

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

## Introduction and Background

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)’s [April 28, 2021 broadcast](https://www.nj.gov/education/broadcasts/2021/april/AmericanRescuePlanESSERFunds.pdf), in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act](https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr1319/BILLS-117hr1319enr.pdf), Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides an additional $122 billion in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the nation’s students. As with the previous ESSER funds available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA), the purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families. Additional information on ARP ESSER may be found in the NJDOE’s [funding comparison fact sheet](https://www.nj.gov/education/esser/docs/ESSERFactSheet.pdf).

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA’s website, no later than 30 days after receiving ARP ESSER funds, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan) A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. Under the interim final requirements published in [Volume 86, No. 76 of the Federal Register](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-04-22/pdf/2021-08359.pdf) by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), an LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

Pursuant to those requirements, **LEAs must submit to the NJDOE and post on their website their Safe Return Plans by June 24, 2021.** The NJDOE intends to make LEA ARP ESSER Fund applications available in EWEG on May 24, 2021 and LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE via EWEG.To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE is providing the following template.

This template incorporates the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan. The questions in the template below will be included in the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG. LEAs will submit responses to the questions within the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG by June 24, 2021. The NJDOE hopes that this template will allow LEAs to effectively plan for that submission and to easily post the information to their websites as required by the ARP Act.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy [announced](https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210517a.shtml) 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.

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

**LEA Name: Woodland Township School District**

**Date: 07/29/2021 Date Revised: 01/19/2022**

### 1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

1. **Universal and correct wearing of masks**

Woodland Township School District will continue to follow the guidance of the state of New Jersey in regards to face coverings. As of today, January 10, 2022:

* Masks will be required for all individuals at Woodland Township School District – staff, students and visitors.
* We recommend that all eligible students and staff be vaccinated. Being vaccinated against COVID-19 will help to better ensure a student’s education is not disrupted by the need to quarantine.

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

Given the student population of Woodland Township School District, we will continue to enforce social distancing of 6 feet within our classrooms. Woodland Township School District will continue to follow the guidance of the state of New Jersey in regards to social distancing.

1. **Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

The faculty, staff, and students at Woodland Township School District shall utilize good hygiene techniques/practices. All faculty, staff and students are to use hand sanitizing stations frequently and practice the appropriate protocols for the use of proper handwashing techniques. Shared objects, such as PE materials and shared classroom materials must be wiped down with the appropriate cleaning agent provided by the district. All faculty, staff, and students should wash their hands after utilizing the cleaning agent and wear protective eyewear when applicable. All are asked to be mindful to follow signs and floor markings. Water bottle filling stations will be available and subject to CDC guidelines indicating the contrary.

1. **Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

* Procedures for additional Sanitizing Classrooms & Other Workspaces
  + All classroom surfaces will be wiped down with sanitizing wipe at the conclusion of each use
  + All student personal desks will be wiped down:
    - Prior to eating anything in that space
    - At the conclusion of eating in that space
    - At the conclusion of each school day
  + All classrooms will be provided with hand sanitizer
* Procedures for additional Sanitizing of Bathrooms and High Touch Areas
  + Custodians will sanitize all bathrooms on an hourly rotation throughout the school day.
  + Custodians will sanitize high touch areas (i.e. door knobs, etc.) on an hourly basis throughout the school day.
  + Water fountains will be closed until further notice.
* Adequate Ventilation
  + Heating and ventilation will be maintained.
  + All filters will be changed when required and a log will be kept to keep track of this.
  + A/C will be used where available. Filters will be maintained within units.
  + Windows will be open where A/C is not available.
  + HEPA air purifiers are placed in every room.

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

The District’s isolation and quarantine policies follow the guidance and recommendations developed by trained medical professionals at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), to the greatest extent possible. Although the District cannot substitute its judgment for that of experts in the field of infectious diseases when it comes to preventing the spread of COVID-19, the District also has a strong interest in continuing to provide full-time, in-person instruction to its students. Accordingly, that interest will also be taken into account when updating the District’s isolation and quarantine policies, which, at times, may deviate from the most current NJDOH and/or CDC recommendations or guidance, as authorized by N.J.S.A. 26:4-6.

* Staff and students will be required to submit an initial COVID-19 screening acknowledgement at the start of the school year. After that, staff and families will conduct a daily self-screening for symptoms and stay home when they are sick.
* School district will follow all New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools
* Contact tracing will occur with requirements for quarantine if there is close contact with a COVID-positive individual (defined as being within 6 feet for a period of 15 minutes or longer). Student seating charts will be maintained to monitor masks in the event of a positive case and necessity for quarantine for unvaccinated individuals. Per the NJDOH guidelines, all vaccinated students/staff identified as a close contact DO NOT have to quarantine if they are symptom free.
* All school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee should be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing conducted by State, county, and local officials.
* District will engage the expertise of their school nurses on the importance of contact tracing.
* School Safety Specialist and School Nurse will complete Johns Hopkins University’s COVID-19 Contact Tracing course.
* School officials will continue ongoing consultations with the Burlington County Health Department.

1. **Diagnostic and screening testing**

* All guidelines and recommendations provided by the BCNJDOH, NJDOH and the NJDOE will be adhered to by the district to the best of our abilities.
* Protocols for Symptomatic Students and Staff
  + Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms should be placed away from others and asked to wear a face covering/mask until they can be sent home. Per state policy, all students’ (age 2 and older) noses and mouths should be covered with a mask or cloth face covering. If a mask is not tolerated by the ill 11 student or staff member due to their illness, other staff should be sure to adhere to the universal face covering policy and follow social distancing guidelines (6 ft. away).
  + Ask ill student (or parent) and staff about potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days: o Close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19
* Individuals should be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider for evaluation on whether testing is needed. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended for persons with COVID-19 symptoms.
  + If COVID-19 risk is low (or COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix, green), 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 COVID-19 risk is moderate or high (COVID-19 Regional Risk Matrix, yellow or orange), they should be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.
* Schools should notify LHDs when students or staff are ill and have potential COVID-19 exposure, are ill when COVID-19 risk level is high (orange), or when they see an increase in the number of persons with compatible symptoms. Schools should be prepared to provide the following information when consulting with the LHD:
  + Contact information for the ill persons;
  + The date the ill person developed symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19 (if known), and was last in the building;
  + Types of interactions (close contacts, length of contact) the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations; o Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for ill person’s close contacts in the school;
  + Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps.
* Immediately close off areas used by the person who is sick, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area and wait 24 hours before you clean or disinfect. Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick as outlined in cleaning and disinfection section, including isolation area. Once area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
  + If the number of ill students exceeds the number of isolation areas and the areas cannot be closed for 24 hours, clean and disinfect between ill persons.
  + Notify the school community as per school protocol.
* Protocols for Students and Staff who test Positive for COVID
  + Schools should ensure that parents and staff notify school authorities if they test positive for COVID-19. Schools should notify the LHD and provide the following information, where available:
    - Contact information for the person(s) who tested positive for COVID-19;
    - The date the COVID-19 positive person developed symptoms (if applicable), tested positive for COVID-19 (if known), and was last in the building;
    - Types of interactions (close contacts, length of contact) the person may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations;
    - Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for ill person’s close contacts in the school;
    - Any other information to assist with the determination of next steps. As long as routine cleaning and disinfecting have been done regularly (at least daily), additional cleaning measures are not necessary unless the COVID-19 positive person is in school on the day school officials are notified of the positive test.
    - Notify the school community as per school protocol
* Unvaccinated employees
  + Will be required to get tested at least one time per week as per executive order 253
    - Employees will provide results to the district weekly
  + Testing will be conducted outside of school hours
  + District will provide local testing sites to employees in an effort to give them options for their weekly testing
* **‘**Fully Vaccinated’ Definition as of January 13, 2022
  + Everyone 5 years and older who receives their primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine is fully vaccinated.
  + For children 5 through 17 years of age, a primary series consists of 2 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. For persons 18 and older, a primary series consists of:
    - A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or
    - A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine).
    - Accordingly, a booster dose is not required to be considered “fully vaccinated” against COVID-19.
  + Furthermore, for purposes of compliance with Executive Order 253, the definition of “fully vaccinated” has not changed, and remains as follows: “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 where they have received a COVID-19 vaccine that is currently authorized for emergency use by the FDA or the WHO, or that are approved for use by the same.” As such, an employee does not need to have received a COVID-19 booster to be considered “fully vaccinated” under Executive Order 253.

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

* Woodland Township School District will continue to disseminate information about vaccinations to educators, other staff, students, and parents as it is available from the NJDOH or the NJDOE.

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

* All appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities will continue to be addressed in each student’s IEP.

### 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)**

* For the 2021-22 school year, Woodland Township School District will offer full day instruction (8:50-3:10) for all students. Throughout the school week students will be provided with character education classes, periodic wellness checks, as well as counseling services if needed.
* As of January 1, 2022, the school calendar will be revised for the months of January – mid April. Every Friday will be an early dismissal for all students. Staff will be required to work their contracted day. The afternoon time will be used for staff to get students caught back up if needed due to quarantine as well as allow themselves to get themselves in order.
* School breakfast and lunches will be served to all students free of charge for the 2021-22 school year. Bagged breakfast and lunch will be offered.
  + Bagged lunches will continue to be sent home with students on early dismissal Friday’s beginning in January 2022.

### 3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comment 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)

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)