

POLICY

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The Road Forward - COVID-19 Health and Safety
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1648.11 THE ROAD FORWARD - COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Union County Educational Services Commission is fully committed to providing full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. In June 2021, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) worked collaboratively to develop guidance, The Road Forward – Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year (The Road Forward). The NJDOE and NJDOH released an updated version of the The Road Forward on August 20, 2021.

The Road Forward replaces the mandatory anticipated minimum standards outlined in the NJDOE’s “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” (June 2020) and provides a range of recommendations rather than mandatory standards. These recommendations are meant to assist school districts in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

The Board of Directors considered many factors as they prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and the school community.

For the purpose of this Policy, “Order” shall mean any Governor of New Jersey Executive Order, New Jersey State Agency mandate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, New Jersey statute, or administrative code requiring compliance by the Commission.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop health and safety protocols. The Board will consider all recommended Orders and comply with all mandatory Orders when developing health and safety protocols and reviewing them periodically.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the Commission’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas and included in corresponding Appendices:

- A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors
 1. Vaccination - (Appendix A);
 2. Communication with the Local Health Department - (Appendix B);
 3. Mask Wearing Protocol - (Appendix C);
 4. Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols - (Appendix D);
 5. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols - (Appendix E);
 6. Provision of Meals - (Appendix F); and
 7. Transportation Protocols - (Appendix G).

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- B. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow - (Appendix H)
- C. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members (Appendix I)
- D. Contact Tracing – (Appendix J)
- E. Testing – (Appendix K)
- F. Student and Staff Member Travel – (Appendix L).

The absence of one or more of the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward and/or in the Commission's health and safety protocols will not prevent the reopening of the school(s) in the Commission for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff members present.

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. N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(b) indicates when a school 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 toward the school district's 180-day requirement.

The Commission may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases among staff and/or students. If the Commission is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of possible exposure to COVID-19, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the Commission may 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 toward the Commission's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The Commission anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this Policy is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of this Policy. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy and corresponding Appendices shall be reviewed by the Superintendent with the Board Attorney, School Physician, and Board of Directors, if appropriate. The Superintendent may revise the health and safety protocols included in any Appendix as necessary and appropriate. All students, parents, and staff members will be notified of any changes to Commission-developed protocols implemented as a result of this Policy, as appropriate.

Adopted: October 6, 2021



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****This Appendix replaces “Appendix A – Vaccination” adopted on October 6, 2021 ****

Appendix A – Vaccination

Union County Educational Services Commission recognizes vaccines as safe, effective and accessible measures of COVID-19 prevention and control in school settings.

The Board of Directors strongly encourages all eligible students and staff to obtain COVID-19 vaccinations to prevent infection, reduce severe symptoms of illness, and slow the spread of the pandemic in the community.

The Commission will distribute information regarding the benefits and availability of COVID-19 vaccinations on a regular basis and work with local public health officials to identify opportunities to increase the accessibility of vaccinations for eligible students and staff.

Based on guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health and New Jersey Department of Education, the Commission will implement a system to determine the vaccination status of eligible students and staff.

Accurate representation of the vaccination status of eligible students and staff is essential to the safe operation of Commission schools and programs. The survey information will be used to:

- **Improve the efficiency of contact tracing;**
- **Guide travel restrictions and school or work exclusions;**
- **Make informed decisions regarding implementation of additional health and safety protocols;**
- **Assess the need and interest of providing vaccination clinics in the district; and**
- **Respond to requests for information from the NJDOE and NJDOH.**

All eligible students and staff are required to complete a written survey to disclose vaccination status. Staff are also required to submit written proof of vaccination, if applicable.

Students who do not wish to disclose vaccination status can do so without consequence and will be considered as unvaccinated individuals in all relevant decision-making.

Staff members who opt to not disclose their vaccination status will be assumed to be unvaccinated in determinations regarding close contact and work exclusion, and will be subject to COVID-19 weekly testing pursuant to Executive Order No. 253.

All vaccination data will be kept confidential in the Superintendent’s Office to the maximum extent permitted by Federal and State law and will not be used in any manner that is discriminatory or otherwise prohibited.

District Screening Testing Program

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 253 and Board Policy 1648.12 “School Employee Vaccination Requirements”, all school employees and contracted service providers who will have contact with students will be required to provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing one time each week on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated, effective October 18, 2021.

Employees who are partially vaccinated, whose vaccination status is unknown, or who have not provided sufficient proof of documentation, shall also be considered unvaccinated and required to submit to weekly testing.

To ensure the safest possible environment for students and school staff, the Board of Directors has elected to enroll in the NJDOH School COVID-19 Screening Testing Program. District employees will be invited to participate in free, school-based weekly testing that fully satisfies the requirements of Executive Order No. 253.

Unvaccinated employees who opt out of participation in the district screening testing program shall be required to obtain and submit proof of COVID-19 testing on a weekly basis as directed by the Office of the Superintendent. Results of commercially available “self-administered, at-home” COVID-19 tests do not satisfy the requirements for testing under Board Policy 1648.12. Testing will be at the time and expense of the unvaccinated employee.

If an unvaccinated employee is not working on-site in the school district during a week when testing would otherwise be required, the employee is not required to submit to testing for that week.

Unvaccinated employees who had a positive COVID-19 test result are not required to submit weekly testing until 90 days have transpired since recovery from illness or the positive test result, whichever is later.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated and fail to provide proof of COVID-19 testing on a weekly basis according to published timelines and procedures will be placed on medical leave and absences will be deducted from accumulated paid sick or personal leave until such time that proof of COVID-19 testing is submitted.

Contracted service providers shall be responsible for compliance with Executive Order No. 253 with respect to their own employees who perform work with students on a regular basis and are required to certify compliance for their employees in order to provide contracted services on behalf of the Board of Directors.

Union County Educational Services Commission maintains the right to request proof of COVID-19 vaccination and/or weekly screening testing from all contracted service providers. Failure to comply with requirements of Executive Order No. 253 may result in assessment of a fine, penalties and/or contract termination.

The Board of Directors is responsible for tracking results of weekly screening testing and reporting results to enrolled employees and local public health departments as required by Executive Order No. 253.

Union County Educational Services Commission will revise COVID-19 vaccination and testing policies as appropriate in response to updated guidance or directives from the NJDOE and NJDOH.



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Appendix B – Communication with the Local Health Department

Union County Educational Services Commission will maintain close and frequent communication with the following Local Health Departments to obtain and share relevant information and resources regarding COVID-19 transmission, prevention and control measures in district schools and programs:

Westfield Regional Health Department
425 E. Broad Street
Westfield, New Jersey 07090
908-789-4070
Megan Avallone, Health Officer

Scotch Plains Health Department
430 Park Avenue
Scotch Plains, New Jersey 07076
908-518-5620
Annie McNair, Health Officer

Elizabeth Health Department
50 Winfield Scott Plaza
Elizabeth, New Jersey 07201
908-820-4049
Krishna Garlic, Director

All decisions regarding district health and safety policies and protocols; school and work exclusions; and the operational status of Commission schools and programs will be made in consultation with Local Health Departments with consideration to recommendations outlines in the following resources:

New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools
https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml

New Jersey Department of Health Weekly COVID-19 Activity Level Report
<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

New Jersey Department of Education and New Jersey Department of Health
The Road Forward Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year
<https://www.nj.gov/education/roadforward/docs/HealthAndSafetyGuidanceSY2122.pdf>



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Appendix C – Mask Wearing Protocol

Union County Educational Services Commission readily acknowledges that universal and consistent use of face coverings is an important health and safety strategy to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

UCESC requires all teachers, staff, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status, to wear an appropriate face covering while indoors in any school, building, office and/or transportation vehicle until further notice. Teachers, staff, students, and visitors who are participating in mask breaks, physical education and/or recess outside of the school building will not be required to wear masks. In addition, staff who are alone in a classroom or office are not required to wear masks.

The Commission will continue to consult with local health officials in order to determine the appropriate time to make revisions to this protocol.

Guidelines for Mask Wearing

- Face coverings may be homemade, purchased cloth, or disposable masks.
- A multi-ply, tightly woven cotton cloth or multi-ply disposable face covering is recommended.
- Bandanas, neck gaiters, masks with exhalation valves or vents, or face coverings with printed images and/or text deemed inappropriate to the educational environment will not be permitted.
- Clear face shields cannot be used as a substitute for face coverings and may be worn only as a supplement to cloth or paper face coverings.
- Cloth face coverings with a clear “window” over the mouth are an acceptable alternative, particularly for teaching staff members assigned to work with students with disabilities.
- Disposable single use masks will be available for students and staff who forget to bring a face covering or whose face covering becomes wet or soiled while at school.
- Special personal protective equipment, including face shields and KN-95 filtration masks, will be provided to staff assigned to work with students in close contact and/or students who are unable to consistently wear face coverings or maintain recommended social distance.
- Parents and/or Guardians are responsible for supplying daily face coverings for students and will be asked to send a minimum of one extra face covering to remain in school.
- No disciplinary action will be taken against a student who does not have a face covering.
- Administrators will incorporate opportunities for students and staff to take short “fresh air” breaks periodically throughout the day to the greatest extent possible and practical.
- School Nurses and other relevant education staff will provide training for students and staff on the safe and effective use of face coverings on an ongoing basis.

Exceptions to Mask Wearing Requirements:

UCESC acknowledges that wearing face coverings consistently throughout the school day may present a challenge for some students, including young children and individuals with disabilities.

Students in Special Education schools and programs will be encouraged to wear face coverings at all times, to the greatest extent possible and practical, and teaching staff will identify positive strategies to promote and reinforce students for consistent use of face coverings while in school.

Additional exemptions to district masking protocols will be considered for the following reasons:

- When an underlying medical condition contributes to difficulty breathing or imposes any other physical limitation that may introduce a safety concern when wearing a face covering;
- 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, precludes use of a face covering;
- When a child is under two (2) years of age;
- When a student 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 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.

Parents seeking exemptions in wearing face coverings are required to submit relevant medical documentation to the School Nurse for consideration of appropriate adaptations and alternatives.

Staff seeking exemptions in wearing face coverings are required to submit relevant medical documentation to the Superintendent's Office for consideration of reasonable workplace accommodations.



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Appendix D – Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

Union County Educational Services Commission will implement physical distancing measures in all schools as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy to the greatest extent possible and practical while ensuring that full-day, full-time, in person learning is provided to all students during the 2021-2022 school year.

Based on studies from 2020-2021 school year, CDC recommends that schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students in classrooms, combined with mask wearing to reduce transmission risk.

When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, the Commission will reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission by layering multiple prevention strategies, including but not limited to promoting handwashing and respiratory etiquette, implementing enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols, and following NJDOH guidance for screening, excluding and responding to symptomatic students and staff.

One or more of the following strategies will be implemented in UCESC schools and programs as applicable to maximize opportunities to increase distance between students:

- Students transported via school bus will disembark individually or in small groups then proceed into school buildings as directed by designed staff members.
- One-way routes will be designated in hallways to the greatest extent possible and directional signage will be displayed to promote orderly flow of foot traffic.
- Staff will be assigned to monitor hallways to ensure compliance with traffic flow, social distancing and face covering requirements upon student entry/exit and during transitions within buildings.
- Classroom configurations will be modified to avoid grouped seating arrangements in favor of assigning students to individual desks facing in the same direction.
- Students will be assigned to cohorts with dedicated staff who remain together throughout the day to the greatest extent possible based on individual and programmatic needs.
- Instructional schedules will be modified to eliminate or significantly reduce non-essential transitions between classes during the school day to the greatest extent possible to prevent mixing of student cohorts and enable social distancing.
- Lockers will not be utilized to minimize unnecessary hallway congestion.
- Physical education classes will be conducted outdoors when possible.
- Related services will be provided in classrooms whenever feasible and appropriate to individual needs.
- Lunch schedules will be staggered, and students may be assigned to eat in classrooms or other alternate locations outside the cafeteria to allow for social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

During periods of high community transmission, schools and programs may be advised to implement more-restrictive operational strategies to increase physical distancing and reduce mixing of student cohorts based on NJDOE and NJDOH guidance and recommendations.



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Appendix E – Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

Union County Educational Services Commission promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 including regular hand-washing, hand sanitization and respiratory etiquette.

Contact-free hand sanitizing dispensers will be maintained in all school entrances and exits, classrooms, therapy rooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums, restrooms and other high traffic areas. Hand sanitizing dispensers will be filled with Ecolab Advanced Gel Sanitizer (62% ethyl alcohol) or an equivalent product if unavailable.

Hand soap dispensers will be maintained in health offices, faculty rooms, bathrooms, classrooms with sinks, and food preparation areas. Hand soap dispensers will be filled with Ecolab Digiclean Antibacterial Foaming Hand Soap or an equivalent product if unavailable.

Schools will designate times for students to wash hands with soap and water on a regular basis including, but not limited to the following:

- Upon morning arrival
- Before eating meals
- After using the toilet
- Upon return from outdoor recess
- After sneezing, wiping or blowing noses

Allowing students and staff to clean hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for at least 20 seconds is an acceptable practice when washing with soap and water is impractical.

Students and staff should cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue when not wearing a mask. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.

Instruction on hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be delivered to all enrolled students in September as part of health and physical education classes and reinforced daily by all teaching staff members in a manner consistent with CDC recommendations and guidance at: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>



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Appendix F – Provision of Meals

Union County Educational Services Commission will work with the Board-approved food services vendor (Maschio's Food Services, Inc.) to ensure the safe, seamless and uninterrupted provision of breakfast and lunch for all enrolled students during the 2021-2022 school year.

Maschio's Food Services employees will be responsible for:

- Following district health screening and exclusion protocols.
- Wearing face masks, face shields, and gloves during meal preparation and distribution.
- Washing hands after removing gloves or directly handling food service items.
- Using disposable food preparation and service items to the greatest extent possible.
- Frequently cleaning and sanitizing all food preparation and service areas.

One or more of the following strategies will be implemented in UCESC schools and programs as applicable to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 when meals are provided to students and masks cannot be worn:

- Lunch schedules will be staggered to the greatest extent possible to reduce the number of students present in the cafeteria.
- Students may be assigned to eat in classrooms or other alternate locations outside of the cafeteria to increase social distancing.
- Students will be strongly discouraged from sharing meals and/or utensils.
- Staff will be assigned to monitor cafeterias to ensure compliance with social distancing while students are selecting meal options in the food service line.
- Assigned seating will be implemented when feasible to maximize physical distance between students.
- Students will be required to wash hands before and after meals.
- Custodians will clean and sanitize cafeteria tables/surfaces between each meal service following protocols outlined in Appendix H: Cleaning, Disinfection and Airflow.

During periods of high community transmission, schools and programs may be advised to implement more-restrictive strategies for meal service to ensure physical distancing requirements are strictly maintained in accordance with NJDOE and NJDOH recommendations.



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Appendix G – Transportation Protocols

General Guidelines:

UCESC will maintain recommended social distancing on school busses and other district vehicles to the greatest extent possible based on student occupancy and transportation needs.

All students and staff – regardless of vaccination status – are required to wear a face covering at all times when entering/exiting a district owned vehicle and during the ride to/from school unless doing so would inhibit an individual’s health or is otherwise impractical due to a student’s age or disability.

Enhanced personal protective equipment such as KN95 filtration masks, gloves and face shields will be provided by the Commission to bus drivers and aides upon request.

The Commission will closely monitor State and Federal requirements and/or guidance for masks on school busses and other district vehicles and update this policy when deemed safe and permissible.

Health Screening of Bus Drivers/Aides:

Bus Drivers/Aides are strongly encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of illness and remain home from work when not feeling well.

Bus Drivers/Aides will be required to submit a “COVID-19 Attestation Form” in September, 2021 to certify understanding of responsibilities to the Commission’s daily health screening protocols.

Bus Drivers/Aides who have a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, who are exhibiting COVID-19 compatible symptoms, who have been notified of close contact with an individual with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, or who have travelled outside of the immediate region should contact the Transportation Coordinator for guidance prior to reporting to work.

In the event of COVID-19 compatible symptoms, a School Nurse will contact the Bus Driver/Aide to determine if her or she is able to return to work or must remain home and seek medical evaluation.

Bus Drivers/Aides who become ill during the day shall notify the Transportation Coordinator and contact a designated School Nurse to discuss their symptoms. The School Nurse will determine if the Bus Driver/Aide should resume work, proceed home and/or seek medical evaluation.

Bus Drivers/Aides exhibiting COVID-19 compatible symptoms may be required to undergo evaluation by a private healthcare provider. Readmittance to work will not be permitted without medical clearance and/or COVID-19 testing to indicate the staff member is contagion free.

The School Nurse will follow NJ Department of Health guidelines for exclusion/readmittance based on local transmission levels and consult with Public Health Officials for additional advisement.

Cleaning/Sanitization of School Vehicles:

School busses and other vehicles used to transport students must be cleaned and sanitized after each route using EPA-approved products provided by the Commission. Bus Drivers are responsible for the safe and secure storage of cleaning/disinfecting supplies inside each assigned vehicle.

Cleaning and sanitization should focus on high-contact surfaces, including buttons, handholds, steering wheels, door handles, shift knobs, dashboard controls and stanchions. All seats, seatbacks, safety belts and rails should be wiped down and sprayed with sanitizer.

Hand sanitizer will be available on school vehicles during working hours. Containers will be stored in a safe, secure area while vehicles are in motion. Hand sanitizer will be stored at the end of each day in a bin in the transportation staff lounge. Bus drivers will be required to confirm on their daily log that the hand sanitizer has been properly stored at the end of each day.

Contracted Transportation:

Transportation vendors assigned to provide contracted routes for both public and nonpublic schools will be required to sign an annual attestation to affirm their compliance with industry-specific safety guidelines published by the NJDOE, NJDOH, CDC and/or OSHA.

Student Drop Off/Pick Up:

Schools will designate a vehicle drop off/pick up area to control the movement of staff members and students and promote social distancing to the greatest extent possible.

Drop off/pick up areas will be clearly marked using cones. Visual prompts will also be utilized to encourage social distancing on the sidewalks and near the entrance to the building.

Bus Drivers/Aides should not disembark students without the approval of designated school staff.

Field Trips and Community Based Instruction (CBI):

All UCESC schools will temporarily suspend community-based instruction and other field trips for the first month of the school year in consideration of the health and safety of students and staff.

The Commission will closely monitor COVID-19 transmission levels and consult with Public Health Officials to make a determination regarding the reinstatement of CBI and field trips on October 4, 2021.



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Appendix H – Cleaning, Disinfection and Airflow

General Guidelines:

Custodial staff will implement enhanced procedures for the cleaning, disinfection and sanitization of all Commission schools and offices using products and procedures consistent with NJDOH and CDC guidelines.

UCESC will assign additional part-time custodial staff to all Commission schools and programs during the 2021-2022 school year to facilitate enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols.

Supplies and Materials:

Custodial staff will use the EPA-registered cleaning and sanitization products indicated below to implement enhanced cleaning, disinfection and sanitization protocols outlined in this appendix. Comparable substitutions will be made available in the event of product discontinuation:

- Ecolab Antibacterial Foam Hand Soap (DigiClean AB)
- Ecolab Gel Hand Sanitizer
- Ecolab Oasis Pro 16 Orange Force Multi-Surface Cleaner Degreaser
- Ecolab Oasis™ 100 Neutral Floor Cleaner
- Ecolab Oasis 146 Multi-Quat Sanitizer
- Ecolab Peroxide Multi Surface Cleaner and Disinfectant
- Ecolab Oasis® 499 HBV Disinfectant

Cleaning and sanitization products will be ordered and maintained on a consistent basis and as needed to ensure consistent and uninterrupted practices.

Cleaning and sanitization products will be securely stored away from students and recommended safety precautions will be followed during use to prevent unnecessary environmental exposure.

Hand Sanitizer and Soap:

Contact-free hand sanitizing stations will be installed in all school entrances/exits, classrooms, therapy rooms, cafeterias, gymnasiums and restrooms and filled with Ecolab Advanced Gel Sanitizer (62% ethyl alcohol) or an equivalent product if unavailable.

Hand soap dispensers in bathrooms, classrooms with sinks, and food preparation areas will be filled with Ecolab DigiClean Antibacterial Foaming Hand Soap or an equivalent product if unavailable.

Custodial staff will check and refill hand sanitizer and hand soap dispensers on a daily basis.

Cleaning Schedules and Practices:

Custodians will contribute to the health and wellness of students and staff by strictly adhering to an enhanced and rigorous schedule of daily cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting school buildings.

Immediately upon arrival to buildings, full-time day custodians will complete the following activities prior to performing regularly scheduled responsibilities throughout the workday:

- Check HVAC systems to ensure it is operating adequately
- Check and fill hand sanitizing dispensers as needed
- Check and fill classroom cleaning supplies
- Check with Principal to see if any additional cleaning and disinfecting is necessary

Part-time custodians shifts will clean and disinfect designated high-contact common areas and bathrooms on a 30-minute schedule.

High frequency contact areas targeted for additional disinfecting inside and outside of each school include, but are not limited to:

- Light switches
- Sinks
- Shared desks, tables and chairs
- Drinking fountains
- School bus seats and windows
- Playground equipment
- Access button to enter building
- Door handles

Bathrooms will be cleaned between use to the greatest extent possible. Social distancing will be followed to the greatest extent possible in multi-person bathrooms. Signage to promote handwashing will be posted in each bathroom.

Evening custodians will provide additional cleaning and sanitizing duties as assigned by the Buildings and Grounds Supervisor.

All custodians will only use EPA-registered cleaning and disinfecting products according to the recommendations for concentrations, application method and surface contact time.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting furniture will be completed recognizing the varying materials in furniture in each building

Playground equipment will be cleaned and sanitized on a daily basis.

Staff Responsibilities:

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff will be issued EPA-registered disposable wipes and sanitizer spray to clean frequently-contacted surfaces and shared items, including but not limited to computer keyboards, desks, tables and instructional materials in between scheduled custodial cleanings. Use of shared instructional materials should be limited to the greatest extent possible and shared materials must be cleaned/sanitized between each use.

Office Staff

Administrative Office staff will be issued EPA-registered disposable wipes and sanitizer spray to clean frequently-contacted surfaces and shared items, including but not limited to telephones, computer keyboards, printers, copy machines, desks, tables, countertops, and other common work surfaces between scheduled custodial cleanings.

Bus Drivers

Bus Drivers will be issued EPA-registered cleaning and sanitizing products and will be expected to clean and sanitize vehicles after each route.

Cleaning and sanitization should focus on high-contact surfaces, including buttons, handholds, steering wheels, door handles, shift knobs, dashboard controls and stanchions. All seats, seatbacks, safety belts and rails should be wiped down and sprayed with sanitizer.

Bus Drivers are responsible for the safe and secure storage of cleaning/disinfecting supplies inside each assigned vehicle.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools After COVID-19 Diagnosis:

In the event that a student, staff member or visitor tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in a school building, custodial staff will clean and disinfect the spaces determined to have been occupied by the individual according to the following guidelines:

- Close off areas used by the person who is sick or positive and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) after the person has exited a space before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC settings to increase air circulation in the area to the greatest extent possible.
- Use cleaning and disinfection products from the approved list according to the instructions on the product labels.
- Wear a mask and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
- Once the area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be re-opened for use.

The Superintendent will advise the Buildings and Grounds Supervisor of any specific guidance from Public Health Officials in response to a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis.

The Superintendent will determine, with input from Public Health Officials if short-term closure of a classroom and/or school building is required to properly implement cleaning protocols.

Staff Training:

The Buildings and Grounds Supervisor will provide additional training to full and part-time custodial staff focused on the enhanced protocols and schedules for cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, restrooms, common areas and school vehicles.

Training will include, but not be limited to, the safe and effective use of cleaning and sanitizing agents, cleaning schedules for various surfaces, recordkeeping requirements, and appropriate safety precautions (i.e. protective equipment use, ventilation, waste disposal).

Administrators, Teaching Staff and Support Staff will receive training on the safe and effective use of cleaning products deployed to classrooms and offices including EPA-registered cleaning and sanitizing products and disposable wipes.

Improving Airflow:

HVAC systems in all Commission schools were upgraded to the maximum level of air filtration (MERV13) recommended without significantly reducing the airflow and efficiency of each unit.

HVAC systems were also set to draw in the maximum outdoor area recommended for each unit.

Portable air cleaners with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters were installed in high traffic areas and will be maintained during the 2021-2022 school year to enhance air cleaning.

The Buildings and Grounds Supervisor will carefully monitor the HVAC systems in each school to ensure that air ventilation/filtration systems and outdoor air flow dampers are working properly.

The Board-approved HVAC contractor will conduct quarterly inspections and ensure that required preventative maintenance tasks are completed according to manufacturer's recommendations.

Schools are encouraged to implement strategies to increase air circulation and intake of outdoor air such as:

- Opening windows and doors to the extent that doing so does not pose a safety, security or health risk for students and staff.
- Using exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
- Holding activities, classes, meetings and/or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.
- Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk.



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Appendix I – Screening, Exclusion and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

Health Screening Guidelines

Union County Educational Services Commission will strictly enforce screening and exclusion procedures for students, staff members and visitors as a primary strategy in the layered approach to COVID-19 prevention.

All screening and exclusion procedures will be consistent with NJDOH and CDC recommendations and remain subject to revision based on ongoing consultation with State and Local Health Officials.

Students, staff and visitors are strongly encouraged to monitor their health for signs of infectious disease, remain home from school and work, and consult with a trusted healthcare provider for evaluation and care when experiencing COVID-19 compatible symptoms regardless of vaccination status.

The Commission is actively working with the Westfield Regional Health Office and the Board's Physician to evaluate the feasibility of implementing a COVID-19 screening testing program for students and staff.

Administrators maintain the right to prohibit entry or expel from property any student, staff member or visitor who refuses to comply with screening and exclusion protocols.

Screening Procedures for Students:

Parents and guardians will be required to sign a "COVID-19 Attestation Form" at the beginning of the year indicating their agreement to closely monitor and keep their child home from school if he or she receives positive COVID-19 test results, demonstrates COVID-19 compatible symptoms; comes in close contact with an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis; or travels outside of the immediate region.

The CDC rescinded its previous recommendation for schools to conduct daily COVID-19 symptom screening for students in grades K-12 on a routine basis. Based on current guidance, students will not be required to undergo daily temperature checks upon arrival to any UCESC school or program but will be visually screened for COVID-19 compatible symptoms by appropriate trained staff.

Students who exhibit COVID-19 compatible symptoms upon arrival will also be asked to don a filtered mask (unless doing so would inhibit the student's health or is otherwise impractical due to age or disability) and respectfully escorted to a designated isolation location for further evaluation by the School Nurse.

The School Nurse, in consultation with school or department administration, will determine whether the student is able to remain in school or must return home and seek medical evaluation and/or diagnostic testing prior to readmittance to school.

Principals or Directors are responsible for notifying the Office of the Superintendent immediately upon excluding any student from school due to any COVID-19 related reason.

Screening Procedures for Staff Members:

Staff members will be required to submit a "COVID-19 Attestation Form" at the beginning of the year to indicate his or her agreement to remain home and contact an immediate supervisor for specific guidance if he or she receives positive COVID-19 test results; demonstrates COVID-19 compatible symptoms; comes in close contact with an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis; or travels outside of the immediate region.

Staff who exhibit COVID-19 compatible symptoms upon arrival to work will be given the option to immediately return home or don a filtered mask (unless doing so would inhibit the staff member's health) and proceed to the designated isolation location to await further evaluation by the School Nurse.

The School Nurse, in consultation with the school or department administration, will determine whether the staff member is able to remain at work or must return home and seek medical evaluation and/or diagnostic testing prior to readmittance.

Principals or Directors are responsible for notifying the Office of the Superintendent immediately upon excluding any staff member from work due to any COVID-19 related reason.

Screening Procedures for Visitors:

Visitors should be kept at a minimum and permitted in UCESC schools only with prior approval of building administration when visitations are essential for school or district related matters.

Visitors include parents and family members, sending district personnel, parcel and post carriers, contracted maintenance and repair staff, and other individuals not enrolled/employed by the district

Visitors will be required to submit a "COVID-19 Attestation Form" prior to entry into the building confirming the absence of positive COVID-19 test results; COVID-19 compatible symptoms; close contact with individuals with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses; or travel outside of the immediate region.

Visitors will also be required to provide contact information (home address, phone, email address) to facilitate contact tracing activities, if needed, prior to entry into the building.

Response to Students and Staff with COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

The New Jersey Department of Health currently recommends that individuals with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school or work:

- At least two of the following symptoms:
 - fever, 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 individuals with pre-existing chronic illnesses, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

All decisions regarding exclusion and readmittance of students and staff will be made on a case-by-case basis following applicable guidelines of the NJ Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service published at: https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml

Response to Student Illnesses:

Students who become ill during the day will be safely and respectfully accompanied to the Health Office for evaluation by the School Nurse.

Students who exhibit COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be asked to don a filtered mask (unless doing so would inhibit the student's health or is otherwise impractical due to age or disability) and remain in isolation under constant adult supervision and care until picked up by a parent, family member or authorized adult.

The Office of the Superintendent will be contacted immediately following the school exclusion of a student due to COVID-19 compatible symptoms for guidance on appropriate follow-up actions.

Response to Staff Illnesses:

Staff who become ill during the day shall report to the School Nurse for evaluation to determine if he or she is able to return to the classroom or advised to proceed home.

Staff with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater or who demonstrate the above symptoms of COVID-19 not otherwise explained will be asked to don a filtered face mask unless doing so would inhibit his or her health and sent home after consultation with the principal.

The School Nurse will follow NJ Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service guidelines for exclusion/readmittance and consult with the local health department for additional advisement.

The Office of the Superintendent will be contact immediately following the work exclusion of a staff member due to COVID-19 compatible symptoms for guidance on appropriate follow up actions.

Response to Students or Staff with a Confirmed COVID-19 Diagnosis

In the event that a school is notified that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the Principal and School Nurse will immediately notify the Office of the Superintendent before any further action.

The Superintendent or an appointed designee will immediately initiate contact tracing activities and contact the local health department to share the following information:

- Contact information of the individual who tested positive;
- Dates the individual developed symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19, and was last in the building;
- Any close contacts the individual may have had with other persons in the building or in other locations;
- Names, addresses, and telephone numbers for the individual's close contacts in the school;
- Vaccination status of the individual who tested positive and the individual's close contacts

The Superintendent or an appointed designee will make case-by-case decisions regarding exclusion of students and staff members and/or the temporary shift to remote instruction in consultation with local health officials.

The Superintendent or an appointed designee will provide timely and accurate notification of COVID-19 positive cases to all students, parents and faculty members assigned to the impacted school or department.

Students or staff members who test positive for COVID-19 will not be permitted to return to school or work until the following criteria have been fully satisfied:

- At least 5 full days have passed since symptom onset AND
- At least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever (without fever reducing medication) AND
- Improvement of COVID-19 compatible symptoms

Students or staff members who return on Day 6 are required to wear a KN-95 mask for days 6-10. Students and staff who are unable or unwilling to wear a KN-95 mask for days 6-10 will not be permitted to return to school or work until 10 full days have passed.

All screening, isolation, exclusion and readmittance procedures outlined in the document are subject to change based on updated guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health.



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Appendix J – Contact Tracing

Union County Educational Services Commission recognizes that public school districts contribute to the health and safety of the community by assisting Local, County and State Health Officials in the implementation of contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contact tracing is an important strategy for preventing the transmission of infectious diseases including COVID-19. It involves the process of identifying, notifying and providing support to individuals who may have come in contact with a person who was diagnosed with an infectious disease.

Per the CDC, close contact is currently 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 situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met close contact criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

Per current NJDOH guidance, 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.

In the event of a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 occurring in any UCESC school or department, the Superintendent or an appointed designee will immediately initiate contact tracing protocols to identify students, staff and/or visitors who were potentially exposed. Designated contacts of community partners will also be notified in the event of potential exposure in a location outside of a Commission school and program.

Based on recommendations of the Local Health Department, the Superintendent or an appointed designee will provide timely notification to parents and staff of close contact exposures and exclusion requirements.

In most cases, unvaccinated students or staff identified as a close contact to an individual with COVID-19 will be advised to self-quarantine and excluded from school or work for 5 full days whereas individuals up to date on their vaccinations who exhibit no COVID-19 compatible symptoms will not be excluded from school or work.

All exclusion determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis, in consideration of relevant factors including the length of exposure, vaccination status of the close contact and current level of community transmission.

UCESC schools will further contribute to implementation of prompt and responsible contact tracing protocols by maintaining timely, accurate and easily accessible records related to:

- Daily Schedules and Attendance of Students and Staff
- Contact Information for Students and Staff
- Visitor Logs and Visitor Contact Information

Schools are responsible for notifying the Superintendent's Office immediately of all close contact notifications received from students, parents, staff and/or Local, County or State Health Departments.

Confidentiality will be strictly maintained when notifying students, parents and staff of potential exposure to COVID-19 and the source of the potential exposure will not be identified as part of contact tracing procedures.



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This Appendix replaces “Appendix K – COVID-19 Testing” adopted on October 6, 2021

**Appendix K – COVID-19 Testing
(Revised November 10, 2021)**

Union County Educational Services Commission recognizes that viral testing, when combined with other layered prevention strategies, is an effective method of detecting illness, preventing outbreaks, reducing the risk of transmission, and protecting students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

Employees who demonstrate COVID-19 compatible symptoms are required to undergo evaluation by a private healthcare provider and a determination will be made regarding the need for COVID-19 testing prior to readmittance to work.

Pursuant to State Executive Order No. 253, all school employees must be fully vaccinated or submit to weekly COVID-19 testing until such time they are fully vaccinated as of October 18, 2021.

Employees who are not fully vaccinated will be invited to participate in a free screening testing program implemented by the Commission or submit results of COVID-19 testing completed at his or her own time and expense.

The free screening program will be made available to fully vaccinated employees and all students once deemed feasible by the Office of the Superintendent.

Based on the recommendation of Public Health Officials, self-administered COVID-19 tests do not currently meet district requirements for readmittance to school or work after formal exclusion.

Any testing protocols adopted by the Commission are consistent with the following recommendations:

New Jersey Department of Health

Public Health Recommendations for Implementing COVID-19 Screening Testing in K-12 Schools

https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/K-12_screening_testing_guidelines.pdf



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Appendix L – Student and Staff Member Travel

Union County Educational Services Commission will follow published CDC recommendations for travel until further notice in consideration of the health and safety of students and staff.

Students or staff with plans to travel outside of the immediate region (i.e. New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware) are responsible for reviewing current guidance published on the following website prior to travel:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html>

Based on the most recent recommendations published on June 10, 2021, students and staff are advised of the following requirements:

Requirements for Fully Vaccinated Individuals

- Fully vaccinated individuals or individuals (students or staff) who have recovered from COVID-19 in the past three months are not required to obtain testing or self-quarantine after returning from travel outside of the immediate region.
- Fully vaccinated individuals who plan to travel outside of the immediate region are required to submit a completed COVID-19 Notification Form (Form A) to advise their principal, director, or immediate supervisor in writing of anticipated travel.
- The Superintendent or designee will issue written authorization to return to school or work immediately upon confirmation of vaccination status.

Requirements for Unvaccinated Individuals

- Unvaccinated individuals (students or staff) are required to obtain testing or self-quarantine after returning from travel outside of the immediate region in order to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.
- Unvaccinated individuals who plan to travel outside of the immediate region are required to submit a completed COVID-19 Notification Form (Form A) to advise their principal, director, or immediate supervisor in writing of anticipated travel.
 - Unvaccinated individuals are required to either get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 full days after travel

OR

- Stay home and self-quarantine for 10 full days after travel without getting tested.
- The Superintendent or designee will issue written authorization to return to school or work immediately upon receipt of the COVID-19 Notification Form and test results, if applicable.
- Staff will be approved to apply paid sick days when required to self-quarantine due to travel.

Per the Local Health Department, individuals who travel outside of the immediate region – regardless of vaccination status – are strongly encouraged to:

- Wear a mask while indoors at U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations, while on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation, and while indoors in public places.
- Avoid crowds and stay at least 6 feet/2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) from anyone who is not traveling with you.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Self-monitor for symptoms of illness for 10-14 days after returning from travel and get tested in the event of COVID-19 compatible symptoms.

The Commission will closely monitor CDC travel recommendations and community transmission levels and issue revised guidance when deemed feasible and safe.