

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT



Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year



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Introduction

On June 28, 2021, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) worked collaboratively to develop a guidance document called “The Road Forward – Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-22 School Year.” This document assists New Jersey school districts to develop a plan to reopen schools in September, 2021 to best meet the school district's local needs.

The Chesterfield Township School District will provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 School Year. This following guidance includes a range of strategies the district will implement to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time in-person learning. While the State is committed to a resumption of normalcy for next school year, we will continue to monitor the data and our decisions will be guided by health professionals to ensure that we maintain a safe and healthy school community.

Section 1: General Health and Safety Guidelines

Section 1.1: Vaccinations

During the spring of the 2020-2021 School Year, the Chesterfield Township School District provided staff with the opportunity to participate in a vaccination clinic organized through the Burlington County Department of Health. The District also provided staff with information about other opportunities for vaccination clinics run throughout the South Jersey area.

On July 24, 2021 the District worked with the FEMA and the Burlington County Department of Health (BCDOH) to host a vaccination clinic at the school.

During the 2021-2022 School Year, the District will continue to provide staff with information about opportunities for vaccination clinics hosted by multiple organizations.

As a PK-6 grade school district, the District awaits the availability of a vaccine for children and will make every effort to inform parents of vaccination clinics that conduct vaccinations for children when available.

Section 1.2: Communication

The Chesterfield Township School District monitors the COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) weekly as the activity level is a factor in health and safety protocols such as quarantine time frames. During the 2020-2021 School Year, the Superintendent published a weekly update each Thursday with information specific to COVID-19. The Superintendent will discontinue the weekly letter during the 2021-2022 School Year; however, the District will maintain a COVID-19 Dashboard on the district website that will be updated weekly. The dashboard will report current COVID-19 levels and information. The District will continue to maintain an open line of communication with the BCDOH for guidance and support and will keep the school community informed as needed.

Section 1.3: Masks

On Friday, August 6, 2021, New Jersey Governor Murphy announced Executive Order Number 251 mandating the use of masks for all staff, students, and visitors in all public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools. This EO was effective on Monday, August 9, 2021.

EO 251 states:

“NOW, THEREFORE, I, PHILIP D. MURPHY, Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. All public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools (collectively "school districts"), must maintain a policy 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:

- a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;*
- b. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask without assistance;*
- c. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face mask;*
- d. When the individual is under two (2) years of age;*
- e. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask;*
- f. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;*
- g. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or*
- h. When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.*

2. This Order shall not impact the obligation of any school district to comply with requirements issued by the CDC on masking on public transportation conveyances, including school district transportation.

3. The State Director of Emergency Management, who is the Superintendent of State Police, shall have the discretion to make additions, amendments, clarifications, exceptions, and exclusions to the terms of this Order.

4. It shall be the duty of every person or entity in this State or doing business in this State and of the members of the governing body and every official, employee, or agent of every political

subdivision in this State and of each member of all other governmental bodies, agencies, and authorities in this State of any nature whatsoever, to cooperate fully in all matters concerning this Order, and to cooperate fully with any Administrative Orders issued pursuant to this Order.

5. No municipality, county, or any other agency or political subdivision of this State shall enact or enforce any order, rule, regulation, ordinance, or resolution which will or might in any way conflict with any of the provisions of this Order, or which will or might in any way interfere with or impede its achievement.

6. Penalties for violations of this Order may be imposed under, among other statutes, N.J.S.A. App. A:9-49 and -50. 7. This Order shall take effect on Monday, August 9, 2021 and shall remain in effect until revoked or modified by the Governor.”

Face masks must cover an individual’s nose, mouth and chin and are to be worn by all students, staff and visitors at all times except those times outlined in EO 251. In the event an individual is medically unable to wear a mask, a physician’s note indicating such will be required. Proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings will be taught and reinforced.

- 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.
- Disposable face masks should be changed daily or when visibly soiled, damp, or damaged.
- 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.
- Students, staff, and visitors will have access to additional disposable masks in case a back-up mask is needed.

The mask mandate for arrival, dismissal, and buses may be waived when the superintendent determines that excessive heat is a health concern.

Section 1.4: Physical Distancing and Cohorting

The Chesterfield Township School District will allow for social distancing to the maximum extent practical and in accordance with applicable NJDOH and NJDOE guidance. In addition to physical distancing, or if the school is not able to maintain recommended physical distance, additional modifications will be considered including turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of a table, spaced apart, and utilizing individual classroom filtration systems installed as part of the building’s HVAC system.

The District will implement the following mitigation strategies in the classroom:

- Three-feet or more distancing between students in the classroom when possible.
- All student desks facing forward to avoid grouped seating.
- Use of cohorts.
- Individual classroom filtration system as part of the building's HVAC system.

When possible, formations of cohorts of students will be used to minimize risk of community spread as well as inform contact tracing procedures. On buses, drivers will maintain records and seating charts for each run to more easily facilitate contact tracing if needed.

Section 1.5: Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the district requires regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to/following eating, sharing materials and use of district outdoor equipment. If soap and water are not readily available, use of provided hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol is required. School nurses will instruct and reinforce proper hand washing protocols for all students and staff.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizing stations and/or alcohol-based hand/surface wipes will be available in each classroom, in several areas within/outside the building and at each entrance/exit. All stations and wipes are at least 60% alcohol and EPA approved for use by students and staff. Empty soap dispensers, hand sanitizer, and paper towel dispensers will need to be replenished continuously. A basic responsibility of all custodial and maintenance staff are to inspect the dispensers in their respective areas and refill as needed.

Proper hand hygiene will be reinforced as follows:

- Upon arrival at school
- Before and after meals and snacks
- After using the bathroom
- Before dismissal
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into a tissue
- When hands are visibly soiled

School nurses will instruct students and staff of the proper procedures for covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue if maskless.

Section 1.6: Meals

Every effort will be made to maintain as much distance between students as possible in the cafeteria and/or assigned rooms during lunch. Students will be assigned dining areas with their class and all classes will follow a weekly rotation of dining areas. Students will dine in the

cafeteria and their classroom and outside when possible.

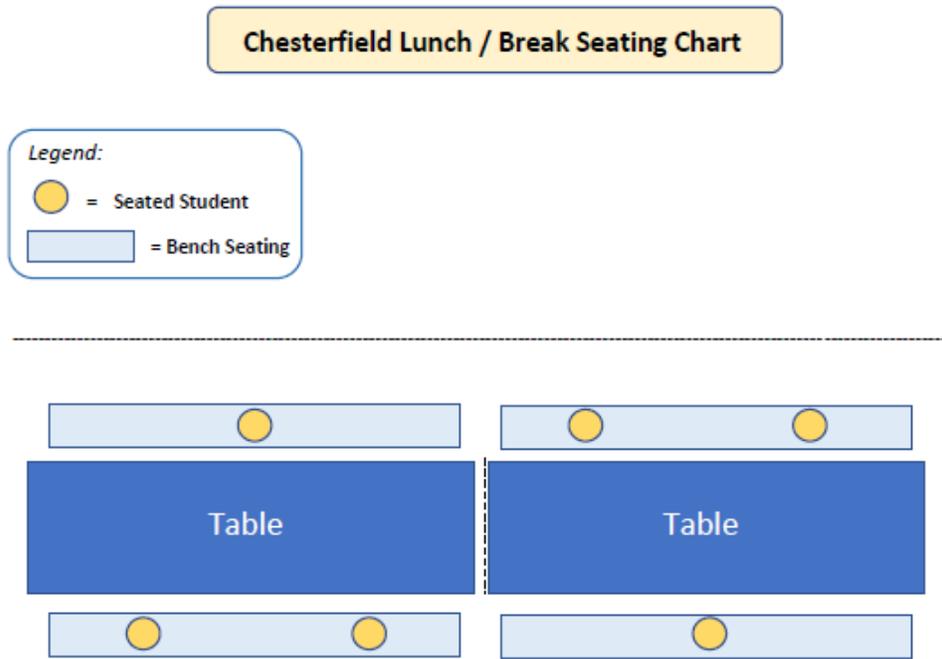
All meals served to students in a location other than the cafeteria will be delivered to eliminate student lunch lines. Students will also be discouraged from sharing food. Cleaning and disinfecting will occur between each group utilizing the designated dining area.

The District will implement the following mitigation strategies for lunch:

- Three-feet or more distancing between students when possible
- Staggered seating arrangements
- Meals eaten in the cafeteria, classrooms, and outside spaces on a weekly rotational basis
- Meals served to students in a location other than the cafeteria will be delivered to eliminate student lunch lines
- Cleaning/disinfecting between groups

Using our first lunch, the 5th and 6th grade lunch as an example, here is a description of what it will look like in the dining areas:

Grade 6 will dine in the cafeteria the first week while 5th grade will dine outside or in the classrooms for the first week. The 6th graders who dine in the cafeteria will be seated 3 feet apart with students on the opposite side of the table staggered (see figure below). Using this seating arrangement, each cafeteria table will safely seat 6 students. We will use a similar seating arrangement for students who dine outside. In the classroom, students will eat at their desks, which are already arranged to face forward and are spaced 3 feet apart.



Section 1.7: Transportation

All Chesterfield Township School District students and staff will wear a mask when a passenger on a bus, regardless of vaccination status, as per CDC Federal Order.

The district will utilize the National Heat Index to exempt students and staff from wearing masks on school buses in extreme temperatures. Under extreme heat conditions, additional mitigation strategies such as opening all windows/roof vents will be used. Social distancing protocols will be in place to the greatest extent possible. School buses will follow a cleaning/disinfection protocol and will be sanitized between routes, when possible.

Section 2: Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

Section 2.1: Limited Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

The use of shared objects will be limited when possible or cleaned between uses. All classrooms receive individual classroom supplies and equipment to be used by their classroom group or cohort. Every effort is made for students to use personal supplies and materials. Designated areas are set up in the classroom for students to store personal items to keep them isolated from use by others. Any shared supplies and/or equipment is sanitized prior to and after an individual's use when possible. All classrooms and offices are supplied with hand sanitation stations and/or disinfecting wipes to be used for cleaning hands and/or surfaces.

Section 2.2: Cleaning and Disinfection

The Chesterfield Township School District will continue to adhere to required facilities cleaning procedures. We will continue to follow our cleaning and disinfection protocols used in the 2020-2021 School Year which maintains a focus on targeted areas and high touch surfaces.

On a daily basis, and at various times during the day, all “high touch” surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected. The District uses approved cleaning and disinfection products which are designed for use against SARS-SoV-2.

In the event that an individual exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, all spaces occupied by the infected individual will be cleaned and disinfected as per our cleaning/disinfection protocols. Areas used by the individual will be closed off for an extended period of time prior to cleaning/disinfecting. Ventilation will be increased within the space to improve air circulation. Custodians will follow protocols for cleaning/disinfecting an area occupied by a person who is symptomatic and/or tests positive for COVID-19.

Section 2.3: Improving Airflow

The building's HVAC system provides adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation in all areas. Recirculated air is mixed with outside/fresh air as part of normal operation. When practical, classroom windows will be opened to increase fresh air. The air in each indoor area also passes through individual air filtration units installed prior to the 2020-2021 School Year. When circumstances allow, activities, classes, or lunches may be held outdoors.

Section 3: Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Section 3.1: Parental Screening

Health monitoring will be done in conjunction with efforts taken at home with the parents of children attending school. Parents have the greatest information regarding the health of their children and are an integral part of this process. As such, students, staff, and others are monitored to ensure they are healthy and not exhibiting signs of illness by first educating all stakeholders (students, staff, and parents/guardians) on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Students, parents and employees will be asked to self-monitor at home before sending children to school and/or reporting to school or work using the **Daily COVID-19 Checklist**. Students and staff who present symptoms and/or are ill must stay home. Students or staff presenting any symptoms of illness after being evaluated by the school nurse may be sent home.

Section 3.2: Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Our school has a designated room to be utilized for isolation purposes. The isolation room can accommodate multiple individuals spaced at least 6 feet apart. Hygiene supplies, masks, tissues, and alcohol-based hand/surface wipes are available within the room. When occupied, the room is supervised by one of our school nurses following physical distancing protocols. Students will remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult. Once the isolation room is cleared, it will be cleaned and disinfected as per district protocols.

Section 3.3: Exclusion

Section 3.3.1 Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

Students or staff presenting any symptoms of illness will be evaluated by the school nurse based on the Daily COVID-19 Checklist for the following symptoms:

- 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.

Section 3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Upon a student or staff member presenting COVID-19 symptoms, individuals are placed in isolation or sent home. Students who have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days will be considered a close contact. These students are sent home and referred to a health care provider for testing or quarantine.

- 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.

As per the criteria above, the school district will consult and provide information to the BCDOH regarding the ill persons to include:

- Date of onset of symptoms
- Test results
- Date/Time in school building
- Close contacts and duration
- Name, address and phone number for the ill person's close contacts
- Vaccination status
- Any other pertinent information

Section 3.3.3 Exclusion

The district will adhere to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19:

- 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.
- An alternate diagnosis (including a positive strep test or influenza swab) without a negative COVID-19 test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school earlier than the timeframes above.

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.

The district will adhere to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts:

The CDC released guidance with options to shorten the quarantine time period following exposure to a confirmed positive case. While CDC and NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days as the preferred quarantine period, and thus the preferred school exclusion period, regardless of the community transmission level, it is recognized that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus. Additional information is described in NJDOH quarantine guidance.

To that end, excluded 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.

Section 4: Contact Tracing

Section 4.1: Contact Tracing

If a positive case is identified and administration is notified, contact tracing will begin immediately to determine close contacts. The School Nurse will facilitate contact tracing and work with the Burlington County Department of Health to provide the necessary information. This may include the individual's schedule, attendance records, and person to person contact information of staff and students that were exposed by being with the individual within approx six feet for at least 15 minutes cumulatively or longer within a 24 hour period. After consulting with the Burlington County Department of Health, the school will confidentially contact parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements. Identified individuals may also include siblings.

Section 5: Testing

Section 5.1: Diagnostic and Screening Testing

In the event of a potential positive case or close contact is detected, the school nurses will provide parents and/or guardians viral testing options in our community as identified by the Burlington County Department of Health.

Section 5.2 Live Streaming/Virtual Learning for Quarantined Students

If the district is confronted with an incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students; 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 district will provide virtual live-streamed instruction to those students.