



Linden Public Schools

Safe Return Plan

2023 - 2024

LINDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
LINDEN, NJ

CENTRAL OFFICE

ATIYA Y. PERKINS
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

PAUL OLIVEIRA
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR ACADEMICS

ANNABELL LOUIS
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR SUPPORT

PAMELA B. CAPORALE
ASSISTANT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

JOHN SERAPIGLIA
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

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A. Universal and correct wearing of masks

Linden Public Schools will follow the guidance provided by Governor Murphy to lift the universal mask mandate as of March 7, 2022, and has implemented a mask-optional policy.

B. Physical distancing

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for physical distancing to the maximum extent practical. Building administrators, teachers, staff, and the district's Maintenance Department collaborate on the configurations of classrooms, lunchrooms, instructional spaces, and other areas to maintain appropriate social distancing to the maximum extent practical. If instructional and non-instructional rooms cannot comply with distancing standards, modifications will be taken into consideration when feasible.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for handwashing and respiratory etiquette.

- **Handwashing:** District administrators, in conjunction with the Facilities Department, will continue to support healthy hygiene behaviors by providing adequate supplies at the District's expense, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and cloth face coverings (as feasible). Hand washing stations will be maintained with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Signage will be displayed throughout buildings to encourage hand washing and sanitizing.
- **Respiratory Etiquette:** Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands throughout the school day, including but not limited to before eating, after eating, using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/sneezing/coughing. Through ongoing general education and health education lessons, students will be reminded of the proper ways to wash and sanitize their hands.

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation. All school facilities will be cleaned daily in accordance with district protocols inclusive of deep cleaning each day. High-contact areas and touchpoints will be disinfected throughout the day, and restrooms will be cleaned twice during school hours and again at the end of the day. Cafeteria areas will be disinfected between each student/staff lunch. Backpack sprayers will be used in the evening to ensure that all areas are properly cleaned. Classroom unit ventilators will be thoroughly cleaned, and new filters will be installed in each prior to school opening. All district spaces/classrooms have been provided with one or more air purifiers. Air purifiers shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications regarding filter replacements, etc.; Building ventilation shall follow CDC and State of New Jersey DOH guidelines. All windows shall be maintained and operable to ensure maximum ventilation. Custodial training will occur ongoing to stay informed.

E. Contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine, in collaboration with the state, local, territorial, or tribal health departments

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine. Per the October 7, 2022, New Jersey Department of Health COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools, Childcare, and Youth Camps, the District transitioned away from a case-investigation response model to a routine disease control model in schools. This model focuses more on response to clusters of cases, outbreaks, and evidence of ongoing transmission in a particular setting, and less on individual case investigation and contact tracing. The District has implemented a formal process for reporting student and staff COVID-positive cases. Standardized communication procedures, protocols, and templates for notification to staff, families, and the community

have been developed and implemented. Additionally, cases are reported weekly through the State's CDRSS system.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, NJ Department of Health guidance for diagnostic and screening testing, and participates in the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) K-12 COVID at-home test kit program offered at no cost to school districts. Families and staff are encouraged to refrain from attending school or work when sick or exhibiting COVID-like symptoms. Families and staff are encouraged to monitor for symptoms and test following the onset of symptoms or after a potential exposure. The district website provides information regarding quarantine and isolation protocols, screening and handling of symptomatic students and staff, travel protocols, masking, and testing resources.

G. Efforts to provide vaccinations to educators, other staff, and students, if eligible

Linden Public Schools is committed to maintaining in-person instruction. The District partners with the Linden Health Department and local pharmacies when necessary. Upon request, the District may inform students, staff, and community about vaccination opportunities throughout the area, including direct links to the Linden Health Department's website.

H. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies

Linden Public Schools is in alignment with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools. The District is committed to maintaining in-person instruction and is following the CDC, NJDOE, New Jersey Executive Orders, and NJ Department of Health guidance for children with disabilities, in regard to their health and safety.

I. Describe how the LEA 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. (1000 character limit):

Linden Public Schools will continue to operate as a 1:1 District, utilizing Apple Products and Cisco WebEx video conferencing during the school year. All students will have access to these personal devices in school, as well as at home, should the district be forced to close, due to COVID-19 restrictions. In the event of a school closure, Students and staff will communicate via their personal devices. SeeSaw, Canvas, and Cisco WebEx platforms will be used to provide direct instruction in academic curricula and resources. On-going professional development will be provided to students, staff, and parents to assist with instructional technology. Real-time technical support and device repair will be provided by the District IT Department. The COVID-19 pandemic has created various challenges which have impacted students, families, and staff in numerous ways. Linden Public Schools will continue to provide SEL support and referrals to students and families for this school year.

J. Linden Public School sought public comment on its plan and how it took those public comments into account in the development of its plan.

The plan was shared by the Superintendent with the Board of Education at a public work session on December 14, 2023. The public had the opportunity to comment on the plan. A survey was made available to stakeholders during the initial planning stages of the plan. A reopening meeting was coordinated for the school community that consisted of central administration and health officials. The plan will be posted on the district website, and a dedicated email address (lpsreopen2021@lindenps.org) will be shared with the community for additional feedback to be used for each revision period.

K. Linden Public School ensured that the plan is understandable and uniform format; is, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, will be orally translated for such a parent; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with

a disability as defined by the ADA will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.

The Linden Public Schools 2023-2024 Reopening Plan was developed in both an understandable and uniformed format for all of our parents and school community to view. The guidelines are listed under topics such as masks, educational settings, quarantine, vaccinations, travel, attendance, and extracurricular activities. The school district also created a dedicated email hotline if any parent or guardian has a question about the reopening plan guidelines. The plan will be translated into several languages and posted on the district website. This information will be communicated to parents through email blasts, social media, Back to School Nights, text alerts, and mailings. Anyone requiring assistance with accessing or understanding the plan will be provided with contact information to receive clarification and/or translation.

L. Linden Public School will make available professional development and technical assistance to all schools.

The Linden Public Schools will provide professional learning and technical assistance opportunities throughout the school year in various ways. The central administration has created a reopening committee, comprised of staff, parents, and community stakeholders, that meets on a regular basis to update the district plan as needed. The Linden Public Schools have coordinated numerous technology nights to assist our families throughout the school year. A dedicated email hotline is open all school year for any parent or guardian that has an individual question or that may need further assistance. All professional learning and technical assistance opportunities are forwarded to the respective schools for implementation.