyy):

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

We will adhere to the CDC core principle for mask use in schools that require consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks with proper filtration by all students, teachers, and staff to prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission through respiratory droplets. Masks should be worn at all times, by all people in school facilities, with certain specific exceptions for certain people, or for certain settings or activities, such as while eating or drinking. Masks should be required in all classroom and non-classroom settings, including hallways, school offices, restrooms, gyms, auditoriums, on bus transportation, etc.

All staff, students, and visitors shall wear face coverings (unless requiring a medically necessary exemption due to a documented health impairment)

- District will supply N95 for nurses and custodians
- District will supply reusable face coverings for each staff member
- Disposable face coverings will be also available for staff and students on an as needed basis
- Students mask usage
 - Face coverings should always be worn when indoors
 - Disciplinary action will be taken for students not adhering to face covering rules.
 - Accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities or those medically exempted from wearing a mask.

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

We will adhere to the CDC core principle for physical distancing in schools that establishes school policies and implement structural interventions to promote physical distance between people.

- Between students in classrooms
 - In elementary schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart.
 - In middle schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission. In areas of high community transmission, middle school students should be 6 feet apart if cohorting is not possible.
- Maintain 6 feet of distance in the following settings:
 - Between adults (teachers and staff), and between adults and students, at all times in the school building. Several studies have found that transmission between staff is more common than transmission between students and staff, and among students, in schools.
 - When masks cannot be worn, such as when eating.
 - During activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, shouting, band, or sports and exercise. Move these activities outdoors or to large, well-ventilated spaces, when possible.
 - In common areas such as school lobbies and auditoriums.
- Use cohorting, and maintain 6 feet of distance between cohorts where possible. Limit contact between cohorts. In areas of substantial (orange) and high (red) levels of community transmission, schools that use less than 6 feet between students in classrooms, cohorting is recommended, with at least 6 feet maintained between cohorts.
- Remove nonessential furniture and make other changes to classroom layouts to maximize distance between students.

*All details within this plan are subject to revisions based on new information released by the CDC and/or NJDOE.
 May 15, 2021 update - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/operation-strategy.html>*

- Face desks in the same direction, where possible.
- Eliminate or decrease nonessential in-person interactions among teachers and staff during meetings, lunches, and other situations that could lead to adult-to-adult transmission.
- Visitors: Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible—especially with people who are not from the local geographic area (for example, not from the same community, town, city, county). Require all visitors to wear masks and physically distance themselves from others.
- Create distance between children on school buses when possible. Open windows to improve ventilation when it does not create a safety hazard.
- Transportation: Create distance between children on school buses (for example, seat children one child per row, skip rows), when possible. Masks are required by federal order on school buses and other forms of public transportation in the United States.

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Physical Desk Barriers

- Flexible plastic screens shall be affixed on each student desk for elementary classrooms
- Hard plexiglass physical barriers on teacher desks, where needed, to facilitate small-group instruction/evaluation

Class Size

- Addition of classes and sections to reduce class size to accommodate the need for six 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)
 - Teacher decides room arrangement to effectively use classroom space
 - Furniture removal will 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.
- Teacher buffer zone outlined in front of room and around desk
- Wide aisles for teacher/student movement, when necessary, and storage of backpacks.
- Non-instructional Rooms, such as the Performing Arts Center, All-Purpose Rooms, conference and therapy rooms, nurses office, etc. will comply with social distancing standards.

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Sharing Items, Books, and Supplies

- Teachers can limit the need for sharing items through instructional choices
- Technology (see *Technology and Connectivity* for details)
 - 1:1 device distribution (Chromebooks)
 - Eliminate 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
 - 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: District-wide policy for how specific grade levels should complete homework and/or complete tests (online or paper).
 - 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.
- 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

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

We will adhere to the CDC core principle for handwashing and respiratory etiquette in schools that recommends ongoing health education lessons, teaching children proper handwashing behaviors, and providing adequate supplies. Ensure that teachers and staff use proper handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence among students, teachers, and staff. If handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol should be used.
- Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue when not wearing a mask and immediately wash their hands after blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Some students with disabilities might need assistance with handwashing and respiratory etiquette behaviors.
- Adequate supplies: Support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, a way to dry hands, tissues, face masks (as feasible), and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans. If soap and water are not readily available, schools can provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).

Specifics related to Margate Schools internal plan include these details:

Hand-Sanitizing Stations and Clearing of High Touch Surfaces

- Stationary hand sanitizer stations are being updated/installed in every classroom, at primary entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and bathrooms

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- 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

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

We will adhere to the CDC core principle for cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities in schools that includes making changes to physical spaces to maintain a healthy environment and facilities, including improving ventilation. Routinely clean high-touch surfaces (such as doorknobs and light switches). CDC defers to ASHRAE (American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers) guidelines for facilities, while still allowing safe air practices.

- **Ventilation:** Improve ventilation 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 actions.
 - Bring in as much outdoor air as possible through system controls.
 - Ensure Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) settings are maximizing ventilation.
 - Filter and/or clean the air in the school by improving the level of filtration as much as possible.
 - Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
 - Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Even just cracking windows open a few inches improves air circulation.
- **Modified layouts:** Adjust physical layouts in classrooms and other settings to maximize physical space, such as by turning desks to face in the same direction.
- **Cleaning:** Regularly clean high touch surfaces and objects (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, toilets, drinking fountains) within the school and on school buses at least daily or between use as much as possible.
- **Communal spaces:** Modify communal use of shared spaces, stagger use and clean regularly (for example, daily or as often as needed). Consider use of larger spaces such as cafeterias, libraries, gyms for academic instruction, to maximize physical distancing.
- **Food service:** Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options such as hot and cold food bars, salad or condiment bars, and drink stations.
- **Water systems:** Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, sink faucets, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.

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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 four times 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

We will adhere to the CDC core principle for contact tracing in schools that recommends collaboration with the health department, to the extent allowable by privacy laws and other applicable laws, to confidentially provide information about people diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19. Students, teachers, and staff with positive test results should isolate, and close contacts should quarantine. Schools should report positive cases to the health department as soon as they are informed. School officials should notify families of close contacts as soon as possible after they are notified that someone in the school has tested positive (within the same school day).

- **Staying home when appropriate:** Educate teachers, staff and families about when they and their children should stay home and when they can return to school. Students, teachers, and staff who have symptoms should stay home and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- **Isolation should be used to separate people diagnosed with COVID-19 from those who are not infected.** Students, teachers, and staff who are in isolation should stay home and follow the direction of the local public health authority about when it is safe for them to be around others.
- **Case investigation and contact tracing:** Schools should work with the local health department to facilitate, to the extent allowable by applicable laws, systematic case investigation and contact tracing of infected students, teachers, and staff, and consistent isolation of cases and quarantine of close contacts. Schools can prepare and provide information and records to aid in the identification of potential contacts

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and exposure sites, consistent with applicable laws, including those related to privacy and confidentiality. Collaboration between the health department and K-12 school administration to obtain contact information of other individuals in shared rooms, class schedules, shared meals, or extracurricular activities will expedite contact tracing. For schools to remain open, health departments should ensure they have enough contact tracers to complete case investigation and notify contacts within 48 hours of a positive test result. Prompt identification, quarantine, and monitoring of those contacts exposed to SARS-CoV-2 can effectively break the chain of transmission and prevent further spread of the virus.

- The definition of a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period. The definition of a close contact applies regardless of whether either person was wearing a mask.
- For schools that use less than 6 feet between students in classrooms, the definition of close contacts should not change. Students sitting less than 6 feet next to another student or person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more should quarantine at home and be referred for testing.
- Quarantine should be used for students, teachers, and staff who might have been exposed to COVID-19. Close contacts, identified through contact tracing, should quarantine unless they are fully vaccinated, or have tested positive in the last 3 months, and do not have any symptoms. Students, teachers, and staff who are in quarantine should stay home and follow the direction of the local public health department about when it is safe for them to be around others. If a child with a disability is required to quarantine, the school is required to provide services consistent with federal disability laws.

Cohorting plays an important role in properly contact tracing. 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, teachers, and staff. As levels of community transmission increase, schools should further strengthen prevention strategies and monitor cases to reassess decisions.

A school cluster is an index case and two or more cases epidemiologically linked to the index case who likely acquired SARS-CoV-2 infection in school (i.e., school-associated cases). When cases are introduced into the school environment, they can lead to clusters and potentially to rapid and uncontrolled spread. Schools should monitor cases (consistent with privacy and other applicable laws), identify clusters quickly, and promptly intervene to control spread. Infection source and whether the infection is likely acquired in school or outside of school should be determined by case investigations conducted by a collaboration between school administration and the local health department.

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Schools should take the following actions to control transmission in the event of a cluster:

1. Investigate cases and trace contacts; encourage isolation and quarantine (consistent with applicable privacy and other laws).
 - Work with the health department to carefully investigate each case, including conducting interviews with students, teachers, parents, and school staff.
 - Encourage compliance with isolation for people who test positive.
 - Work with the health department to trace close contacts in accordance with applicable federal and state privacy laws of all cases and refer close contacts for diagnostic testing. Encourage compliance with quarantine.
2. Assess situations where close contacts occurred and implement interventions to address potential contributors to the clusters. For example:
 - Determine whether inconsistent or incorrect use of masks contributed to the clusters and intervene to improve consistent and correct mask use.
 - Assess implementation of physical distancing and determine whether intervention is needed to address distancing.
 - Eliminate or decrease nonessential in-person interactions among teachers and staff during meetings, lunches, and other situations that may have led to adult-to-adult transmission.

Unplanned school closures

In cases where schools must temporarily close for in-person instruction, schools should make efforts to provide continuity of instruction through synchronous remote learning or at-home activities.

Despite careful planning and consistent implementation of prevention strategies, some situations may lead school officials to consider temporarily closing schools or parts of a school (such as a class, cohort, or grade level) to in-person instruction, typically in consultation with the local health department. These decisions should be made based on careful consideration of a variety of factors and with the emphasis on ensuring the health and wellness of students, their families, and teachers and staff.

Classrooms, cohorts, or schools experiencing uncontrolled spread of COVID-19 may temporarily close for in-person learning. If the school is experiencing uncontrolled spread, school leaders should immediately notify public health officials and collaborate to facilitate increased testing and contact tracing, as necessary. The local health department may facilitate testing for students, teachers, and staff who are in schools with an uncontrolled spread.

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Schools in areas experiencing rapid or persistent rises in COVID-19 case rates or severe burden on health care capacity. School leaders and public health officials should monitor indicators of community transmission and review trends over time. In communities that have rapid or persistent rises in COVID-19 incidence or severe healthcare capacity burden, school leaders may decide to temporarily close schools to in-person instruction until levels of community transmission stabilize.

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.

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.
- 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.**

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- 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 will be posted on the district website. A discussion will be held during the next 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 will allow members of the community to share comments in addition to the public board meeting. Public comment will be considered and included in our planning process, as appropriate. We will have our plan ready for uploading to the state by the June 24, 2021 deadline.

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.