

# Camden's Promise Charter School

## Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan COVID-19

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Background Information: COVID-19	4
Authorities	5
Assumptions	6
Preparations	7
Response	9
Recovery	13

## INTRODUCTION

In February 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released a statement advising communities to prepare for a domestic outbreak of COVID-19, a new coronavirus strand. Camden's Promise Charter School (CPCS) understands that our schools are essential educational and community institutions that serve many members of our local population. CPCS also acknowledges that an outbreak of any infectious illness, including COVID-19, would be detrimental to our community. To guide preparation, response, and recovery from any such potential outbreak, CPCS has adopted this Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan.

This document provides information about Camden's Promise Charter School's plans and responsibilities in the event of a local or regional outbreak of COVID-19. It is intended to be supplemental to the information provided by the [Camden County Department of Health](#), [the State of New Jersey Department of Health](#), and [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). For the most current information about COVID-19 or any other public health concern, please access the information provided by these public health organizations.

CPCS is working closely with local, state, and national health officials to monitor ongoing developments related to the global outbreak of COVID-19. As additional information becomes available, the district will continue to communicate with families and the community. The most current information available from the Camden's Promise Charter school related to COVID-19 will always be posted on the Camden's Promise Charter School COVID-19 Coronavirus Response webpage on the CPCS website.

## PURPOSE

CPCS's Infectious Illness Preparedness and Response Plan will serve as a resource guide for planning for, responding to, and recovering from a pandemic that may impact or is impacting our schools and communities. Unlike most other disasters or crises, a pandemic is people-centric and will require a community and people-focused response. Although this document is specifically focused on outlining the district's response to COVID-19, the same or similar strategies may be used to address any highly infectious illness that may impact our community.

The primary goals of this plan are to:

- Prevent or minimize the spread of illness while preserving, to the extent possible, the continuity of essential school and district functions.
- Continue the essential operations of Camden's Promise Charter School, as possible, in the event of increased student or staff absences due to an outbreak of a highly infectious illness.
- Ensure effective, timely, and situation-sensitive decision-making related to any outbreak that is impacting or has the potential to impact the CPCS community.
- Establish a clear communications plan that ensures that students, families, and staff receive timely and accurate information regarding illness prevention and infection control strategies as well as information about impacts to the school district and available services.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION: COVID-19**

The 2020 outbreak of COVID-19, commonly referred to as “coronavirus,” originated in the Wuhan province of China. Symptoms of COVID-19 reportedly include mild to severe respiratory illness accompanied by fever, cough, and shortness of breath. The virus is spread person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, within a distance of about six feet, where the droplets are then inhaled into the lungs. Transmission may also be possible through contact with contaminated surfaces, though this is not considered the primary method of transmission. Symptoms typically appear within two to 14 days of exposure to the virus.

As of early March 2020, per the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung or kidney disease seem to be at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. Early data suggest older people are twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. This may be because:

- As people age, their immune systems change, making it harder for their body to fight off diseases and infection.
- Many older adults are also more likely to have underlying health conditions that make it harder to cope with and recover from illness.

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce exposures to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease.

If you are at increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age or because you have a severe underlying medical condition, it is especially important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of exposure.

While the spread of COVID-19 continues to evolve, the guidance we are provided at the current time, urges that the seasonal flu remains a much greater concern. With that in mind, officials highly recommend the following precautions:

- Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, mouth, and face.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Minimize social contact such as shaking hands.
- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue or elbow (not hands); then wash hands
- Stay home when sick.

If a child is sick, parents/guardians are encouraged to notify the school and share information about symptoms and whether the child has had a positive influenza or COVID-19 diagnosis. According to the Family Educational Rights Protection Act, or FERPA, CPCS will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID19 in any communication. CPCS also follows guidelines provided by the New Jersey

Department of Health, included in this plan as Appendix B, for use in evaluating whether a child or staff member is too sick to attend school for any illness. Parents/guardians and staff are encouraged to consult these guidelines.

## AUTHORITIES

In the United States, the State of New Jersey, and Camden County, various public officials have authorities related to the protection of public health and safety. During an outbreak of a highly infectious illness, the United States Government, specifically the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is the national leader for communication and coordination efforts. In some instances, the United States Government may also work in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). The US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are responsible for:

- Identifying, appointing, and leading the national response to highly infectious illness; for enacting or modifying legislation and policies required to sustain and optimize pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response efforts across all sectors.
- Leading national and domestic efforts to monitor and detect outbreaks while prioritizing and guiding the allocation and targeting of resources to achieve the goals outlined in the country's response.
- Providing additional resources for national pandemic preparedness, capacity development, and response measures, including supporting rapid containment of outbreaks and providing guidance to state level authorities on the use and timing of community infection control measures.
- Supporting biomedical research and development of new vaccines and medical countermeasures.
- Considering providing resources and technical assistance to countries experiencing outbreaks of the highly infectious illness.

At the state level, the New Jersey Department of Health is guided by the US Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC. At the local level, the Camden County Department of Health takes guidance from the NJDOH. National, state, and local authorities are charged with collaborating in highly infectious illness preparedness and response efforts. Camden's Promise Charter School cooperates with these authorities to raise awareness and take necessary actions in response to reported illness. ***Camden's Promise Charter School's response to any outbreak of COVID-19 will be guided by the recommendations of the Camden County Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.***

In the event of reports of an infectious illness, such as COVID-19, Camden's Promise Charter School will:

- Remain in session until advised by local health authorities of the need to close schools.
  - The Chief School Administrator has the authority to close schools for emergency reasons in accordance with applicable district policy and state law.
  - The Chief School Administrator will work closely with all state and local officials, specifically with the Camden County Department of Health and the New

Jersey Department of Education, to make all decisions related to possible school closure in response to an infectious illness, such as COVID-19.

- The Camden County Health Officer will make a recommendation about whether to close school(s).
- Develop and deliver comprehensive communications for students, families, staff, and community members regarding the infectious illness and the district's planned response.
- The district and school nurse will continue to educate school communities about strategies for the prevention of illness including vaccinations, proper hand washing techniques, community mitigation, and social mitigation as well as any other strategies deemed necessary or appropriate for preventing illness transmission.
- The School nurse and school administration will continue to utilize and update plans to be enacted in the event that a child must be sent home from school due to illness.
- Continue to collaborate with the Camden County Department of Health to monitor health data and update schools, staff, and families regarding potential changes that may occur or new and pertinent information related to the extent or spread of the illness.

## ASSUMPTIONS

In the event of a pandemic illness that results in a public health emergency, the New Jersey Governor may declare a state of emergency. In the event that a state of emergency is declared, response to the outbreak will be coordinated across all levels of government, including the school district. In a state of emergency:

- NJDOH will take the role of Lead State Agency for emergency support and will coordinate with the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and other state and local agencies as part of a unified command structure.
- Effective prevention and therapeutic measures, including vaccine and antiviral medications could be delayed, in short supply, or be unavailable.
- Substantial public education regarding the need to target priority groups for vaccination and antiviral/antibiotic medication and the allocation of limited supplies, will be crucial to avert public panic.
- [Non-pharmaceutical interventions](#), travel restrictions, cancellation of public events, isolation and/or quarantine may be required to slow the spread of an outbreak.
- Secondary bacterial infections, following the outbreak, may result in shortages in antibiotic supplies.
- The Camden County Department of Health will work with health care providers to coordinate distribution of vaccines, antivirals, and other medications and/or medical supplies as necessary.
- There may be a need for alternate care sites to be used as temporary health facilities.
- Healthcare workers, firefighters, police officers, and other emergency services personnel may be at higher risk of exposure and illness than the general population, which may strain outbreak response.
- Widespread illness could increase the likelihood of sudden and potentially significant shortages of personnel in other sectors that provide critical public safety and necessary services.

- It may be necessary to expand mortuary service capacity including Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams (DMORT) through NJDOH.
- It is possible that there may be waves of illness. In the case of pandemic influenza, for example, there may be up to two months of little or no flu activity, but there may be up to 18 months where there is ongoing risk to the public.

As additional assumptions or information about COVID-19 are identified or become available, these assumptions may be updated.

## PREPARATION

Preparedness includes the actions and measures taken before an event to better handle that event when it arises. In this case, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) plays a significant role in ensuring that states and local health departments are prepared for public health emergencies. At the state and local levels, the New Jersey Department of Health and (NJDOH) and the Camden County Department of Health collaborate with the Camden County Department of Education and Camden's Promise Charter School to prepare the district prior to, during, and after exposure to a highly infectious illness.

Prior to or in the early stages of an outbreak or pandemic, public health officials encourage the practice of every day good health habits and implementation of [non-pharmaceutical interventions](#) to prevent and protect the population from the spread of highly infectious illness. These habits include:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- When you are sick, stay away from others to prevent passing on your illness to others.
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing with a tissue and then throw away the tissue.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  - The [CDC](#) offers free hand washing resources to encourage proper hand washing technique and that include tips for families to help children develop good hand washing habits.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent the spread of germs.
- Practice other good health strategies, including cleaning and disinfecting surfaces especially when someone is ill; get plenty of sleep, manage stress, and be physically active.

In addition to these good health habits, other non-pharmaceutical interventions that can help to mitigate the spread of illness in the community include:

- Social distancing or creating ways to provide distance between people in close contact areas including at work and at school.
- Closures or cancellations of non-urgent events and avoidance of scheduling community events during an outbreak or pandemic in Camden County or neighboring regions.
- Being prepared and informed about the pandemic and appropriate steps to prevent the spread of illness.

- Communication with students, families, employees, and community members that informs and provides updates on the status of an outbreak or pandemic and provides information on good hygiene methods that may help mitigate the spread of illness.
- Ongoing monitoring of the outbreak or pandemic.
- Maintaining clean and disinfected environments.
- Encouraging those who are sick, including students and staff, to stay home.

As Camden’s Promise Charter School continues its preparation efforts, the district is also implementing the following preparedness measures in accordance with guidance from the CDC and the Camden County Department of Health:

- **Planning:**
  - Reviewing, updating, and implementing emergency operations plans in collaboration with the Camden County Department of Health.
  - Monitoring and planning for absenteeism in schools and offices.
    - Camden’s Promise Charter School has adopted guidelines that dictate that daily absence rates exceeding 10% of staff or students due to illness of any form must be reported to the Camden County Department of Health. Please see Appendix A for complete guidelines.
  - Review of attendance and sick leave policies. Encouraging students and staff to stay home when sick.
    - The CDC and the Camden County Department of Health have developed [guidelines](#) for businesses managing employee leave and sick time. The district will reference these guidelines as needed.
  - Identifying critical job functions and positions and planning for alternative coverage of these positions as needed.
  - Developing plans for remote learning for students and for remote work for staff in the event of extended closures.
    - Encouraging staff to prepare for potential absence or closure by preparing lesson plans ahead of time, bringing materials home as needed to allow for remote work, etc.
  - Determining what level of absenteeism will disrupt continuity of teaching and learning.
  - Creating communications plans to ensure that students, families, staff, and the community receive information necessary to prepare for and respond to an outbreak.
- **Education and Prevention:**
  - Encouraging all students, families, and staff to follow good health habits and encouraging implementation of measures that prevent the spread of illness.
  - Sharing resources with families to help them understand when to keep children home. CPCS will continue to share the resources published by the [CDC](#) and the [Camden County Department of Health](#). Information about evaluating whether students are too sick to attend school can be found in Appendix B.
  - Following procedures to ensure students and staff who become sick at school or arrive at school sick are sent home as soon as possible and ensuring that sick students and staff are separated from well students and staff until they can leave.

- Performing routine environmental cleaning of the school, busses, and offices including cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, countertops, door frames, handicap push buttons, tabletops, backs of chairs, pencil sharpeners, keyboards, mice, monitors, portions of walls, etc.) with cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
  - CPCS’s cleaning procedures are governed by district’s ABM cleaning contract.
  - In times of more prevalent illness, the custodial department works closely with the Camden County Health Department regarding cleaning and disinfection protocols.

The district will continue to adopt and implement additional preparedness measures as they are identified.

## **RESPONSE**

If local health officials report that there are cases of COVID-19 in Camden County or in counties adjacent to Camden County, Camden’s Promise Charter School will transition into a response phase. *The first step of any response phase will be consultation with local health officials from the Camden County Department of Health and the Camden County Department of Education.* The second step of response will be the convening of the district’s Health and Safety Team.

Once it is determined that transition to a response phase is necessary, CPCS, via the Health and Safety team, will consider the circumstances and determine the most appropriate response. The potential response options and phases outlined herein are based on current knowledge of COVID19. As additional information becomes available about the virus, how it spreads, and how severe it is, this response protocol may be updated in accordance with recommendations provided by the Camden County Department of Health and the CDC.

### ***Immediate and Temporary CPCS School/Office Closure***

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, temporarily dismissing childcare programs and K-12 schools is a strategy to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19 in communities. Local health officials may recommend temporary school closures in instances where a student or staff member attended school or work prior to being confirmed as a COVID-19 case. In such instances, local health officials with the Camden County Department of Health will make recommendations related to the scope of the closure. The duration of closures will be determined on a case-by-case basis using the most up-to-date information available about COVID-19 and the specific case(s) in the community.

In the event of exposure within the CPCS community, the following steps will be taken:

- CPCS will confer with local health officials, primarily the Camden County Department of Health, to obtain a recommendation regarding school closure, timing, scope, and duration.
- CPCS will communicate the possible exposure to the community, which includes students, families, staff, and community members. In accordance with the Family

Educational Rights Protection Act, or FERPA, PSD will not identify the name, grade, or age the student(s) or staff member(s) confirmed to have tested positive for COVID-19.

- CPCS will communicate plans for school and office closures and event/group activity cancellations as appropriate and in as timely a fashion as possible.

If local health officials recommend closure of a CPCS school, local high schools, or the entire county school system, the following protocols will be followed:

- **Building Closure and Cleaning**

- The school(s) and district offices, as appropriate, will be closed beginning on the date/time collaboratively determined in collaboration with local health officials.
- The extent of closure – whether it impacts students or students and staff – will be determined in partnership with local health officials.
- Only identified essential personnel and building administrators will have access to school buildings during closure.
  - ***CPCS will clearly communicate that staff, with the exception of those designated as essential personnel by their supervisor, and students are not to enter or CPCS school or district facility during a closure.***
- The district will evaluate options to provide meal programs, if feasible, or to connect to community resources where available. Per World Health Organization (WHO) guidance, cafeterias will not be open during building closures.
  - CPCS intends to offer breakfast and lunch to students who qualify for free and reduced meals. Breakfast and lunch will be provided in “to go” containers and are available for pick up only. Pick-up is available between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m on any campus in Camden City designated as a food service site.
- All regularly scheduled events, including athletic and extracurricular activities, performances, etc. will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
- All facility rentals will be cancelled or postponed until further notice.
- Before and after school childcare at CPCS will be cancelled.
- Signs will be posted at the school indicating playground closures for the duration of the school closure or unless otherwise determined. Playgrounds and school grounds with fencing will be secured/locked and no access will be permitted.
- Students will be asked to take all necessary learning technology and curricular materials home with them for use in e-learning for the duration of the closure as directed by their teachers.
- Staff will be required to take all work-related technology and tools home with them for use in support of e-learning or telecommuting for the duration of the closure as directed by their supervisor.
- Cleaning of affected CPCS facilities will be completed in accordance with district protocols as outlined in the ABM contract and in accordance with recommendations from the Camden County Department of Health. All cleaning will be completed prior to implementation of any student or staff building re-entry.
  - Cleaning protocols in response to a closure would include removing trash and recycling from the building, vacuuming all floor surfaces, sweeping, mopping, scrubbing all desks, counters, sinks, and tabletops. Restrooms,

locker rooms, and health offices would be cleaned and disinfected. All high-touch surfaces would be disinfected, including wiping all surfaces with towels that have been soaked in disinfectant. Surfaces with cracks or corners will be wiped and sprayed with disinfectant (BioBlasting). All Early Childhood and kindergarten toys will be disinfected. All carpet will be sprayed with disinfectant and all kitchens, including floors, prep areas, serving tables, and equipment, and restrooms would be disinfected. Buses and child restraint devices for transportation will continue to be cleaned and disinfected as well.

- The business office has articulated a plan to ensure that payroll will be processed based on all current scheduled assignments and paid to existing direct deposit accounts. Employees without direct deposit will not receive checks until buildings are reopened. Due to fraud risks, employees will not be able to sign up for direct deposit during a closure, unless a Payroll Manager is able to positively confirm the change with the employee.
- **Communication:** Information about the closure will be shared as soon as possible after closure determinations are made via:
  - District website and social media presences;
  - School Messenger emails, phone calls, and text messages to families and staff;
  - Signage on the door at CPCS; and
  - School outgoing voicemail recordings.

Information about closures will be updated daily to ensure that the community has the most current information available.

- **Continuity of Education and District Services:** In the event of a closure, the district will implement tele-education and telecommute plans for students and staff, where appropriate.
  - To prepare to support continuity of education and district services, CPCS will utilize comprehensive plans for the following:
    - E-learning for students that includes digital and distance learning options, such as access to digital textbook resources, online classroom collaboration tools, etc.
      - Google Classroom and Canvas will be used, for example, to assign lessons, grade student work, and provide feedback on student work.
      - Curriculum adoptions since 2016 have also included robust digital platforms to support remote student learning (Canvas, iXL, Khan Academy, etc.).
      - Clear expectations for e-learning will be defined as part of this planning effort. Plans for supporting students without regular access to the internet to support e-learning will also be developed.
    - Providing training to teachers to support e-learning for students including preparation of online lessons, use of online learning tools, etc.
      - Administration and teachers will collaborate to develop resources for a distance learning experience.

- Clear expectations for supporting e-learning will be defined as part of this planning effort.
  - Collaborating with the Camden County Department of Education regarding any necessary waivers to state requirements for in-person instructional hours, school days, or seat time.
  - Collaborating and receiving guidance from the Camden County Department of Education regarding state assessment requirements.
  - Continuing service to students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans as well as providing mental health support to students remotely.
  - Providing training to non-instructional staff to support telecommute options, including training on remote use of key district software and information management systems.
  - Exploring and identifying the resources that may be needed to support tele education and telecommute options, including but not limited to wireless internet connection solutions for students without home internet connections, conferencing and collaboration tools for teams, etc. Determinations about the resources the district will provide will be made on a case-by-case basis.
  - Each department will develop guidelines associated with expectations for staff as related to working remotely. These guidelines will be communicated to staff by their supervisors.
  - Planning for necessary technical support of e-learning and telecommute efforts via the Information Technology department.
  - Planning for ongoing maintenance of school and office buildings as needed.
  - Planning for ensuring ongoing security of school and office buildings as needed.
- **Other Considerations**
  - **Extended Closures:** In the event of extended school/office closures, the district is also exploring the following:
    - The potential need to modify school schedules as a result of extended closures (i.e. adding days to the end of the school year etc.).
    - Modifying contracts with employees, as needed, to accommodate for extended closures. This consideration will be informed by decisions made by the New Jersey Department of Education regarding requirements to make up days/class time missed.
    - Long-term financial planning to meet the district’s financial obligations (i.e. payroll, etc.).

More information related to the specifics of extended closures will be shared as the need for such closures are identified.

- **Travel:** As COVID-19 cases continue to be identified across the country and around the world, CPCS will continue to evaluate whether to permit domestic and international travel for field trips or school-sponsored events and/or for staff professional development.

- As of March 6, 2020, determinations about whether to travel are to be made by parents/guardians on behalf of students. Staff may make personal decisions about whether to travel.
- Should the district make district-level determinations about whether to permit student and staff travel for district-sponsored events, field trips, professional development, etc., they will be made on a case-by-case basis and will be shared with schools, students, families, and staff.

## **RECOVERY**

In the event of school or office closures related to COVID-19, CPCS will communicate when CPCS staff and Camden County Department of Health officials have conferred and determined that it is safe to return to school as well as what steps and precautions will need to be followed at that time.

All schools, offices, buses, and support vehicles will be cleaned and sterilized, as appropriate, prior to reopening of buildings. As school is reopened, a process for cleaning and disinfecting equipment (i.e. laptops, cell phones, etc.) and materials brought home during closure will also be implemented. Cleaning and sterilization practices will be guided by recommendations from the Camden County Department of Health.

Communications platforms that will be utilized to share information about the reopening of the building and the reentry process will include, but are not limited to, the district website and social media platforms, voicemail recordings, emails, phone calls, and text messages to staff and families.

CPCS will also develop and implement a plan for return to the classroom for students who may have missed an extended period of instruction during a school closure.

CPCS will make every effort to return to “business as usual” following any necessary closures.

Concurrently, the district will rely on the guidance department to evaluate the need for additional support and resources for our students, families, and staff, and will provide these supports to the extent possible.

The district will also continue to partner with local health officials to monitor the illness on an ongoing basis and will continue to communicate with the community.

Debriefing among local health officials and school district staff will also occur after any closures to ensure that successes and challenges are identified to inform planning for any future pandemic events.