



## COVID-19 Health & Safety Plan

**Goals are for continued Continuity of Services as well as continued Safe Return to In-Person Instruction.**

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Date of Board Review: December 14, 2022  
Date of Board Review: October 25, 2023  
Date of Board Review: April 24, 2024



## **ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan**

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Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, hereinafter referred to as a *Health and Safety Plan*.

This plan addresses how RIU6 will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, and will serve as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities during the period of the ARP ESSER grant. The Health and Safety Plan should be tailored to the unique needs of each program and location of our services and must take into account public comment related to the development of, and subsequent revisions to, the Health and Safety Plan.

We will be continuously monitoring our Health and Safety Plan throughout the year and update as needed. All revisions should be reviewed and approved by our governing body prior to posting on the school entity's public website.

- ▶ RIU6 recognizes that each school entity is unique and the goal of RIU6 is to meld our Health and Safety Plans within the local culture of each school/learning environment that our staff operates, from K-12 and EI preschool classrooms to health care facilities and private academic providers. In the event that our staff work in a location without a defined plan, they default to our core plans for headquarters and early intervention, while working with their supervisor for their individual work space.
- ▶ Our Health & Safety plan is designed to address three major prongs: (1) safe operations, (2) teaching and learning procedures, and (3) staff and student wellness.
- ▶ Our Health & Safety plan is designed to follow the guidance of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in cooperation with the PA Department of Education and PA Department of Public Health.

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction	.....	1
Section 1: Type of Reopening	.....	3
Section 2: Key Questions	.....	4
Section 3: Requirements Being Met	.....	7
Section 4: Additional Resources	.....	8
Section 5: Pandemic Coordinator / Team	.....	9
Section 6: Summary	.....	10
Section 7: Post Public Health Emergency Planning & Implementation.....		11
Section 8: Board Affirmation	.....	12

## **Health and Safety Plan: RIVERVIEW INTERMEDIATE UNIT 6**

### **Section 1: Type of Reopening**

All decision-makers should be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risk within a school population. The goal is to keep transmission as low as possible to safely continue school activities. All school activities must be informed by the latest CDC regulations and guidance. The administration has categorized reopening in-person instruction into four broad phases based on the safety precautions that are being recommended at the Federal, State, and Local levels with consideration to the transmission levels and number of identified cases in each school setting or community setting:

- (1) FULL IN-PERSON instruction = students and staff attending daily for full days (as RIU6 has been since late last winter)
- (2) HYBRID instruction = some combination/rotation of in-person and virtual days for RIU6 staff and students
- (3) TEMPORARILY VIRTUAL instruction = 0-4 weeks of virtual instruction
- (4) FULL VIRTUAL instruction = 1 month or more of all virtual instruction due to local, State, or Federal shut down of schools.

Depending upon the public health conditions in any county within the Commonwealth, there could be additional actions, orders, or guidance provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH), and/or the CDC, which will influence the decisions made by the local administration. Each RIU6 staff member is placed in a school setting or community environment and are expected to follow the plan for the local environment/school. When no plan exists, they can revert to this plan for headquarter staff. Some counties may not experience a straight path from 1 to 2 to 3 to 4, instead, cycling back and forth between less restrictive to more restrictive designations as public health indicators improve or worsen. This means that each staff member should account for changing conditions in your local Health and Safety Plan to ensure fluid transition from more to less restrictive conditions in each of the designations as needed.

## Section 2: Key Questions

- How the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, implement prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?

*Answer: The RIU6 Administration will follow the latest CDC guidelines and have regional leadership meetings with all the local school districts and county safety personnel to keep up to date. Information will be passed to staff through their local school leaders and supervisors as well as through RIU6 leadership for safety and security protocols and response to situations and outbreaks.*

- How the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;

*Answer: The RIU6 Administration will utilize a vast array of service providers to ensure students' needs are met through the IEP process and daily instruction (whether in-person or virtual). We utilize special education teachers, Training and Consultation (TAC) facilitators, specialists in autism and behavior, social workers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech therapists to help students and staff members with their social, emotional, and mental health needs, as well as cooperate with the local school personnel to meet the students' health and nutrition needs. In these realms, we will continue to provide professional development for staff, research best practices, and follow the latest CDC guidelines.*

- 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 policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC?

*Answer: The RIU6 Administration will follow the latest CDC guidelines to the greatest extent practical within the context of the local environment for which education is occurring. We will have staff training on the items at the beginning of each year and quarterly throughout the year with in-service days. Information will be passed to staff through their local school leaders and supervisors as well as through RIU6 leadership for safety and security protocols and response to situations and outbreaks. Below is the list of safety recommendations and how we are treating them at the local level:*

- Universal and correct wearing of masks:

*General Rule is required of all staff and students when CDC guidance requires a mask.*

- *Masks are required for all persons on transportation to and from school and in-school when CDC requires a mask.*
- *Exceptions to wearing a mask one in the school setting, during the school day, are only those permitted through law and CDC guidelines (young age, education exceptions, and vaccination status)*
- Modifying facilities to allow for [physical distancing](#) (e.g., use of cohorts/podding):  
CDC guidelines will continue to be followed emphasizing 6 feet where able at all times, however reducing to 3 feet in classrooms where masks are universal and transmission levels are not high.
- [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#):  
Frequent hand washing emphasized per CDC regulations.
  - **Before, during, and after** preparing food
  - **Before and after** eating food
  - **Before and after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
  - **Before and after** treating a cut or wound
  - **After** using the toilet
  - **After** [changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet](#)
  - **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
  - **After** handling pet food or pet treats
  - **After** touching garbage
- [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving [ventilation](#):  
Cleaning and disinfection will occur daily and after use of high touch areas and if someone was sick. For ventilation, open windows and use of fans for “Air Out” procedures will be emphasized for improvement.
- [Contact tracing](#) in combination with [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#), in collaboration with State and local health departments:  
CDC guidelines will continue to be followed for contract tracing, isolation, and quarantines. Cohorting and special emphasis on limiting contact in general routines will be utilized to aid in the limitation of exposure if a student or staff member is exposed/sick. Consultation will continue with local health officials and the state DOH for situations of reporting and tracing transmission levels.
- [Diagnostic](#) and screening testing:

CDC guidelines will continue to be followed for diagnosis and screening procedures. Daily temperature and symptom checks will continue if required by CDC guidance and returning from quarantine and isolation will require negative test results where applicable.

- Efforts to provide COVID-19 [vaccinations to school communities](#):  
Just as we did in the spring of 2021 when we hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic, we will continue to support our local medial providers in distribution of the vaccine and are open to hosting a vaccination clinic again in the future if the need arises.
- Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and  
Any accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety will continue to be a priority in IEP team decisions and implementation. All of our staff will continuously receive professional development related to best practices and legally defensible IEPs in order to best meet the needs of each student within the guidance of the law.
- Coordination with state and local health officials.  
Ongoing regional school leadership meetings occur through Riverview Intermediate Unit 6. Our leadership continues to meet regularly with PDE, PEMA, and the PAIU network of job-alike meetings. Locally our schools meet with the DOH officials and the county EMA officials on a regular basis

### **Section 3: Requirements Being Met**

- The LEA's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the LEA's publicly available website by July 30, 2021.
- The ARP Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated.
- The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Each LEA will upload in the eGrants system its updated Health and Safety Plan and webpage URL where the plan is located on the LEA's publicly available website.
- The ARP Act requires LEAs to review their Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant.
- LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools.
- Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.
- LEAs may use the template to revise their current Health and Safety Plans to meet ARP requirements and ensure all stakeholders are fully informed of the LEA's plan to safely resume instructional and non-instructional school activities, including in-person learning, for the current school year.
- An LEA may use a different plan template or format provided it includes all the elements required by the ARP Act, as listed above.



## Section 4: Additional Resources

The following resources were reviewed in the development of the RIU6 Health and Safety Plan:

- RIU6 Reopening Health & Safety Plan 2020
- [CDC K-12 School Operational Strategy](#)
- [PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [PDE Roadmap for Education Leaders](#)
- [PDE Accelerated Learning Thorough an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)

## Section 5: Pandemic Coordinator / Team

Individual(s)	Stakeholder Group Represented	Pandemic Team Roles and Responsibilities (Options Above)
<b>Dr. Michael S. Stahlman</b>	Executive Leadership/Board of Directors	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Shawn Algoe</b>	Executive Leadership, Facilities & Safety Committee	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Mary Anne Jordan</b>	Department of Special Education	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Deanna Sintobin</b>	Department of Special Education	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Jason Williams</b>	Department of Technology	Plan Development
<b>Julie McElroy</b>	Department of Technology	Plan Development
<b>Greg Machokas</b>	Maintenance/Custodial & Safety Committee	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Lori Hargenrader</b>	Business Office & Insurance	Plan Development
<b>Daphne Himes</b>	Business Office & Safety Committee	Plan Development
<b>Sandy Clark</b>	Special Education – Early Intervention	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Brandon Maines</b>	Special Education – School Age Programs	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Cybill Reed</b>	Special Education – School Age Programs	Plan Development and Response Team
<b>Nick Pisarcik</b>	Special Education – School Age Programs	Plan Development and Response Team

*\*Personnel updated to reflect current staffing plan, post Public Health Emergency (PHE).*

## **Section 6: Summary of Responses:**

Staff and students returning to physical buildings will be guided by the local site plans for each district, school, and community site. In the absence of a local site plan, our staff will follow the guidance in this plan and work with their site supervisors to adapt the plan to each specific location. Intermediate Unit classrooms already have size restrictions so we will be closely monitoring social distancing in those settings through our site supervisors and rooms will be redesigned to follow recommended CDC guidelines. Engagement of stakeholders will be done through our network of meetings with our local school leaders and union leaders, our staff in-service days, our website for the general public, and our Local Task Force (LTF) meetings for parents. Our website and email networks will communicate the plan to our local communities and school districts. It will be reviewed and provided to parents as part of IEP meetings and program information at the start of the school year. IEP teams will be utilized for tracking social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and strategies for improvement in those areas. School closures, significant modifications to operations, and ongoing monitoring will be coordinated through our Superintendent and Special Education Director networks for school age classrooms, and the Early Intervention Programming will be coordinated with the local site administrator, our EI Supervisors, our Special Education Director, and our Executive Leadership. Face-to-Face instruction will be utilized to the extent feasible based on the local context and the mitigation recommendations of local, state, and federal officials at the time, with distance learning (virtual and correspondence) as the next step either in hybrid, temporary, or long term as deemed fit.

## Section 7: Post Public Health Emergency Planning & Implementation

As per the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DoH), the expiration of the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration does not mean the virus is gone. The best defense against COVID-19 remains getting vaccinated and continuing basic health and hygiene practices, like handwashing, staying home when sick and avoiding contact with people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19. The CDC will continue to track variants; you can find the latest information [here](#).

After May 11, 2023, when the PHE expired, much of the COVID-19 data that states were collecting will no longer be mandated to be reportable to the Department of Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has maintained updated COVID-19 vaccine locations and recommendations for children and adults. That information is available [here](#).

The PA DoH directs individuals seeking information about exposure and isolation to the CDC's guidance on "What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19" located [here](#).

For those individuals interested in tracking United States COVID-19 hospitalizations, deaths, emergency department (ED) visits, and test positivity by geographic area, you can access maps, charts and data for your respective county by accessing this [link](#).

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**IMPORTANT: As per a CDC [press release](#) issued on March 1, 2024, all COVID-19 related information has been folded into basic prevention guidance for respiratory illness.**

Each year, respiratory viruses are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States. In addition to the virus that causes COVID-19, there are many other types of respiratory viruses, including flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The respiratory virus guidance from the CDC is available by accessing this [link](#).

Multiple informational links exist within the new respiratory guidance, although key guidance exists within the [Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick](#).

Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others. You can now return to normal activities when, for at least 24-hours, both are true: 1) Your symptoms are getting better overall; and, 2) You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

## Section 8: Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors for **Riverview Intermediate Unit 6** reviewed and approved the Phased School Reopening Health and Safety Plan on August 25, 2021. The plan was approved by a unanimous vote.

As per the requirements of ARP ESSER, the RIU6 Health and Safety plan has been continually reviewed every 6-months, with the latest review being conducted at the **April 24, 2024** Board Meeting.

*Shawn A. Algoe*

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Signature of the School Safety & Security Coordinator

Shawn A. Algoe  
School Safety & Security Coordinator

Thomas Phillips  
Printed Name of RIU6 Board President