

**Sussex Wantage Regional School District
Procedures for 2023-2024 School Year
LEA Virtual Remote Plan Included
(updated 7.20.23)**

As we move into the 2023-2024 school year, we are required to develop a plan for emergency virtual or remote instruction (Plan) to the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). These procedures are subject to change based on updated guidance from the Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Education, and/or the Governor of NJ.

1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

1.1 Vaccination: Schools are encouraged to have a system in place to determine the vaccination status of students and staff, however, if an LEA is unable to determine the vaccination status of individual students or staff, those individuals should be considered not fully vaccinated.

Plan for Staff: Staff were already given the opportunity to provide proof of vaccination voluntarily (copies of cards) to our school nurse at the beginning of the school year. At any point if a staff member becomes vaccinated, it is their responsibility to inform our school nurse and provide necessary documentation. If you do not provide proof of vaccination, you will be considered unvaccinated which may impact if you need to quarantine or not.

Plan for Students: Students will be required to demonstrate proof of vaccination in applicable situations such as quarantining.

1.2 Communication:

Plan: The school district will be in close communication with the Department of Health in all things related to COVID-19. Relevant information will be sent to parties as needed. The main methods of communication will be phone, email, and text through our messenger system.

1.3 Face Coverings (masks):

Plan: Face coverings became optional for all students, staff, and visitors in the school building and on transportation.

Plan: Masking will remain optional so long as the school district has the discretion to implement that.

If face masks are ever reinstated due, the following exemptions will be allowed:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors; as determined by the Superintendent
- 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 from all other individuals;
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing: Physical distancing must not prevent the school from offering full-day, full-time, in person learning to all students for the 2022-2023 school year.

Plan: When individuals are ill they should remain home. Students will move to different classes for special areas and if departmentalized (Grades 3-6).

1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Plan: To educate students on the proper hand washing with soap and water (or hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available). Hand sanitizer will contain 60% alcohol.

1.6 Meals

Plan: Students will eat in the cafeteria and maintain physical distance when feasible during receiving meals on the line, eating, and cleaning up. Barriers will no longer be used.

2 Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

2.1 Limit Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

Plan: Students will shift back to being able to utilize shared supplies as it has been proven the main spread of COVID-19 is aerosol. If an outbreak is identified, the BOE reserves the right to shift this practice to more restrictive.

2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

Plan: All spaces will be cleaned and disinfected nightly with products certified to kill COVID19. Throughout the day high touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected as needed.

2.3 Improving Airflow

Plan: All spaces have either Unit Ventilators or windows to allow for fresh air circulation. Classes will be encouraged to work outside as much as possible.

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

3.1 Parental Screening for Students

Plan: Families/Students will be responsible for self screening prior to their arrival at school. Staff will assess their own health each morning prior to their arrival to work. Individuals who are ill should remain home.

3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

Plan: When students or staff show or have symptoms, the nurse will assess the individual and consider the Department of Health guidelines when making decisions in the best interest of our school.

3.3 Exclusion

Plan: Students or staff should not come to school if they have:

1. 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**
2. at least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.
3. If they test positive for COVID-19

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

*Regardless of vaccination status, if a student or staff experiences COVID-compatible symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2.

Plan: COVID-19 Like Symptoms or a Positive COVID test:

- During times of lower infection rates, a student or staff member that has COVID-19 like symptoms or a positive test will be required to quarantine for a minimum of 5 days (until asymptomatic for at least 24 hrs or has tested negative COVID-19).
- Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
- If they experience symptoms recurring, 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.

Plan: Exposed close contacts have no COVID-like symptoms and are symptom free:

- 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.
- We will no longer notify close contacts

Plan: If illness occurs in school the following steps will be taken:

1. School nurse will inquire about potential exposure.
2. School nurse and administration will follow the updated DOH guidelines for quarantining. (The student will be excluded from school until symptoms are gone)

Plan: If students are required to quarantine due to COVID-19, the district will provide the student with assignments as per the following:

- Paper or digital based assignments will be provided to students if they are absent for 2 or more days. It is the parents/guardians responsibility for picking up the assignments. Please allow for 2 days for teachers to prepare the assignments.

4 Contact Tracing

Plan: The school district will consider the recommendations from the Department of Education and the Department of Health in the implementation of Contact Tracing and quarantine.

5. Testing

Plan: If required by New Jersey Executive Order, testing options will be made available to appropriate staff.

6. Travel

Plan: The school district will follow the mandates found on the State website:

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

7. Remote/Virtual Learning

- A. **Plan:** As per The Road Forward, “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”
- B. **Platform for Remote Learning:** We will use Microsoft Teams as the main platform for remote learning. Instruction will occur as a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous learning. Faculty will use Google Meets/Microsoft Teams/or equivalent to live stream instruction when appropriate.
- C. **Required Hours of Instruction:** We will provide a minimum of four hours of instruction per day to all students.
- D. **Student Meals during Remote Learning:** We will offer families set days a week to pick-up meals for eligible students on site.
- E. **Measuring student growth and learning in a virtual or remote instruction environment:** We will continue to utilize the same grading practices and benchmark data to measure student growth and learning in a remote setting versus an in-person setting.
- F. **Digital Access for Students:** We will provide the necessary devices and connectivity to those students who may not have access. A survey will be sent out to determine the need of these items.
- G. **Special Education**
- a. **The provision of virtual or remote instruction to implement Individual Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible, including accessible materials and platforms**

- i. The district will utilize a digital platform such as Microsoft Teams or Google apps to provide remote instruction to all students, including students with IEPs. Students are outfitted with devices which provide necessary tools to assist with modifications such as speech-to-text and reading text aloud. In addition, faculty members will utilize breakout rooms to assist students with disabilities by providing 1-1 assistance with a paraprofessional or special education instructor pending their IEP.
- b. Methods to document IEP implementation including the tracking of services, student progress, as well as provision of accommodations and modifications**
 - i. The documentation of IEP implementation can be found in teacher lesson plans as well as grade books. Any modifications and accommodations in the student's IEP are documented in lesson plans.
- c. Case manager communication with families to ensure services are implemented in accordance with IEPs to the greatest extent possible?**
 - i. Case managers will follow up as needed with families to ensure services are implemented in accordance with IEPs to the greatest extent possible.
- d. Conducting IEP meetings, evaluations and other meetings to identify, evaluate and/or reevaluate students with disabilities?**
 - i. Meetings will be conducted via Google Meet/Microsoft Teams for IEP meetings, evaluations, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or reevaluate. If a safe in-person option is available, that will be conducted.

H. Addressing English language learners (ELL) Plan Needs

- a. English as a Second Language and/or bilingual education programs aligned with State and Federal requirements to meet the needs of ELLs.**
 - i. The district will follow their Bilingual/ELL Three-Year Program Plan for any students requiring ELL services.
- b. The LEA will communicate with families of ELLs through:**
 - i. Providing translation materials, interpretative services, and literacy level appropriate information as needed.
- c. Alternate methods of instruction (that is, differentiation, sheltered instruction, Universal Design for Learning), access to technology and strategies to ensure ELLs access the same standard of education as non-ELL peers.**
 - i. As per our Bilingual/ELL Three-Year Program Plan, we will utilize a wide variety of programs and strategies to ensure ELLs have access to the same standard of education as non-ELL peers.
- d. Training for teachers, administrators, and counselors to learn strategies related to culturally responsive teaching and learning, socio-emotional learning, and trauma-informed teaching for students affected by forced migration from their home country (e.g. refugee, asylee)**

- i. Faculty members have received training on culturally responsive teaching and learning and our school has a Equity Committee to continue these practices. Faculty are trained in a variety of SEL programs including (but not limited to): yoga, mindfulness, unconscious bias, and peer mentoring.

I. Attendance

- a. Student attendance in a virtual setting:
 - i. Student attendance will be determined by their participation in virtual lessons via Google Meets/Microsoft Teams. If students do not attend classes they will be marked as absent. The district will follow our current attendance policy for truancy and other interventions to improve attendance for those students who have excessive absences.
- b. Communicates with the family when a student is not participating in online instruction and/or submitting assignments
 - i. The district will follow the BOE approved attendance policy.

J. Building Maintenance

- a. Custodians will clean and sanitize each classroom and work space. After the initial cleaning and sanitizing, custodial staff will only enter and sanitize work spaces of essential staff members.

K. Accelerated learning opportunities

- a. Students who qualify will partake in accelerated STEM activities via Google/Microsoft platform

L. Social and emotional health of staff and students

- a. Students will have virtual access to Child Study Team Members, mentors, teachers, and counseling sessions.
- b. Staff will have the opportunity to partake in virtual wellness activities.

M. Title I Extended Learning Programs

- a. After-school learning will be provided virtually for Title 1 students.

N. 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs

- a. Students will have access to virtual STEM lessons.

O. Credit recovery

- a. As an elementary school, students do not receive 'credits', however any student who is not meeting the benchmarks will have access to after school support (virtually)

P. Other extended student learning opportunities

- a. The school district will adapt their current afterschool clubs to create virtual after school clubs.

Q. Extra-curricular programs

- a. The school district will adapt their current afterschool clubs to create virtual after school clubs.

R. Childcare

- a. The district will highlight local private agencies to secure childcare options for families.

S. Community programming

- a. The district will partner with local programs such as YMCA and the township to provide programs for our community.

T. Essential Employees

- a. The district will provide a list of essential employees to the County at the time they shift to full remote learning. Essential employees will be identified by the Superintendent as employees essential to the operation of virtual instruction and maintenance of the building and grounds.

A. Transportation

- a. School transportation will not be provided during periods of remote instruction as we discontinued the hybrid model. Transportation for out of district placements will be provided conditional upon the respective facility's operations. Considerations for general travel have also been provided for.