

LINDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

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Linden Public Schools Return to School Frequently Asked Questions

Updates are in Red.

- 1. Since I am a parent who works full time, will the online instruction be at certain times of the day or will it be self-paced?**
 - We are extremely empathetic to the needs of our working parents. Please understand that the safety of your children is of utmost importance. With that in mind, students will be able to work on lessons at their convenience. Teachers will take daily attendance by following the schools' bell schedule. A virtual schedule is included in the reopening plans. Teachers support their learning in multiple ways such as recorded videos, phone calls, emails, live Web-ex class meetings, or when possible face time. Teachers will also be available during school hours to answer any questions students or parents may have about classwork. Please address any specific concerns to LPSreopen2020@lindenps.org.
- 2. What about students who do not have access to the internet or do not have a device to use?**
 - Schools will be working with families who do not have access to the internet or other learning resources on an individual basis. We will make certain that each of our students receives the quality instruction that they deserve. Please reach out to your child's building principal if you do *NOT* have access to the internet.
- 3. Will I have a chance to change my mind about virtual learning or face-to-face instruction since the calendar has changed?**
 - Yes, you will be allowed to reconsider your choice of virtual learning or face-to-face instruction once the system has determined the specific date to implement face-to-face instruction based on COVID 19 community spread data.
- 4. If I choose for my child to participate in virtual learning lessons from home, will he/she still be able to participate in extra-curricular activities and/or after school programs?**
 - The district is focusing on solidifying the academic plan for a smooth reopening on September 3rd. Extracurricular activities will be slowly phased in, once we have successfully reopened schools.

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5. How will students be able to eat lunch?

- Students will be socially distanced while they are eating lunch. The cafeteria will not be utilized at full capacity. Schools will utilize outside space whenever possible and some students will eat their lunch in their classrooms.

6. What will the cleaning/disinfecting schedule look like and what products will be used?

- Our restrooms and touchpoints such as doorknobs and railings will be disinfected on an ongoing basis throughout the school day. Any student desks used during both the a.m. and p.m. sessions will be disinfected in between sessions. Our disinfectant dispensers will be refilled and supplies such as paper towels in the restrooms will be replenished as needed. Products on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) disinfectants list, e.g., TruShot, TB-CIDEQUAT, and NABC, will be used. The district has also purchased twenty-five (25) Minute Man Mistlers which will be used to spray disinfectant in-between classes.

7. Will there be physical education classes and recess?

- Physical education classes will be held. Students will not be able to opt - out due to the State requirement. With that being said, the needed adjustments will be made, e.g., the spacing of students and low exertion activities. Recess will be held with students alternating between the playground, gym, and classrooms. Additional staff members will be assigned to ensure that students maintain social distance.

8. Will the needed adjustments be made for students who need to be out of school for an extended period either due to personal illness or a quarantine?

- Yes, we will seek to accommodate these students through the remote learning option during such time.

9. How many students can be in a classroom and still be socially distanced?

- This answer varies from room to room due to, for example, the room size and furniture size.

10. What arrangement will be in place for a student with a doctor's note exempting him/her from wearing a face covering.

- These students can wear face shields instead of gaiters or masks. Also, we will try to create conditions through which they are socially distanced as often as possible.

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11. Why did the district move from the ABVAB model to the AAVBB model?

- The district moved to the AAVBB after receiving feedback from parents and teachers. For contact tracing, it was recommended to keep groups of students together for the two-days. Parents also said that the continuity of the AAVBB schedule would allow them to create a more unified work schedule.

12. How was the plan created?

- Committees were formed during the first week in July. A health and safety committee and instructional committee were comprised of administrators, parents, board members, medical experts, and maintenance workers.

13. When will we receive students' schedules?

- Our teams are collecting parent data on which learning model they have selected. The virtual schedule is included in the reopening plans. Each school will send out additional information to parents.

14. Will bussing be available?

- Bussing will be available. This is why parents need to complete the parent survey, so the district can start scheduling bussing routes.

15. Will each building check temperatures? Why or Why not?

- The district cannot check the temperature of each student every day. There are challenges with students being able to socially distance during this process. We are also concerned with parents having to wait while the students' have their temperature checked. We are asking that parents check students' temperature every morning before sending them to school.

16. What happens if a student becomes infected with COVID-19?

- We will rely on notification from the health department if a student tests positive. If a child tests positive for COVID-19, the entire class will quarantine for 14 days, and participate in virtual learning from home. The health department will conduct contact tracing. We will follow the guidance from the health department when we need to quarantine the entire building.

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17. The district is providing face masks for every student each day, are students allowed to wear their own face masks?

- Yes, students will be allowed to wear their own face masks. Face masks must be approved PPE and cannot display any offensive language or images.

18. What can I do if my child is being bullied or harassed because of COVID-19? What if it's at school?

- Under the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), schools and other places of public accommodation must take action to stop harassment based on race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual. If you suspect that your child is a victim of bullying, please reach out to the school anti-bullying specialist and the principal.

19. Why aren't students attending ½ days or five days a week?

- Due to social distancing requirements and cleaning protocols, it is not feasible to have students in the buildings every day at the start of the school year. We are not using a ½ day model because the learning day is not rigorous enough for our students. Also, a ½ day school schedule presents challenges for our working parents.

20. How will the district address chronic absenteeism?

- The district's attendance officers and building principals will contact students and their families to address this issue. Please note that while regular attendance is important, we encourage parents to keep their children home if they are sick.

21. How many children will be part of a cohort and who is going to be allowed into the classroom at any given time?

- Each classroom will contain students who are spaced six feet apart. Depending on the size of the classroom, the number of students allowed in the room will vary. The average classroom will most likely have 10-16 students at any given time. Once we have an accurate count on the number of students returning for in-person instruction, we will have the approximate number of students in each class. The classroom teacher and aide (if applicable), will be in the classroom with the students throughout the day. Their designated Specials teacher will push in to provide instruction as well.

22. Will we still have to get immunizations done if we choose to have our child virtually learn from home?

- Yes. If you register a child in Linden Public Schools, you must adhere to NJDOE immunization requirements.

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23. What is the plan for the students to gather their belongings from last year?

- Teachers have gathered student belongings from the previous year. They will be distributed to their new teacher during the first few weeks of school.

24. How many kids can be sent to the bathroom and who will be monitoring that?

- We will have staff members monitoring the bathrooms. Students will not be allowed to gather in groups while using the bathroom. We will enforce one student in the restroom at a time. At the elementary level, buildings with “shared” bathrooms will establish a morning and afternoon bathroom schedule to avoid congregating in the hallways.

25. How are we supposed to teach our children any virtual learning if we are both working? I can't leave my children alone for too long. How is this going to help the working parents?

- Unfortunately, the restriction placed on how schools reopen schools safely is not conducive for working parents. If we all adhere to CDC guidelines like washing our hands frequently and wearing a face mask, we may be able to decrease the spread of COVID-19. If infection rates continue to decrease, school districts in New Jersey may be able to offer more days of in-person instruction for students. Until that time, we must follow state regulations to ensure the health and safety of all of our students and staff members.

26. If we opted for the full virtual learning session, what will I need to do?

- Parents will need to complete the parent questionnaire and select their preferred learning model. Parents/guardians must complete one questionnaire for each student in their care. Schedules and specific procedures will be forthcoming once the number of students opting for virtual instruction is determined.

27. With middle school and high school students changing classes throughout the day, will there be cleaning in between classes?

- Classrooms will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Desks will be wiped down after each class.

28. Will these aides be required to adhere to the A/B day schedule, or will they be working their normal hours?

- School aides will work during the AAVBB schedule. Principals will communicate with aides regarding their schedules on virtual days. Schedules will be adjusted to ensure that aides can work their designated weekly hours.

29. Will our Board of Health be testing whole classes of students or will each family be required to go to a medical facility to be tested? If a student gets sick, how is this being handled?

- The board of health will not be testing the whole class. If a student or staff member becomes infected, the department of health will start contact tracing procedures, which includes contacting people who may have been in contact with the infected person.

30. If one student or staff member is confirmed positive for COVID-19, who is required to be tested and quarantined? How will those results be communicated?

- If a student or teacher becomes infected that classroom(s) will have to quarantine for 14 days. The district will work with the health department to advise students and parents. This is further explained in Board Policy 5142.2 located on the district website.

31. Will the students and teacher in that class be notified?

- Students and teachers will be notified if someone they have been near tests positive for COVID-19.

32. What if a student is unable to be picked up? Are there enough staff members to then stay with that child?

- Sick students will be monitored in an isolation room until they are picked up by a parent or guardian. Staff members will be assigned to assist nurses with monitoring this process.

33. Do we truly have enough staff members to ensure the safety protocols will be followed?

- Yes, at this time we do have enough staff to help the district follow safety guidelines set forth by the health department and CDC.

34. If things get better, can I have them return to school later in the school year?

- We hope we will be able to return to some sense of normalcy. We will follow guidance from the governor and the health department on expanding in-class instruction. Parents and guardians will be updated frequently regarding recommendations from NJDOE.

35. Can you switch from Hybrid to Virtual during the school year based on family circumstances?

- We encourage parents and guardians to select a model in which students will participate for the first marking period. If there is a need to switch, we will review each case individually.

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36. What will be the ramifications for students that refuse to wear proper PPE, refuse to social distance, or refuse to exercise proper hygiene?

- Students who do not follow health and safety protocols will have to join the virtual learning model. Of course, each case will be reviewed on an individual basis.

37. Is virtual learning for the duration of the class from start to finish? (8:25am - 3pm)?

- The virtual learning schedule has been included in the reopening plans, which can be found on the district's website.

38. When do we have to notify the school of our decision?

- We are encouraging parents and guardians to complete the parent questionnaire as soon as possible. The August 7th deadline has been extended to Monday, August 10th due the recent tropical storm.

39. For the two full days in school - what are the hours?

- The two full days of in-person instruction will follow the regular school day. Please check the website for the start time and end time for your child's school.

40. Our schools do not have air conditioning, will fans be allowed in the classrooms?

- Our maintenance department is currently working on supplying adequate ventilation for classrooms throughout the district.

41. Where do I find my child's school identification number?

- Your child's student identification number can be found in Genesis or on their ID cards. If you are unable to access Genesis, please contact your child's school for assistance.

42. Will students be able to change for gym in the locker rooms?

- As per regulations set forth by NJDOE, students will not be able to use the locker-room. On the days that students have gym during the AAVBB schedule; they will need to wear their gym attire to school.

43. What will the virtual schedule look like?

- Refer to our [Virtual Learning Guide on our website](#).

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44. I still have student textbooks from last year, will there be a day for me to bring them in and then collect the new textbooks for this upcoming school year so that they can do the work from home or virtually using Seesaw or Think Central?

- Building principals will schedule a time for parents to drop off and/or pick up items from last year.

45. How will students be screened?

- The following link contains important information from the CDC regarding symptom screenings for K-12 students. It contains the rationale for not checking student temperatures as they enter school daily. [symptom-screening.html](#)

46. What types of personal protective equipment (PPE) has the district purchased?

- The district started purchasing PPE in April and to date has spent close to \$700,000. The district purchased 600,000 face masks, one for each student per day. Due to the recent announcement, the district has ordered an additional 100,000 face masks on August 6th.
- The district also purchased 25 Minute Man Mistlers which sprays disinfectant, for \$30,000. The district has on backorder, 25 backpack electrostatic disinfectant sprayers, at \$45,000.
- The district purchased 4,800 eight-ounce bottles of hand sanitizer, 1,200 one-gallon bottles of hand sanitizer, 2,800 containers of Clorox disinfectant wipes, and 250 infrared forehead thermometers. We have also purchased 400 wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers and they will be placed at strategic areas in every building.

47. How often will classrooms be cleaned and disinfected?

- Each classroom will have a one-gallon bottle of hand sanitizer and Clorox disinfectant wipes. The Minute Man Mistlers will be used to disinfect desks, in-between classes. This process takes approximately 5- minutes to disinfect an entire classroom.

48. How will services be provided for students with IEP's or a 504 plan?

- Students with IEPs and 504s will continue to be provided the services outlined in their document. Students will be provided with strategies, assignments, projects, and packets, with accommodations. They will be provided materials directly from special educators and related service providers as well as resources to families to keep students engaged in learning. Special Education case managers and teachers will provide regular, ongoing check-ins with families. They will work collaboratively in a cohesive team approach.

49. Will students with sensory issues be required to wear masks?

- Governor Phil Murphy stated on Monday, August 3, 2020, that the Department of Education has updated its reopening guidance document to require face coverings “for all students at all times while inside a school building regardless of social distancing,” unless doing so would inhibit the individual’s health. The updated guidance also includes exceptions for students with disabilities. Exceptions for the use of the mask will be made on a case by case basis.

50. Will the schedule for smaller special education classes be altered?

- The students who are placed in a self-contained classroom, grades Preschool-Grade 12, will be able to go to school four days a week, as Wednesday will continue to be the virtual day. Classes that are eligible for this format are PSD, Autistic, LLD, MD, BD. The smaller class sizes will be in line with the school reopening guidelines and social distancing required.

51. How will the TOP Program be integrated with the AAVBB schedule?

- Due to the location and size of the TOP program, it is reasonable and more easily enforceable for students to safely social distance in the building. The students will be able to go to school four days a week, and Wednesday will continue to be the virtual day. TOP students and staff will follow all school re-opening guidelines and safety protocols in the classroom, hallways and lunch.

52. How are students eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics?

- The Linden Public Schools Athletic Department believes that it is essential to the physical, mental, and social-emotional well-being of Linden students to safely re-engage in extracurricular experiences, physical activity, and athletic competition. As a member of the New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), we are following a regimented phased return to athletics that has been created by both the Medical Advisory Task Force and the Sports Advisory Task Force.

Returning to play does not mean a return to “normal.” While re-socializing to an activity we are still responsible for doing our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Any consideration of returning to physical activity and athletic competition must adhere to all requirements set forth under the executive orders of NJ Governor Phil Murphy, account for the health and safety of all participants, and abide by the recommendations made by the NJSIAA.

53. What about classroom layout/maximum student capacity?

- Classroom layout and capacity will be dependent upon the survey results when we determine how many students will be returning to school in person. If students are socially distanced by at least six feet they can take “mask breaks” when necessary.

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54. How will a student's individualized education plan will be implemented?

- IEPs will be followed as written. Based on the hybrid or all virtual model, modifications may have to be made on a case-by-case basis.

55. Continuity of in person versus virtual teaching. When students are home who will be teaching them if their teacher/teachers have to teach the other group for two days?

- If a student attends school live with the hybrid model they will receive new instruction/material 3x per week.
 - Ex. "A" student on "A" day will have new lessons on Monday and Tuesday, in person, and Wednesday virtual. On Thursday and Friday, they will have extensions, projects, reading materials and reinforcements to complete based on the lessons previously taught.

56. What does the fully remote learning plan look like? Will there be enough teachers working from home for each grade/school/subject? What are the benchmarks that will be used for assessment and monitoring of students who are 100% remote?

- Those who are on a fully remote plan will be scheduled with dedicated teachers. The skills taught during live instruction will be assessed through modified benchmarks and frequent formative assessments.

57. When will technology workshops be offered to train parents/caregivers on the platforms students will be using (Canvas, Seesaw, Class Dojo, Genesis, etc.)? Will live workshops be offered at different times to accommodate parents' work schedules?

- Staff members are currently working on training sessions and videos for parents. This information will be available the week of Aug. 17. Parent schedules will be taken into consideration and a series of "how to" videos will be available for viewing at any time.

58. How often will the FAQ be updated?

- The FAQ will be updated frequently and translated.

59. When will parents be able to enroll students back into the hybrid/full-day instruction?

- At the conclusion of a trimester at the elementary level and end of the marking period at the middle and high school levels. However, if a parent has an extenuating circumstance, they may send an appeal to the Superintendent.

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- 60. What is the shutdown plan? I saw you addressed the need for a 14-day quarantine for each class containing a COVID-19 positive student or staff member. However, understanding that there may be multiple cases and positive test results at the same time, how many identified cases do there need to be in total before you plan to shut the entire building down? What is the threshold for a single class? What is the threshold number if the occurrence is in separate or multiple classes? What is the threshold when it comes to the number of concurrent staff member cases? What will the school schedule look like in the event of a shutdown?**
- Shutting down of the entire building will not be linked to a specific number of cases. It is dependent on a number of variables such as, are the cases in the same class, number of close contacts to cases identified, location of cases in the building, etc. Threshold numbers of staff would be dependent on the ability of the school to function.
- 61. Are the shut down and quarantine policies only applicable to confirmed positive cases or exposure to confirmed cases as well? How will these policies be similar and different in these instances?**
- Quarantine policies are applicable to close contacts of positive confirmed cases, such as a in classroom setting. Isolation policies apply in cases where a student becomes sick while in school and they are waiting to be picked up by a parent or a guardian.
- 62. What is the policy for identification of students and staff who have been exposed to someone who is positive, perhaps outside out of the school, and what safety precautions are being taken in those instances to protect other students and staff?**
- Anyone who is identified as a close contact positive COVID-19 case will be contacted by the Local Health Department regarding quarantine procedures, whether contact occurred in or out of the school setting. Discussions are ongoing regarding notifying schools of students that are on quarantine.
- 63. We know the results of the COVID-19 test take several days to come back. So, what happens the interim that ensures the protection and safety of students and staff from those who may have been exposed, may eventually, in a few days, test positive, and have the opportunity and ability to expose and infect others in the meantime?**
- Students and staff that are symptomatic should be excluded from school and remain home on isolation while awaiting COVID-19 testing results.

64. What is the FFCRA and are Linden Public School employees eligible for it?

- The federal government put the FFCRA, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, into effect April 1, 2020. It stands in effect through December 31, 2020. It allows for employees to request/take leave for personal illness, family illness, or family need relative to the COVID-19 Pandemic. More specifically, an employee may request, and is “entitled to take, leave if the employee is unable to work or telework because the employee”:
 - Is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
 - Has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
 - Is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;
 - Is caring for an individual who is subject to a federal, state, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19 or has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;
 - Is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or
 - Is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: FFCRA DOL Questions
- A fact sheet and application was sent to all Linden Public School employees by our Director of Human Resources.

65. How often is HVAC preventative maintenance performed in the district??

- The district purchased 25,000 Merv 8 filters for the 2020-2021 school year. The district will replace all HVAC filters every three months versus the recommended replacement at four months. Ventilation systems are cleaned and vacuumed prior to the installation of a new Merv filter.