

FEH BOCES COVID-19 Operational Plan

2021-2022

Version 2

Introduction

The FEH BOCES COVID-19 Operational Plan 2021-2022 is modeled on the NY State Education Department's *Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-2022 School Year*, which was released in August, 2021. The NYSED plan was developed using the most recent K-12 school guidance from the Centers of Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics. In addition to these resources, the FEH BOCES will continually work with representatives from the Franklin, Essex, and Hamilton counties' public health departments to inform best practices for operating our centers.

The essential elements of the FEH BOCES plan are listed below. These elements, along with the larger NYS Education Department's plan will serve as the foundation for how the FEH BOCES will safely and effectively operate during the 2021-22 school year and can be found on the FEHB website under the COVID Operational Plan link.

Masking

- On August 27, 2021, the NYSDOH Commissioner issued a *Determination on Indoor Masking Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60*. This determination mandated universal masking of teachers, staff, students, and visitors to P-12 schools over age two who are able to medically tolerate a face covering/mask and regardless of vaccination status. This masking requirement will be required until Determination 2.60 is modified or rescinded.
- Determination 2.60 specifically references and adopts current CDC recommendations on mask use in the P-12 school setting. The CDC guidance can be found at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- Outdoor masking recommendations are found in the CDC guidance. Specifically, the guidance states:
 - In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.
- In addition to NYSDOH Commissioner's Determination 2.60, NYS schools received *Interim Guidance for Classroom Instruction in P-12 Schools During the 2021-2022 Academic Year* on September 2, 2021 from the NYSDOH. This guidance codified and further clarified Commissioner's determination 2.60 regarding mask use. Specifically, it states:

- In accordance with the Commissioner’s determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors must wear masks at all times indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
- People with medical or developmental conditions that prevent them from wearing a mask may be exempted from mask requirements, as documented by a medical provider.
- People do not need to wear masks when eating, drinking, singing, or playing a wind instrument; when masks are removed for these purposes, individuals must be spaced six feet apart. This may mean that meals cannot be eaten in classrooms that have been arranged to accommodate shorter distances between students during instruction time. Students should not be excluded from in-person learning in order to meet a minimum distance requirement.
- All mask requirements must be applied consistently with any state and federal law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act).

Physical Distancing

- 3 feet whenever practical inside
 - Focus should be on in-person learning
 - Inability to provide physical distancing should not exclude students from in-person learning

Cafeteria/Meals

- 3 feet physical distancing at a minimum, 6 feet preferred
- Masks shall be always worn when not actually eating

COVID-19 Testing at School

Staff

- On September 2, 2021, the NYSDOH Commissioner issued a *Determination on COVID-19 Testing Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.62*. This determination mandated weekly COVID-19 screening testing for all P-12 (public or non-public) school district faculty or staff, including all teachers, substitute teachers, student teachers, school administrators, paraprofessional staff, and support staff, including bus drivers. This determination also applies to contractors working in a P-12 school (public or non-public) or school district setting, including contracted bus drivers.
- Determination 2.62 further defined the process by stating that P-12 schools are required to ensure teachers and staff, as outlined above, have testing performed for COVID-19 at least once per week when a school is in a geographic area identified by the CDC as having low, moderate, substantial, or high transmission rates. Teachers and staff may be permitted to opt-out of mandatory weekly screening testing if they provide documentation of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as set forth in 10 NYCRR 2.62. Teachers and staff who work at multiple schools do not need to receive multiple tests; they may use one weekly test result to demonstrate to any number of schools where they work that they have fulfilled this requirement.

- FEH BOCES will develop an internal process through its Human Resources department to determine which staff shall be tested on a weekly basis pursuant to Commissioner's Determination 2.62.
- Staff determined to be required to test by FEH BOCES' Human Resources department will be directed to report for testing on a weekly basis. Required staff who are unable to be available for testing, due to an absence or other unforeseen circumstance, shall report to the Nurse's office of their assigned building for a COVID-19 test prior to reporting to their usual assignment.
- Staff not required to test shall be eligible to voluntarily test as long as testing capacity allows.

Students

- Commissioner's Determination 2.62 also states that school districts shall offer screening testing for students (with consent) to unvaccinated students on a weekly basis in geographic areas identified by the CDC as having moderate, substantial, or high transmission rates. FEH BOCES will work collaboratively with its component districts to determine which students attending BOCES programs shall be offered the opportunity to receive COVID-19 screening testing (with consent).

Diagnostic Testing (Staff & Students)

- Commissioner's Determination 2.62 also states that school districts shall have the capacity (either directly on-site or via referral) to provide diagnostic testing, for any students, teachers or staff, who regardless of vaccination status and community level of transmission per the CDC, are:
 - Symptomatic; or
 - Asymptomatic following exposure to someone with COVID-19.
- The FEH BOCES, working in cooperation with the Franklin County Health Department, will implement the use of Abbott ID-Now Molecular (NAAT) rapid tests to meet this requirement. These tests will be offered on site at the North Franklin and Adirondack Educational Centers. FEH BOCES employees located in component districts will have access to this testing in the assigned district.
- If the on-site testing is unavailable for any reason, FEH BOCES will make a referral for staff and students to be tested through an alternate means (health clinic, physician's office, etc.)

Isolation & Quarantine

- As indicated by the Local Health Departments

Daily Screening

- Not required when feeling well
- Completed at home by staff and students using screening app only when symptomatic
- Students and staff who are ill should remain home

Remote Instruction

- Will only be utilized when in-person instruction cannot occur due to infection rates/quarantine
- Not mandatory to be provided for individual students and will only be an option when medically/psychologically necessary for the instructional benefit of the student
- Will work with individual districts to determine student needs

Vaccinations

- All eligible students and staff are encouraged to be vaccinated
- Vaccinated individuals not currently subject to quarantine orders if not symptomatic

Visitors

- Visitors to the school will be by appointment only
- Visitors will complete a health screener before entering the building
- Visitors will be required to follow all health, masking, and physical distancing protocols

Operational Plan Changes

- The District Superintendent is authorized to modify this plan as needed in response to changing public health mandates, recommendations, and/or community transmission rates

Adopted, 8/26/2021 - Original

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