



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

revised June 2, 2023

Introduction and Background

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)'s [April 28, 2021 broadcast](#), in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal [American Rescue Plan \(ARP\) Act](#), 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](#).

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](#) 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 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](#) 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 2022-2023 school year as it becomes available.

Colts Neck Township Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Colts Neck Township Schools

Date (6/11/2021): Date Revised: June 2, 2023

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

*NOTE: All items contained within the Colts Neck Township Schools Safe Return Plan are subject to change based upon future changes to or additional Executive Orders. State, county, and local COVID trends and recommendations from health officials may also influence changes and/or additions to the district's Safe Return Plan. The Safe Return Plan reflects current mandates for public schools, recommendations from local and county health officials, and input received from stakeholders.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are the sources that provide the District with its recommendations, requirements, and mandates for the 2021-2022 school year. The most current information from the aforementioned sources are as follows:





- [COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools, Childcare and Youth Camps](#) (10/7/22)
- [The Road Forward](#) (NJDOE & NJDOH) (updated 8/20/21)
- [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#) (updated 5/11/2023)

The Colts Neck Township Schools will continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of its students and staff. On Tuesday, January 11, 2022, Governor Murphy signed [Executive Order 281](#) requiring indoor mask requirements for schools through Friday, February 11, 2022. As a result of Executive Order 281, the Colts Neck Township Schools shall maintain Board of Education Policies and Regulations regarding mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in the following circumstances:

On Monday, February 7, 2022, Governor Murphy announced that the indoor mask requirement for students, staff, and visitors in schools would end, effective Monday, March 7, 2022. On Monday, March 7, 2022, the Colts Neck Township Schools will operate as “mask optional” .

For the 2022-2023 school year, the district will monitor the school community and surrounding areas for the [New Jersey Department of Health's COVID-19 Weekly CALI and Variant Surveillance Reports](#) to determine operational levels, protocols, and restrictions. The District will acknowledge and

recognize the following four categories of COVID-related activity and make operational adjustments based upon Executive Orders, NJDOH recommendations, and surrounding local, county, and state conditions:

Table 1: COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) ^{6a}					Table 2: COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) ^{6b}		
	Value	Case Rate ³	Percent CLI ⁴	Percent Positivity ⁵	Legend	Final Activity Level	CALI Score
Low	1	< 1	< 1.68%	< 3 %		Low	1
Moderate	2	1-10	1.68 - 5.51%	3-10 %		Moderate	2
High	3	10.01-25	5.52 - 13.08%	10.01-20 %		High	3
Very High	4	> 25	> 13.08%	> 20%		Very High	4

Activity thresholds are adapted from:

- The U.S. Influenza Surveillance System Methods: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/overview.htm>
- CDC COVID-View: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>
- COVID-Act Now: <https://covidactnow.org/?s=856166>

The District also reserves the right to implement more restrictive measures at any point for purposes of minimizing the spread of communicable diseases and in accordance with Colts Neck Township Board of Education Policy 8451 – CONTROL OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASE.

In September 2021, the Colts Neck Township Schools provided full-day instruction for all students, PK-8. The district will implement the following COVID-related operating conditions, which shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Effective Monday, March 7, 2022 - The Colts Neck Township School will operate in a “mask optional” environment. Additional daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols in all school facilities and buses
- Daily use of Medify Air Purification Systems in all classrooms and school offices
- Rotation of Phoenix HEPA Air Scrubbers (2 per school building) in hallways / common areas of school buildings
- COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools (Updated 2.22.22):
https://www.state.nj.us/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf

*NOTE: All of the aforementioned operating conditions are subject to change and are based upon [COVID-19 Weekly CALI and Variant Surveillance Reports](#).

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.

- Effective Monday, March 7, 2022, the Colts Neck Township Schools will operate a “mask optional environment.
- Effective, Monday, March 7, 2022, masks for School Visitors and Volunteers shall be optional. School Volunteers shall continue to adhere to requirements (excluding the mask mandate) in accordance with the District’s requirements for School Volunteers. Requirements for School Volunteers can be accessed via the district website: https://www.coltsneckschools.org/parents/school_volunteer_information

Board of Education Policy 8600 – TRANSPORTATION:

- Bus Procedures to Reduce the Spread of Contagion
 - Drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff, including hand hygiene.
 - Bus drivers will be reminded to implement certain personal hygiene actions (e.g., frequent hand washing) and be afforded the opportunity to do so (such as having sufficient time between routes);
 - District vehicles will be cleaned and sanitized including seats, rails, and highly touch surfaces before each run.
 - Contracted transportation providers shall be required to clean and sanitize seats, rails, and highly touched surfaces before each run. The district shall collaborate with the contracted service provider to develop these procedures and ensure that they are consistently followed. The contracted service provider shall collaborate with the district in establishing cleaning/sanitation protocols that are consistent with social distancing practices. The contracted service provider shall ensure that employees are fully trained in the implementation of the established protocols:
 - E. All personnel responsible for cleaning school buses shall document the cleaning/sanitizing measures taken. Personnel are required to:
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the established protocols that must be taken to properly clean and sanitize the bus; and provide a certification that, before the route commenced, the required process was completed as required.
 - These procedures will include a minimum of two stages: cleaning, which removes dirt and germs from surfaces; and disinfecting, which kills germs on surfaces that remain after cleaning.
 - The procedures will identify sanitizing agents that may be used and will be limited to products included in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s list of products that have been shown to be effective against COVID-19.

Minimum Quarantine Time Frames:

The District will require staff and students to quarantine time frames in accordance with the most current recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Health.

- Covid + Students: (Symptomatic and Asymptomatic):
 - A COVID+ student must isolate for at least 5 full days, with day “zero” being the day symptoms began (for symptomatic individuals) or the day of the positive viral test specimen collection (for asymptomatic individuals)

- Day 0 - Symptoms began (for symptomatic individuals) or date of collection for the positive viral test (asymptomatic individuals)
- Days 1-5 - Isolation
- Day 6 - Return to school IF the COVID+ individual is fever-free without fever-reducing medication for at least 24 hours, and/or free of other COVID-related symptoms.
 - Isolated students shall be eligible for available remote instruction within 24-hours from the date of notification to the district.
 - If symptoms persist, a COVID + individual shall continue to isolate.
- For the 2022-2023 School, close contacts (school related or non-school related) will not be required to quarantine. Close contacts who live with a COVID+ individual will be encouraged to monitor personal health.

Post- Travel Quarantine Requirements:

- As of May 17, 2021, New Jersey's travel advisory is no longer in effect.

Quarantine-Related Remote Learning / 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.

Student Lunches and Recess:

- The district will continue the facilitation of lunches with its food management service and allow students to purchase lunches as they did prior to the COVID pandemic.
- All schools will maintain seating charts for lunch periods
- Students in Grades Pk-5 will have assigned seating for lunch periods
- Playgrounds will be available during recess periods at Conover Road Elementary School and Conover Road Primary School.
 - Playgrounds will be disinfected, nightly, after student dismissal

A. Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette:

- The Board promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of illness such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette;; and signs and messages in and around school buildings. ● Where sinks for handwashing are not available, all schools may prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
- Students and staff will be encouraged to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always

before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing.

B. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation.

- School officials shall continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures as well as new specific requirements for additional disinfecting of facilities.
- The District's Plan establishes cleaning and disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used including:
 - (a) A schedule for daily routine cleaning and disinfection.
 - (b) Daily cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched which includes cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g. door knobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops).
 - (c) Use of all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. A list of products that the district is using and are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available on the district's website.
 - (d) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.). Examples of frequently touched areas in schools are:
 - (i) Classroom desks and chairs
 - (ii) Lunchroom tables and chairs
 - (iii) Door handles and push plates
 - (iv) Kitchens and bathrooms
 - (v) Light switches
 - (vi) Handles on equipment (e.g. athletic equipment);
 - (vii) Shared telephones
 - (viii) Shared desktops
 - (ix) Shared computer keyboards and mice
 - (x) Drinking fountains; and
 - (xi) School bus seats and windows.
- Sanitize bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- As an additional strategy to mediate risk of in-school COVID transmission, the district purchased Medify Air Purifiers for all classrooms and school offices throughout the district.

The Colts Neck Board of Education revised Regulation 5310 HEALTH SERVICES for symptomatic staff and students, which includes the following:

- (a) The school principal or his or her designee shall establish an isolation space
- (b) Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 shall be safely and respectfully isolated from others. School officials will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.
 - Re-admittance policies consistent with Department of Health guidance and information for schools and Department of

Health/Communicable Disease Services Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19.

Updated COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing Guideline document from NJDOH: (April 2022)

Schools, Childcare, and Institutions of Higher Education K-12 schools and childcare facilities provide essential services for children and families. As case counts decline, NJDOH recommends that case investigation and contact tracing continue in these settings especially if implementing Test to Stay (TTS) strategies (K-12 only). There are no changes in recommendations for isolation and quarantine and identifying and excluding close contacts is the best way to safely maximize in-person learning/attendance. Notification of close contacts should occur within 5 days of their last known exposure to someone with COVID-19. K-12 Schools: Schools should track COVID-19 vaccination status among students and staff and should continue to require parent/staff reporting of COVID-19 cases and close contact exposures. Depending on local circumstances and the ability of the ill individual to recall close contacts, schools should elicit close contacts from ill students or the parents of ill students so that these individuals can be notified of exposure by the school. K-12 schools should continue to report COVID-19 activity weekly to NJDOH via the CDRSS SIC Module. While identifying and excluding close contacts is the best way to exclude the fewest number of students from school/childcare and maximize in-person learning and attendance, various factors may impact a school's ability to efficiently conduct contact tracing effectively. If schools are unable to determine who a student's close contacts are, LHDs should discuss other strategies with their NJDOH Epidemiologist.

For the 2022-2023 school year, and in accordance with Executive Directive No. 21-011, schools must report weekly student and staff case counts as well as information on student/staff censuses, and the total numbers of students/staff fully vaccinated to NJDOH through the Surveillance for Influenza and COVID-19 (SIC) Module in CDRSS.

C. Diagnostic and screening testing (all methods will be tiered based upon New Jersey Department of Health and New Jersey Department of Education Requirements for Schools):

- The Colts Neck Township Board of Education has revised Regulation 5310 HEALTH SERVICES regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure. These screening procedures include the following:
 - Staff must visually check students for symptoms upon arrival
 - Confirm with families that students are free of COVID-19 symptoms
 - Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. ▪ Results will be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed
 - Screening protocols shall consider students with disabilities and accommodations that may be needed in the screening process for those students
- Screening: For the 2022-2023 school year, all parents/guardians are requested to screen children at home. The district reserves the right to implement a Daily Health Screening Form for all students and staff if COVID-related conditions make it necessary and/or required to do so.

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

- Staff: Colts Neck Township Schools partnered with CentraState Medical Center in Freehold, New Jersey to coordinate vaccine efforts for staff. This was coordinated in alignment with the announcement that effective March 15, 2021 all PK-12 Educational Staff Members were eligible to receive COVID vaccines.
- Additionally, the district has used email to share with staff and the school community numerous vaccine opportunities sponsored by the Monmouth County Department of Health as well as the Monmouth County Board of County Commissioners.
- Students: The district has shared with its community, via email, CentraState's COVID vaccine walk-in clinic information for individuals 12+. Additionally, the district maintains vaccine information for eligible individuals on its website under its "COVID-19" tab.

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

- (a) Home instruction/services shall be consistent with the student's Individualized Education Plan Program (IEP) to the most appropriate extent possible.
- (b) Medical concerns included within the "Medical Alert" portion /attachment to a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) shall be reviewed and considered in the recommendations for scheduling students for services and inclusion in educational programs, consistent with the most appropriate and least restrictive environment.
- (c) Students with out-of-district placements shall be monitored, with services and educational programs identified in IEPs. The district shall consult with students' schools of attendance regarding the nature and delivery of instruction.

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)

The district will ensure continuity of academic services by way of the following:

- Facilitating a four-week Summer Bridge Program for students K-8, in SEL, Instrumental Music, Science, Mathematics, and ELA.
- School Counselors working with students during Summer Bridge
- The district will offer before and after school targeted intervention programs to support identified students in the areas of mathematics and language arts.
- The district will continue to identify students for targeted assistance programs, with rolling/flexible entrance and exit dates.

The district will ensure the continuity of services for student and staff SEL by way of the following:

- SEL services designed around results from SEL assessments
- Continuation of professional development/ training in the practice of Mindfulness
- School-Wide Programs and Advisories to promote students engagement and school community initiatives

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: In May 2020, the Colts Neck Township Schools Board of Education established its Ad-Hoc Reopening Committee. In January 2021, the Board revised the charter for this committee and renamed it the Ad-Hoc Pandemic Response Committee.

June 2021 - DRAFT Safe Return Plan to members of the Board of Education, the District notified the school community, via email, of the plan being presented at the June 16, 2021 Regular Meeting of the Board of Education.

- During that meeting, public comment was permitted.
- Post June 16th, 2021 Board of Education Meeting, the Draft Safe Return Plan was posted to the website with a link to a Google Form. Through that Google Form, the public was invited to provide comments on the plan through July 30, 2021.

August 2021 - REVISED Safe Return Plan emailed to staff and members of the school community via email prior to September 1, 2021.

- The revised plan was posted to the District's website and allowed for Public Comments through September 30, 2021.

February 2022 - CNTSD's Parent/Guardian Safe Return Plan Survey - Procedural Topics

- Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 281 which extended the mandated mask for all public schools. If / when this mask mandate is lifted, school districts may have the opportunity to make masks optional.
- Notification of COVID+ Activity to the School Community

April 2022 - Section 2001(i)(2) of the American Rescue Plan Act

November 2022 - In accordance with the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARPESSER III), districts accepting ARP-ESSER funding are required to update the Safe Return Plan for the continued safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, as well as post the updated plans on their websites as required by ARP Act section 2001(i)(1).

December 13, 2022: The revised Colts Neck Township Safe Return Plan will be recommended for approval by the Colts Neck Township on 12/13/22 Board Agenda. Constituents will have an opportunity to review this revised plan and provide public comment at the December 13, 2022 public Board of Education Meeting.

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.

This plan has been written in English, the primary language for parents/guardians of Colts Neck; however, the district will provide a translation of the plan to parents/guardians upon request.