

Safe Return Plan

2023-2024



Fairfield Public Schools

June 1, 2021

Revised: October 1, 2021

Revised: March 7, 2022

Revised: September 20, 2022

Reapproved: December 15, 2022

Reapproved: June 15, 2023

Revised: December 14, 2023



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](#), 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 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](#) 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.

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

LEA Name: **Fairfield Public Schools**

Date: **06/01/2021**

Date Revised: **10/01/2021, 03/07/2022, 09/20/2022, 12/14/2023**

Date Reapproved: **12/15/2022, 6/15/2023**

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–J), 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.

Section A - Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

Fairfield Public School District is following guidance provided by Governor Murphy to lift the universal mask mandate as of March 7, 2022, and had implemented a mask optional policy.

Section B - Physical Distancing

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for physical distancing to the maximum extent practical. Building administrators, teachers, staff and the District's Maintenance Department collaborate on the configurations of classroom, lunchrooms and instructional spaces and other areas to maintain appropriate social distancing to the maximum extent practical. If instructional and non-instructional rooms cannot comply with distancing standards, modifications will be taken into consideration when feasible.

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Maintaining Health and Safety

Section C - Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

Handwashing: District administrators in conjunction with the Facilities Department will continue to support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies at the District's expense, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and cloth face coverings (as feasible). Hand washing stations will be maintained with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Signage will be displayed throughout buildings to encourage hand washing and sanitizing.

Respiratory Etiquette: Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands throughout the school day, including but not limited to before eating, after eating, using the bathroom, after blowing their nose/sneezing/coughing. Through ongoing general education and health education lessons, students will be reminded of the proper ways to wash and sanitize their hands.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section D - Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities, Including Improving Ventilation

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation. The District will continue to clean and disinfect all rooms in all schools on a regular basis. The District purchases disinfecting products and equipment, including sanitizing sprayers and dedicated microfiber cloths. Custodians have been trained in the use of cleaning products utilized by the District and proper cleaning methods. The District will continue to purchase appropriate cleaning supplies & equipment, and conduct periodic audits of custodial cleaning practices. The District has (and will continue) to upgrade building HVAC control systems, purchase high quality HVAC filters, and increase the frequency of HVAC filter changes.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section E - Contact Tracing in Combination with Isolation and Quarantine, in Collaboration with the State and Local Health Departments

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine. Per the July 6, 2022 New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools, Childcare and Youth Camps, the District transitioned away from a case-investigation response model to a routine disease control model in schools. This model focuses more on response to clusters of cases, outbreaks, and evidence of ongoing transmission in a particular setting, and less on individual case investigation and contact tracing.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section F - Diagnostic and Screening Testing

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for diagnostic and screening testing. Families and staff are encouraged to refrain from attending school or work when sick or exhibiting COVID like symptoms. Families and staff are encouraged to monitor for symptoms and test following the onset of symptoms or after a potential exposure. The District website provides information regarding quarantine and isolation protocols, screening and handling of symptomatic students and staff, travel protocols, masking and testing resources.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section G - Efforts to Provide Vaccinations to School Communities

Fairfield Public School District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and provides information regarding access to vaccinations on the District website.

Maintaining Health and Safety

Section H - Appropriate Accommodations for Children with Disabilities with Respect to Health and Safety Policies

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for children with disabilities, in regards to their health and safety. The District, in accordance with guidance from the NJ Department of Health, NJ Department of Education, and the local health agency, provides appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities that include but are not limited to the availability of clear facemasks, face shields, plexiglass dividers, mask tolerance behavioral programming, telehealth related services while permitted via the state, social distancing, individual material sets, and in-home behavioral supports when appropriate. Student needs are assessed on an individual basis and accommodations and modifications as provided.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

Section A – Describe how the LEA (Local Education Agency) 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.

Fairfield Public School District is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for ensuring continuity of services.

Academic Needs: Fairfield employs a NJTSS Model for social/behavioral support and has a full-time guidance counselor in each school. Student academic progress will be continually monitored through both state and local assessments. Data will be analyzed at regular intervals to determine when individual or curricular interventions are necessary.

Mental Health: Counselors visit classrooms regularly to deliver the District’s SEL curriculum. A universal screener is utilized in grades K-6 to identify those students who may be in need of individualized mental health interventions. Teachers are encouraged to check in daily with students to talk about their emotional state and with a counselor, when needed, to discuss his/her own emotional state. The District will continue to focus resources on the planning for, preparation of, and support of student mental health initiatives.

3. Public Comment

Section A - How did the District seek public comment on its plan?

The Safe Return Plan was approved at the June 10, 2021 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

A revised Safe Return Plan was approved at the October 19, 2021 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

A revised Safe Return Plan was approved at the April 28, 2022 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

A revised Safe Return Plan was approved at the September 20, 2022 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

The Safe Return Plan was reapproved at the December 15, 2022 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

The Safe Return Plan was reapproved at the June 15, 2023 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

The revised Safe Return Plan was approved at the December 14, 2023 Board of Education meeting. Public had an opportunity to comment on agenda items.

Section B - How will the District ensure the plan is understandable for parents?

The District has adopted the basic plan template provided by the New Jersey Department of Education.

Following Board approval, the plan will be posted on the District website.