

FRENCHTOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT



2021/2022 Health and Safety Protocols

*in accordance with "The Road Forward": Health and Safety Guidance for the
2021-2022 School Year and E.O. Nos. 251 and 253*

Adopted: August 24, 2021

Frenchtown Elementary School District 2021/2022 Health and Safety Protocols

INTRODUCTION

The physical and mental health and safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority; we cannot create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning without it. While it is impossible to eliminate all risk, every decision will be made with an eye to minimize it to the greatest possible extent.

As we have since the onset of the pandemic, the District's health, safety, and learning environment protocols follow recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NJ Department of Health (DOH), the NJ Department of Education (DOE), and requirements set forth in NJ Statutes, Codes, and Executive Orders. Protocols are intended to reduce risks to students and staff from SARS COV-2 while allowing for fulltime in-person programming.

Procedures will be updated as information is received from the CDC, NJDOH, NJDOE and as NJ Statutes, Codes and Executive Orders are implemented or edited.

Health and Safety Protocols

In accordance with the New Jersey Department of Education and Department of Health's "The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year," and Executive Orders No. 251 and 253, the Frenchtown School District offers the Fall 2021 health and safety protocols.

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Guidance Document/Resource:

[The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)

New Jersey Department of Education/New Jersey Department of Health - June 2021

[Executive Order No. 251](#) (8/6/21)

[Executive Order No. 253](#) (8/23/21)

Frenchtown Elementary School District 2021/2022 Health and Safety Protocols

1. GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

1.1 Vaccination

The Frenchtown Elementary School does not require students or staff members to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Proof of vaccination is also not required*, however, one may elect to submit a copy of the COVID-19 vaccination record to the school nurse to be kept as part of the student or staff member's confidential medical file.

*Please note in order to be exempt from Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts as described in Section 3.3, "Exclusion," proof of vaccination will be required.

In accordance with EO 253, the following individuals employed or contracted by Frenchtown Elementary School shall be fully vaccinated by October 18, 2021 or shall submit to a minimum of once per week COVID-19 test:

- All individuals employed by a preschool to Grade 12 setting, both full- and part-time, including, but not limited to, administrators, teachers, educational support professionals, individuals providing food, custodial, and administrative support services;
- Substitute teachers, whether employed directly by a preschool to Grade 12 setting or otherwise contracted; and,
- Contractors, providers, and any other individuals performing work in preschool to Grade 12 settings whose job duties require them to make regular visits to such covered settings, including volunteers.

(This does not include individuals who visit the covered setting only to provide one-time or limited-duration repairs, services, or construction.)

1.2 Communication

The Superintendent of Schools will maintain ongoing communication with the Hunterdon County Health Department, the Hunterdon County School Districts, and the NJDOE through the Hunterdon County Office.

Knowing that SARS-COV-2 may impact certain areas of the region and county differently, it is vitally important to maintain continued communication with the Hunterdon County Health Department and the NJDOH to ascertain information regarding transmission levels at the regional and local levels. This information will be used to make informed decisions regarding FES procedures and may necessitate changes to existing protocols.

The Superintendent of Schools will share information with the Board of Education and convey information to the School Community via email communication.

1.3 Masks

In accordance with Governor Murphy's [Executive Order No. 251](#), effective Monday, August 9, 2021 all students, educators, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks indoors for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Please know that this Executive Order is legally binding; it is not discretionary.

Masks are not required for outdoor learning or activities. Frequent mask breaks shall be provided.

Violation of "any order, rule or regulation adopted by the Governor" constitutes, per App.A.9-49, a disorderly persons offense which is subject to 6 months imprisonment or up to \$1,000 fine or both. Per App.A.9-50, anyone who knowingly aids or abets another in the violation of an Executive Order under the Disaster Control Act may also be found to be a disorderly person and punishable in the same manner.

Students who do not wear a mask to school will be provided one. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary consequences in accordance with the student disciplinary code, including but not limited to, isolation and being sent home from school and charged with an unexcused absence.

Exceptions will remain unchanged from the 2020-2021 school year, and include:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
- 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 covering;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- When an individual is engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering;
- When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- 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
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

Executive Order No. 253 clarifies that individuals seeking a medical exemption from mask wearing pursuant to the above exceptions will be required to produce written documentation from a medical professional to support that exemption. Self-attestations and parental attestations are not sufficient.

Per CDC Federal Order, masks must be worn by all passengers and drivers on school buses regardless of vaccine status and regional level of community transmission.

1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing and Cohorting

The District will attempt to continue to maintain three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent possible while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students. All students shall report to school each day, in person, in accordance with the bell schedule.

1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) are located and maintained in each classroom and office, at entrances and exits of buildings, and near lunchrooms and toilets.
- For classrooms and offices that have existing hand-washing stations have been prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
- [Staff and students should wash hands](#) for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their noses/coughing/sneezing. Staff and students should use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.

To contain respiratory secretions, all persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of presumed cause, are instructed to cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing; use tissues to contain respiratory secretions; dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use; and perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

1.6 Meals

School meals (breakfast and lunch) shall be provided to all interested students at no cost via the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option for the 2021/22 school year. The District contracts with Maschio's Food Service, Inc. to provide school meals.

Physical distancing will be practiced to the greatest extent possible. Students will be required to sit in the same lunch seat each day for contact tracing purposes. Students are encouraged to wash their hands before and after lunch.

1.7 Transportation

Masks/Face coverings are required on school buses regardless of the staff member or student's vaccination status per the CDC's Federal Order.

Permitted face coverings: Per CDC recommendations, face masks and gaiters which consist of two or more layers of washable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly against sides of face without gaps, and have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask are permitted.

Face coverings that are NOT permitted: Face masks made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape, and face shields are not permitted.

Students will board buses from back to front and disembark front to back. Family members will be seated together. To improve air flow, bus windows may be open when weather conditions permit.

If occupancy allows, maximized physical distance between students shall be maintained. School buses shall continue to be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the COVID-19 cleaning protocols.

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2. Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Airflow

2.1 Limited Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

The District shall provide, to the best of its ability, adequate supplies (i.e. classroom supplies, equipment) to minimize sharing of high-touch materials or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect routinely and preferably between use.

Students and staff are encouraged to follow hand hygiene practices between use of shared items. Shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected are discouraged from use.

2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

The District has developed and will maintain a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. The District utilizes EPA-approved products for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and follows the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). Frequently touched areas in schools such as classroom desks and chairs, door handles and push plates, bathrooms, light switches, and shared computer keyboards are cleaned and disinfected daily.

For the full protocols, please refer to the FES' Fall 2020 School Reopening Plan, Key Subject Area 1 (Conditions for Learning) Critical Area 7 (Facilities Cleaning Practices).

2.3 Improving Air Flow

All FES facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and risk systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component. Filter(s) for A/C units are maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

Classroom doors may remain open during the school day to increase air flow. Windows, when appropriate, will be opened. To improve airflow on school buses, windows may be open weather permitting.

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3. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Staff and Students

3.1 Parental Screening

Parents/caregivers are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. The District shall strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff (section 3.3 Exclusion).

Students and employees may be asked to leave or not come into school if they test positive for COVID-19 or exhibit:

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.

3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Students and staff members who arrive at school with or develop the following COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be safely and respectfully isolated from others in designated isolation spaces. Students shall remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

District health personnel shall follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.

Re-admittance policies for students and staff shall be consistent with Department of Health guidance and information for schools and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service's Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19.

3.3 Exclusion

The District will comply with the NJDOH and NJDOE exclusion recommendations, and are subject to change. All days listed are calendar days.

Currently, COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19 is as follows:

- 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.

Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts

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)

Schools serving medically complex or other high-risk individuals should use a 14-day exclusion period for the exclusion of these individuals or those who work closely with them when identified as close contacts in all levels of community transmission.

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.

*Please note in order to be exempt from Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts, proof of vaccination will be required.

Remote Instruction /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.

If the District is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the District shall offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible, i.e. Google Meet.

On these days, students will receive class invites on their google calendars beginning at first period. Students will follow the in-person school day remotely. There will not be a live link for lunch, recess, and or physical education class. Please contact your teacher with any questions.

Closure for Declared State of Emergency

Should the entire District be required to close for more than three consecutive days due to a declared 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, the District will provide remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction that will count towards the District's 180-day requirement. All students will follow the in-person instruction model, with minor adjustments, using a virtual platform.

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4. Contact Tracing

Per the CDC, close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain cases, it may be difficult to determine whether students or staff have met this criterion so an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed and excluded from school for a period of time. *We highly encourage parents to establish a back-up plan for their child to be supervised (during remote learning) if we need to follow this protocol to ensure safety.*

Exception: In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition **excludes students** who were within **3 to 6 feet of an infected student** (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting. (updated 8/21)

School nurses and District administration will work in collaboration with the Hunterdon County Department of Health to identify and contact close contacts.

5. Testing

FES will not perform SARS-CoV-2 antigen testing. The District may assist in providing testing options in the community for the testing of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.