



Palmyra School District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Palmyra Board of Education Approval Date:

The Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services for the Palmyra School District has been developed in accordance with the requirements set forth by the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) and section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Act. The ARP Act requires each Local Education Agency (LEA), in this case the Palmyra School District, that receives ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to develop and make publicly available on its website, not 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). To assist LEAs with the development of their Safe Return Plans, the NJDOE has released a template for Safe Return Plans on its NJDOE ARP ESSER webpage. The template incorporates the federally required components of the Safe Return Plan as outlined in the ARP statute and federal regulations. The questions in the template will be included in the ARP ESSER Fund application in which LEAs will submit their Safe Return Plans to the NJDOE. LEAs must seek public comment on their Safe Return Plans and take those comments into account when finalizing the Safe Return Plan. The final plan must be submitted to the NJDOE and posted on the LEA's website by June 24, 2021. The Palmyra Board of Education will accept public comments on the Plan at the next Regular Board Meeting scheduled for June 16, 2021 beginning at 7:00 PM in the Delaware Avenue School Multipurpose room.

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks: Face masks must cover an individual's nose, mouth and chin and are to be worn by all students and staff at all times unless it will inhibit the individual's health. In the event that an individual is medically unable to wear a mask, a physician's note indicating such will be required. It is necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face mask may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.

- Face masks must comply with the requirements set forth in the applicable school dress code
- Proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings will be taught and reinforced

B. Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding): Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable and in accordance with applicable NJ Department of Health and NJ Department of Education requirements. If a school in the district is not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications will be considered including using physical barriers between desks, turning desks to face the same direction (rather than facing each other), and/or having students sit on only one side of the table, spaced apart. The Palmyra School District has established plans that best meet social distancing requirements in each classroom by using staggered seating, physical barriers, and marked off areas for staff. The following additional guidance is provided:

- Ensure that student and staff groupings are as static as possible
- Support social distancing and proper hand hygiene
- Stagger the use of communal spaces as much as possible and disinfect in accordance with Cleaning and Sanitizing protocols.
- Limiting the following areas/facilities of the buildings to students as necessary:
 - locker rooms
 - library
 - computer labs
 - corridor lockers
- Utilize larger instructional areas to promote/meet social distancing efforts
- Encourage all staff, students, and their families to follow applicable guidelines when gathering. This includes, but is not limited to, all areas within and/or on school premises, as well as gathering at places like a friend's house, a favorite restaurant, or other local recreational areas and gathering spots
- Utilize physical barriers on student and teacher desks as applicable

C. Hand washing and respiratory etiquette: The district will continue teaching and reinforcing the importance of washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff. In addition, the district:

- Will maintain adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer; children ages 5 and younger will be supervised when using hand sanitizer), paper towels.
- Will have sanitizing stations located:
 - in each classroom
 - at the entrances and exits of each building
 - near lunchrooms and toilets
- Will ensure that students wash hands for at least 20 second at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing

- Will post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, maintain social distancing and properly wear a face covering, etc.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: The Palmyra School District will adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and will implement all new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. An enhanced Facilities Cleaning Plan establishes cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials is in use.

Cleaning/Sanitizing procedures include:

- A schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfection
- Use of all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
- Adherence to the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. concentration, application method, and contact time, etc.)
- Sanitizing of bathrooms daily, or between use as much as possible, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
 - Examples of frequently touched areas in schools are:
 - Classroom desks and chairs;
 - Lunchroom tables and chairs;
 - Door handles and push plates;
 - Handrails;
 - Kitchens and bathrooms;
 - Light switches;
 - Handles on equipment (i.e. athletic equipment);
 - Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
 - Shared telephones;
 - Shared desktops;
 - Shared computer keyboards and mice;
 - Drinking fountains;
 - School bus seats and windows; and
- Additional cleaning and disinfecting with particular emphasis on classrooms and therapy rooms that service medically fragile students and students with complex disabilities where multiple tools are used for communication, mobility, and instruction.
- Additional cleaning and disinfecting with particular emphasis on “high touch” areas and appliances.
- Increased cleaning frequency of walls/lockers to height of student

Ventilation/Ventilation Improvements:

- The district maintains adequate ventilation, including operational heating and ventilation systems in all indoor facilities where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component, windows should be opened, where practical if air conditioning is not provided, and filter(s) for A/C units must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health

departments: The NJDOE Guidance does not include any “anticipated minimum standards” for contact tracing. Therefore, guidance is derived from State, county, and local officials in conjunction with the expertise of school nurses. In addition, The Palmyra Board of Education adopted Policy-1648 with regards to Contact Tracing.

Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who come in contact with people who have tested positive for contagious diseases, including COVID-19. Typically, this is done through the local health department and that information is shared with the school when necessary.

- Upon notification that a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will call the school district to determine close contacts to whom they may have spread the virus, where close contact is defined as being within six feet for a period of at least fifteen (15) minutes.
- The school district shall assist the local health department in conducting contact tracing activities, including ongoing communication with the identified individual and/or their contacts.
- The school district shall ensure adequate information and training is provided to the staff as necessary to enable staff to carry out responsibilities assigned to them.
- A staff liaison(s) shall be designated by the Superintendent or designee and shall be responsible for providing notifications and carrying out other components that could help ensure notifications are carried out in a prompt and responsible manner.
- School districts shall allow staff, students, and families to self-report symptoms and/or suspected exposure.

Dr. Brian J. McBride, Superintendent and School Safety Specialist, has completed the Johns Hopkins University’s COVID-19 Contact Tracing course along with several other faculty members.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing: The Palmyra Board of Education adopted Policy-1648, which allows for screening of staff and students upon arrival. Students, staff, and others are monitored to ensure they are healthy and not exhibiting signs of illness by first educating all stakeholders (students, staff, and parents/guardians) on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Students and their parents, as well as employees, will be asked to self-monitor at home before sending children to school and/or reporting to school or work. We have educated parents/guardians and staff on the

importance of keeping symptomatic children home from school. Each day the first teacher (e.g. first period, homeroom, classroom teacher) that comes in contact with students reminds students of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and instructs them to go to the nurse immediately if feeling symptomatic. We utilize the check-list shared by the Health Department as common language about symptoms. The nurse evaluates any individual who presents with symptoms.

If a staff, student, or other member of the school community becomes ill or has been exposed to an individual confirmed positive for COVID-19, we will do the following:

- Require the individual to wear a mask, if feasible
- Require the individual to report immediately to the nurse's suite for further evaluation
- Have an area for isolation that is separate from others, is well-ventilated and is easy to disinfect
- Provide appropriate PPE to staff and students in the nurse's suite (assuming the individual was in the suite)
- Require any individual who is sent home with symptoms to get a COVID 19 test or medical clearance prior to returning.
- Notify the Burlington County Health Department of all positive COVID 19 tests.
- Not permit any person presenting with a temperature greater than 100.4 to return to school for a minimum of 24 hours (or a period of time as directed by the Burlington County Health Department)

Parents will be required to complete and submit a student self-screening questionnaire one time only for each child attending in-person instruction. The questionnaire will be accessible for electronic completion in the OnCourse PARENT PORTAL or for printing (and must be turned in upon arrival). All students arriving at the school building will have their temperature taken with a contactless thermometer. Students with a temperature above 100.4 and/or demonstrating symptoms will be escorted to the school nurse for further evaluation. Students utilize the hand sanitizer station to clean their hands upon entry.

Isolation spaces have been designated for each school. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 will be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students should remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult

- CSS – the designated isolation space is the conference room immediately across from the nurse's office
- PMS – the designated isolation space is the media center
- PHS – the designated isolation space is the room adjacent to the nurse's office

Students and staff will be referred to an authorized COVID-19 testing center in the event that testing is required. Authorized testing centers will operate and administer testing in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NJ Department of Health (DOH) requirements in order for the school district to recognize test results as valid. Final determination of test results will be referred to the DOH as necessary.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible: All information for vaccination opportunities will continue to be provided to staff, students and families as the district becomes aware of them. On-site vaccination may be offered in the district when practicable

and provided there is no financial cost to the Palmyra Board of Education. The NJ Department of Health and its approved and/or designated sites and agencies are recognized as the primary administrator of vaccines. If on-site vaccination is offered, the Palmyra Board of Education would solely be the vaccination site provider. While the Board of Education encourages its staff, students and families to be vaccinated against COVID-19, the Board also recognizes that the vaccination decision is voluntary. The Board bears no responsibility or liability in connection with the administration of the vaccine.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to the health and safety policies: The Palmyra School District recognizes that special populations of students will require unique considerations to ensure the continuity of learning as well as the health and safety of students within the least restrictive learning environment. The Plan includes the following:

- Increasing professional development for staff to best utilize the accessibility features and accommodations tools made available through technology-based formats.
- Continuing to ensure that students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of IEP and 504 Plans.
- Development of schedules within Models of Instruction that directly support the individualized needs of students with IEP and 504 Plans.

The district requires face masks that cover an individual's nose, mouth and chin to be worn by all students and staff at all times unless it will inhibit the individual's health but acknowledges that enforcing the use of face mask may be impractical for individuals with disabilities.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

The Palmyra School District 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, as follows:

- The Palmyra School District is fortunate to employ a social worker and homeless liaison who are our first line in making sure that families have access to housing, food, technology, and other resources. We also have a number of school counselors and two school psychologists who are available to assist students in person, via phone, or via online sessions. We will continue to provide counseling services as delineated in students' IEPs and 504s. In addition, we also work frequently with local resources to provide additional resources to families. Our approach is to support the whole family as needed, connecting families with outside resources and agencies for our students' long-term support.
- Teachers are encouraged to monitor behavioral concerns using the district referral form. The administrative team, along with the intervention problem solving teams, will develop strategies for teachers to use to help students become more productive in the classroom such as tangible reinforcers, routines, positive phrasing and breaks. In addition, mindfulness techniques, student yoga, Lunch Bunch and social skill groups will all continue to help support the mental health of the students during this challenging time. Referrals to the district behaviorist and/or the social worker, the school psychologist, and the SEL counselor may be made to help develop plans to address behaviors, offer behavioral consultation and collect data in the classroom. The district will maintain and address behavioral trends. The district will assign check in/check out procedures, mentors to students who need positive one-on-one support, and meetings will maintain safety protocols relating to social distance.

- Supports on training for school staff on the social emotional developmental trajectory will occur. Resources will be provided for school leaders to help support social emotional learning in their schools. Grade specific relationship and community building activities can be implemented live or virtually by school counselors. There will be a dedicated time each week for SEL instruction given by teachers or school counselors.
- The Palmyra School District contracts with Nutriserve to provide meals for students. Careful planning will ensure that proper guidelines are in place for safe food preparation and delivery, including, but not limited to wearing masks and gloves, and frequent hand washing in between.

3. Public Comment

A. Palmyra School District sought public comment on its plan, and took those public comments into account in the development of its plan as follows:

- A draft version of the district's plan was posted on our website one week prior to the public hearing
- A public hearing was held in conjunction with the regular meeting of the Board of Education on June 16, 2021
- The public was provided an opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the plan to the Palmyra Board of Education
- The Board of Education modified the plan as it deemed necessary based on community and stakeholder comments and feedback

B. Palmyra School District ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format by: The Palmyra Board of Education incorporated language from "The Road Back Plan" in its current plan as "The Road Back" had already been carefully drafted in a clear and concise format. Our plan was organized to be understandable to parents and stakeholders alike, as well as to be logical and uniform in its presentation. The district can and will provide translations to any parent with limited English proficiency, both written and oral as necessary. All practicable accommodations will be made to provide an alternate format to any individual with a disability as defined by the ADA. In addition, the district website offers several language options and the website is ADA compliant.