

**BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**SAFE RETURN PLAN**  
**ARP-ESSER III**  
**Updated June 2023**

**1) Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks**

The Board promotes behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate; encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette; allowing the use of face coverings; and signs and messages in and around school buildings. Even if social distancing is possible and being practiced, face coverings are optional for students, and face coverings are also optional for visitors as well as are optional on school buses.

**2) Physical distancing (e.g., including use of cohorts/podding)**

Physical distancing will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible.

**3) Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

School districts will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Such stations should be in each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), at entrances and exits of buildings, near lunchrooms and toilets. For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations should be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. School officials should develop a school-wide plan where students are required to wash hands for at least twenty seconds during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing. If washing with soap and water is not possible, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be used.

**4) Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

School officials must continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. The Board's Plan and Policy will establish cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used. If needed, locker rooms may be closed, or the district will stagger the use and clean and disinfect between in order to mitigate risk and limit students and staff from confined spaces with limited ventilation and/or areas with large amounts of high contact surfaces.

**5) Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the State, local, territorial, or Tribal health departments**

The school district has adopted Board Policy 1648 regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure. All school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee should be provided information regarding the role of contact tracing conducted by State, county, and local officials.

The Pandemic Response Team will: Oversee each school's implementation of the Plan and providing safety and crisis leadership, adjust or amending school health and safety protocols as needed, provide staff with needed support and training, review school level data regarding health and safety measures and the presence of COVID-19 and report information to administration.

**6) Diagnostic and screening testing**

The school district adopted Board Policy 1648 regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure.

**7) Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible**

The school district will continue to work with local, county, and state health officials and medical institutions to provide vaccination opportunities and information.

**8) Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies**

In all stages of pandemic response and recovery, the CDC recommends the following: Reasonable accommodations will be provided for individuals that the CDC identifies as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Even if social distancing is possible and being practiced, face coverings will be encouraged for students, and for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health. Accommodations for students unable to wear a face covering should be addressed according to that student's need and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Exceptions to requirements for face coverings when face coverings are mandatory are as follows: A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an IEP, precludes the use of face covering. It is also acknowledged that enforcing face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.