

Quinton Twp. School 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 (every two months), but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

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.

Local Education Agencies (LEA) must plan to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) worked collaboratively to develop the following guidance to operationalize that goal. This guidance includes a range of strategies that LEAs should consider implementing to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for fulltime in-person learning.

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

LEA Name: Quinton Township School

Date (09/14/2021):

Date Revised (7/27/2023):

1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

Where possible, the following recommendations should be used to develop a layered approach to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Schools should implement as many layers as feasible. LEAs should consider, in close consultation with their local and/or county public health officials, as many factors as feasible as they prepare for the 2023-2024 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the [community](#) at large and in their school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and their school community.

For each mitigation strategy listed below 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.

1.A. Vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination, including booster shots, remains the most critical strategy to prevent severe illness, protect students and staff, and reduce interruptions in learning and care. Schools/ECE are encouraged to speak with their LHD about options for equitable access to vaccines, including on-site or convenient off-site vaccination clinics. Now that everyone 6 months and older is eligible for COVID-19 vaccine doses, schools/ECE should encourage all students and staff to stay up to date with their vaccines, which includes additional doses for individuals who are immunocompromised and booster doses at regular time points. For the purpose of this document, “up to date” means someone has received all doses in the primary series and all recommended boosters when eligible. Schools/ECE should have a mechanism in place to track “up to date” vaccination status of students and staff and are required to report COVID-19 data into the NJDOH SIC Module in compliance with ED 21-011.

1.B. Communication

QTS school officials and local health departments should maintain close communication with each other to provide information and share resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control measures and to establish procedures for Local Health Department (LHD) notification and response to COVID-19 illness in school settings. QTS will work closely with LHDs as they make decisions regarding which mitigation strategies to implement.

1.C. Universal and correct wearing of masks

Please see the bullet points pertaining to masking:

- To support and prioritize uninterrupted, full-time, in-person learning, schools may transition away from a case investigation response model to a routine disease control model. This model focuses more on responding to clusters of cases, outbreaks, and evidence of ongoing transmission, and less on individual case investigation and contact tracing.
- In lieu of individual contact tracing, schools may consider providing cohort notifications (classroom, cohort, team) when exposures occur. Individuals and families can then take additional precautions based on individual needs.
- Quarantine is no longer recommended for people who are exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status. Therefore, NJDOH is discontinuing its recommendation for a Test to Stay Program.

- Asymptomatic students and staff who were exposed to COVID-19 should continue to test and wear a mask for 10 days. For those individuals who test positive, regardless of vaccination status, and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who have not been tested and do not have an alternative diagnosis from their healthcare provider, should stay at home for at least 5 full days after symptom onset or after the positive test. Individuals who have no symptoms, or symptoms resolve after 5 days and are fever-free for 24 hours, can return to school and wear a mask for an additional 5 days (days 6-10).
- Any student or staff member who is showing COVID like symptoms in school, could be required to wear a mask when entering the nurses office and while waiting to go home.

1.D. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- QTS teaches and reinforces [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- QTS encourages students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue during those limited instances when the individual may be unmasked.
 - Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
- QTS maintains adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- QTS assists/observes young children to ensure proper hand washing.

1.F. Meals

- Maximize physical distance as much as possible while eating
 - Avoiding offering self-serve food options.
 - Discouraging students from sharing meals.
 - Encouraging routine cleaning between groups.
 - Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned. Surfaces that come in contact with food will be washed, rinsed, and/or sanitized before and after meals.

1.G. Transportation

Masks are optional for passengers and drivers on school buses. School buses should be considered school property for the purpose of determining the need for prevention strategies.

- Masks are optional, regardless of vaccination status per CDC's Federal Order.
- If occupancy allows, maximize physical distance between students.
- Open windows to increase airflow in buses and other transportation, if possible.
- Regularly clean high touch surfaces on school buses at least daily.

For more information about cleaning and disinfecting school buses or other transport vehicles, read [CDC's guidance for bus transit operators](#).

2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Air Flow

2.1 Limit Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

- Ensure 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.
- Encourage hand hygiene practices between use of shared items.
- Discourage use of shared items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected.

2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

QTS will follow standard procedures for routine [cleaning and disinfecting](#) with an [EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2](#). There will be daily cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys.

2.3 Improving Airflow

QTS looks to continue to improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several strategies:

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible.
- If safe to do so, open windows and doors. Even just cracking open a window or door helps increase outdoor airflow, which helps reduce the potential concentration of virus particles in the air. If it gets too cold or hot, adjust the thermostat.
- Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (such as falling, exposure to extreme temperatures, or triggering asthma symptoms), or if doing so would otherwise pose a security risk.
- Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
- Consider having activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.
- Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Even just cracking windows open a few inches improves air circulation.

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

3.1 Parental Screening

Parents/caregivers will be 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. Schools should strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff (section 3.3 Exclusion - see below).

QTS continues to educate parents about the importance of monitoring symptoms and keeping children home while ill. QTS uses the Connect Ed outreach systems to provide reminders to staff and families to check for symptoms before leaving for school.

QTS provides clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and reasons for absences.

3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

QTS ensures that procedures are in place to identify and respond to a student or staff member who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms.

- QTS utilizes the nurse's office to isolate individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school.
- Students and staff that are exhibiting two or more COVID-19 symptoms could be required to wear a mask while in the nurse's office.

3.3 Exclusion

3.3.1 Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

Parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- 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.

For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms should be separated away from others until they can be sent home. Individuals will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider.

Persons with COVID-19- compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing

- QTS will notify LHDs when students or staff:
 - Only in the case of a suspected or confirmed outbreak

3.3.3 Exclusion

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 5 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 5 days from the positive test result.
- Any staff member or student who tests positive for COVID-19 may return as early as day 6 with no symptoms for 24 hours and must wear a mask from day 6 to 10.

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.

LEAs may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If an LEA 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 LEA should be prepared to offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible. In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.2

4. Testing

Quinton Township School is not offering testing to staff, and students.

4.1 Diagnostic Testing

At all levels of [community transmission](#), QTS will work with the local health department to identify rapid viral testing options in their community for the testing of symptomatic individuals and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

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)

QTS will ensure continuity of services for all sub-groups and mitigate learning gaps via curricular acceleration. The district will plan, design and implement Extended Learning Opportunities to provide struggling students with small-group instruction delivered by highly effective teachers. QTS will build a sustainable, tiered intervention model of school-based mental health supports and services to positively impact students in all sub-groups. Via SEL learning, our model will embed mental health in our school into an equitable system of support to enhance the fit of mental health concerns and to fully promote social-emotional learning while comprehensively addressing any barriers. Also, see Virtual Plan on Website.