



Avalon Stone Harbor Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Service Pursuant to the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, Section 2001(i)

Introduction and Background

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, no 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). A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan. Under the interim final requirements published in Volume 86, No. 76 of the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE), an LEA must periodically, but no less frequently than every six months through September 30, 2023, review and, as appropriate, revise its Safe Return Plan.

This plan incorporates the federally-required components of the Safe Return Plan. The questions in the plan below will be included in the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG. LEAs will submit responses to the questions within the LEA ARP ESSER Fund application in EWEG by June 24, 2021. The NJDOE hopes that this template will allow LEAs to effectively plan for that submission and to easily post the information to their websites as required by the ARP Act.

Note that on May 17, 2021, Governor Murphy announced that upon the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year, portions of Executive Order 175 allowing remote learning will be rescinded, meaning that schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The NJDOE and New Jersey Department of Health will share additional information regarding State requirements or guidance for health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year as it becomes available.

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Avalon Stone Harbor Schools Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

LEA Name: Avalon Stone Harbor Schools

October 2021

Updated January 7, 2022

Updated July, 2022 Board Approved August 10, 2022 in Stone Harbor and August 17, 2022 in Avalon

Updated January, 2023 Board Approved January 11, 2023 in Stone Harbor and Avalon

Updated June, 2023 Board Approved June 14, 2023 in Stone Harbor and June 21, 2023 in Avalon

Updated December, 2023 Board Approved December 13, 2023 in Stone Harbor and December 20, 2023 in Avalon

1. Maintaining Health and Safety

For each mitigation strategy listed below (A–H), please describe how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

A. Universal and correct wearing of masks: Policy 5141.10

Indoors: In alignment with recommendations from the NJDOH dated August 29, 2022, masks will remain optional but recommended in school, at school activities, and on the school bus in the following circumstances: during periods of elevated community transmission, during an active outbreak, after returning from isolation on days 6-10, after known COVID-19 exposure.

Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors.

Appropriate and consistent use of masks may be challenging for some individuals, however if indoor mask use in schools is ordered by the Governor's office, the following exceptions will apply:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;

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- When a student’s documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face covering;
- When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

Where an individual is seeking a medical exemption from the masking requirement pursuant to the first or third bullet above, documentation from a medical professional supporting this exception is required-

Transportation: Mask use is not currently required on transportation. If occupancy allows, we will maximize physical distancing on the bus and open windows to generate air flow.

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

Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will work to prevent crowding to the extent practical while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students. In addition, Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will prioritize other prevention measures including increasing ventilation, hand washing, and the use of outdoor learning spaces. Outside of classrooms including in hallways, locker rooms, indoor and outdoor physical education settings, and school-sponsored transportation, the schools will maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent practical.

C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette

- Avalon Stone Harbor Schools should teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
- Maintain adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Assist/observe young children to ensure proper hand washing.

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Hand Hygiene should take place:

- Upon arrival to school
- Before and after meals and snacks
- After going to the bathroom
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into tissue
- When hands are visibly soiled

D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation: Policy 3510

The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will implement routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. This means at least daily disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hands-on learning items, faucet handles, phones and toys.

If a person exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, school staff should clean and disinfect the spaces occupied by the person.

Improve airflow to the extent possible to increase circulation of outdoor air, increase the delivery of clean air, and dilute potential contaminants. This can be achieved through several strategies:

- Bring in as much outdoor air as possible. HVAC units will be adjusted to determine the amount of air flow based on outdoor humidity and temperature.
- If safe to do so, open windows and doors.
- Do not open windows or doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (such as falling, exposure to extreme temperatures, or triggering asthma symptoms), or if doing so would otherwise pose a security risk.
- Use exhaust fans in restrooms and kitchens.
- Activities, classes, recess or lunches will be held outdoors when circumstances allow.
- Open windows in buses and other transportation, if doing so does not pose a safety risk. Even just cracking windows open a few inches improves air circulation.
- It is noted that the heating and cooling units in both Avalon and Stone Harbor were replaced in the summer of 2021. Units are single room units with fresh air being filtered in and then filtered and returned outside. Classroom units do not contain ductwork or air flow between rooms.

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

Universal case investigation and contact tracing are no longer recommended for COVID-19. Students and staff who are showing signs of illness should stay home and notify the Health Office. They will be contacted by the nurses for further information and recommendations will be made on a case by case basis. An initial test is recommended. If the initial test is negative, the test should be repeated in 48 hours.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset or positive test for asymptomatic individuals, and until at least 48 hours have passed since fever has resolved **without the use of fever reducing medications**. In addition, they should wear a mask on days 6-10 and may return to normal activity if they are feeling up to it. Each positive case will be handled on a case by case basis with the school nurses.

F. Diagnostic and screening testing

Daily Screening of Students and Staff

Parents/caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will strictly enforce exclusion criteria for both students and staff. The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will educate parents about the importance of monitoring symptoms and keeping children home while ill. The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will use existing outreach systems to provide reminders to staff and families to check for symptoms before leaving for school. The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will provide clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and reasons for absences.

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

The Avalon Stone Harbor Schools will advertise, via ParentSquare, vaccine clinics advertised by and/or provided by the Cape May County Department of Health.

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

Accommodations will be made for a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering. Where an individual is seeking a medical exemption from the masking requirement, documentation from a medical professional supporting this exception may be required.

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All special education, English Language Services, speech, occupational, and physical therapy will continue during periods of remote instruction. These services will be provided using similar methods for regular instruction including Google Meets, Google Classroom, Zoom, ParentSquare, etc. All services will be provided on a mutually agreed upon schedule between the parents and the specialist so as not to interfere with regular classroom instruction.

2. Ensuring Continuity of Services

A. 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.

LEAs may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases amongst staff and/or students. If an LEA is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of the scenarios listed above, while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the LEA should be prepared to offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible. In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count towards the district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9. Staff members may be required to report to the building during a school or classroom closure depending on vaccination status and other variables. All closures and quarantines will be confirmed with the Cape May County Department of Health.

Remote Learning

Students required to quarantine due to a Covid confirmed positive case will be provided with remote instruction. Remote learning will be coordinated with the classroom teacher upon notice of the need to quarantine.

- Remote learning and live streaming in grades 3-8 will be offered to the student as soon as possible upon notification of quarantine.
- Remote instruction activities may include live streaming into the classroom, live streaming between a teacher and students, remote access to learning materials, independent study and learning assignments, and other activities as determined by the age and ability of the student.
- Teachers will give students who are quarantined ample time to turn in assignments before assigning grades.
- Communication between the teacher and parent will facilitate the completion of all school work during remote learning.

Communication

- Parent communication will be sent via the ParentSquare app. This app also sends a daily e-mail and, if requested, text notification to parents.
- Students communication will be through Google Classroom and e-mail where appropriate.
- District administration will communicate with the staff using e-mail, ParentSquare, and Google Meets or Zoom for live meetings.

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Access to Technology

- Chromebooks will provide 1:1 computing for all students
- If students do not have their device accessible at home on the day of an emergency closure, in person pick up will occur at both schools beginning at 8:00am on the day of a remote closure or students may use their own device at home.
- All students have a designated Google account for school use.
- All students will learn the use of Google Classroom and other appropriate software during the initial weeks of school so they are prepared in the event of a closure.
- Students lacking appropriate internet access for a period of time will not be penalized during remote learning. Parents are asked to communicate with school staff regarding any issues with their child's participation in remote learning.

Instruction

- Students and staff will follow the remote schedule as closely as possible.
- Time will be made in the day for teacher office hours and one-to-one instruction where appropriate.
- Live instruction will be provided through Google Meet or Zoom for students in grades K-8. Pre-K will provide online lessons for students to review at their convenience.
- Students on remote learning must attend 4 hours of daily instruction to count as present under state attendance laws. It is expected that students will attend the entire instructional day. If they will be absent for a day or part of a day, please call the Main Office.
- A daily schedule will be provided for each grade level's remote instruction via ParentSquare.
- All itinerant services including speech, special education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and English language Services will be provided during remote instruction using similar methods as classroom instruction at a mutually agreed upon time between the parent and the provider.

Food Service and Distribution

The Avalon and Stone Harbor School Districts do not participate in the Federal Lunch Program. Therefore, the Avalon and Stone Harbor Schools will provide lunch services during in-person instruction only.

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3. Public Comment

A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments into account in the development of its plan. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan.

The plan was shared at public Board meetings and open for comments. Any revisions to the plan will be made at 60 day intervals with public comment sought through open public meetings and parent and staff surveys.

B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an 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 plan will be posted on the Avalon Stone Harbor Schools website as a pdf document for access by parents. Any parent that requires a translation of the document should contact the Main Office of either school.

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