



# ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan Guidance & Template

---

Section 2001(i)(1) of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires each local education agency (LEA) that receives funding under the ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website a *Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan*, hereinafter referred to as a *Health and Safety Plan*.

Based on ARP requirements, 90 percent of ARP ESSER funds will be distributed to school districts and charter schools based on their relative share of Title I-A funding in FY 2020-2021. **Given Federally required timelines, LEAs eligible to apply for and receive this portion of the ARP ESSER funding must submit a Health and Safety Plan that meets ARP Act requirements to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) by Friday, July 30, 2021, regardless of when the LEA submits its ARP ESSER application.**

Each LEA must create a Health and Safety Plan that addresses how it will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff, and which will serve as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. The Health and Safety Plan should be tailored to the unique needs of each LEA and its schools and must take into account public comment related to the development of, and subsequent revisions to, the Health and Safety Plan.

The ARP Act and U.S. Department of Education rules require Health and Safety plans include the following components:

1. How the LEA will, to the greatest extent practicable, implement prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning;
2. How the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services;
3. 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 policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC:

- a. Universal and correct wearing of [masks](#);
- b. Modifying facilities to allow for [physical distancing](#) (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);
- c. [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#);
- d. [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving [ventilation](#);
- e. [Contact tracing](#) in combination with [isolation](#) and [quarantine](#), in collaboration with State and local health departments;
- f. [Diagnostic](#) and screening testing;
- g. Efforts to provide COVID-19 [vaccinations to school communities](#);
- h. Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and
- i. Coordination with state and local health officials.

The LEA's Health and Safety Plan must be approved by its governing body and posted on the LEA's publicly available website by July 30, 2021.\* The ARP Act requires LEAs to post their Health and Safety Plans online in a language that parents/caregivers can understand, or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to an individual with limited English proficiency, be orally translated. The plan also must be provided in an alternative format accessible, upon request, by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Each LEA will upload in the eGrants system its updated Health and Safety Plan and webpage URL where the plan is located on the LEA's publicly available website.

The ARP Act requires LEAs to review their Health and Safety Plans at least every six months during the period of the LEA's ARP ESSER grant. LEAs also must review and update their plans whenever there are significant changes to the CDC recommendations for K-12 schools. Like the development of the plan, all revisions must be informed by community input and reviewed and approved by the governing body prior to posting on the LEA's publicly available website.

LEAs may use the template to revise their current Health and Safety Plans to meet ARP requirements and ensure all stakeholders are fully informed of the LEA's plan to safely resume instructional and non-instructional school activities, including in-person learning, for the current school year. An LEA may use a different plan template or format provided it includes all the elements required by the ARP Act, as listed above.

\* The July 30 deadline applies only to school districts and charter schools that received federal Title I-A funds in FY 2020-2021 and intend to apply for and receive ARP ESSER funding.

## **Additional Resources**

LEAs are advised to review the following resources when developing their Health and Safety Plans:

- [CDC K-12 School Operational Strategy](#)
- [PDE Resources for School Communities During COVID-19](#)
- [PDE Roadmap for Education Leaders](#)
- [PDE Accelerated Learning Through an Integrated System of Support](#)
- [PA Department of Health - COVID-19 in Pennsylvania](#)

## Health and Safety Plan Summary: **FOREST AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Initial Effective Date: **August 19, 2021**

Date of Last Review: **February 16, 2022**

Date of Last Revision: **February 16, 2022**

1. How will the LEA, to the greatest extent practicable, support prevention and mitigation policies in line with the most up-to-date guidance from the CDC for the reopening and operation of school facilities in order to continuously and safely open and operate schools for in-person learning?

**Forest Area School District will evaluate all the guidance from the CDC/PA Department of Health in the local context and make decisions that will allow the schools to open and operate safely while minimizing risk to the school community.**

**School Events -- We are planning to offer school events as usual, but may adapt those for safety. We will consider each event carefully and do our best to promote safety.**

**Visitors to School -- Visitors to school will be asked to follow all protocols that we have in place. Access for visitors may be limited due to COVID conditions in the county and the school buildings.**

**Before Arrival at School -- Parents are asked to complete the Daily Wellness Checklist provided by the school before sending students to school each day. Staff members will also be asked to self-assess each morning and remain at home if they display symptoms.**

**Arrival at School -- We will continue to do temperature checks for students upon arrival at school and ask them to use hand sanitizer prior to entering the building. That gives staff a chance to check on each individual student and ensure that they are feeling well that day.**

**Transportation: Students will be transported in the usual fashion, but students will be seated with family members first and then classmates when possible. Students will maintain the same seats. Buses will be disinfected regularly. Facemasks will be required on buses in compliance with federal mandates.**

2. How will the LEA ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address the students' academic needs, and students' and staff members' social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services?

**Academic:** All students have been provided with a Chromebook and will have access to hotspots and other technology supports to ensure access where it is available. We will also continue to provide access to our network in the parking lots where students can come to upload new assignments and download completed assignments if remote instruction is required. We are not planning to allow live streaming from home as a parental choice for full time education. If a student will be out of school for medical reasons for more than five school days, we may offer a live streaming option. We will offer full-time in-person attendance and we do have a district cyber option for parents who are concerned about having their child in school full-time. We will use live streaming if there is a need to close a school building because of COVID cases or if the Department of Health recommends closing schools for a longer period of time.

**Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs:** Our Student Assistance Program (SAP) will continue to operate as usual whether we are remote or virtual. Students will receive assessments and referrals to appropriate services to meet their needs. We had one social worker and one school counselor on staff last year. We will be adding an additional counselor at the elementary and middle levels so that we have the opportunity to provide services such as mental health groups, strengthen our character education and provide interventions as needed. We also will continue to offer outpatient counseling services onsite for students who require those services.

With regard to staff, we continue to offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). We touch base with staff regularly and provide support and relief from extra stressors when possible.

**Student Health:** A certified school nurse is available in each building so that students can be seen regularly by a medical professional who knows them. All of the expected screenings will be offered and our student immunization program is being administered as usual. Dental and vision screenings and services will be provided on schedule. We will continue to operate the health suites allowing for isolation of students presenting with symptoms of COVID. All students and staff will be required to mask prior to entering the health suites to avoid that spread of COVID.

**Food Services:** Food services will be provided under the CEP program for all students while they are in attendance at school. Breakfast will be served as a grab and go and students will eat in their classrooms. Lunch will be served in the cafeteria with appropriate social distancing while students are in line or seated. We offer a weekend backpack program and are considering expanding services to all students if that option is available again this school year. We will continue to provide CACFP as an afterschool option. Regular cleaning of the cafeteria fixtures will occur between uses, so that students will have a sanitized area at which to eat.

3. Use the table below to explain 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 policy on each of the following safety recommendations established by the CDC.

ARP ESSER Requirement	Strategies, Policies, and Procedures
<p><b>a. Universal and correct wearing of <a href="#">masks</a>;</b></p>	<p>We will ask teachers to review the proper wearing of masks with students including when they are necessary and when they can be removed safely for eating or breaks.</p> <p>Face masks and/or face shields will be recommended, but not required for pre-kindergarten - grade 12.</p> <p>Facemasks will be required if mandated by the Department of Health or if local circumstances warrant them, such as in the case of a high level of community transmission that can be linked to the schools. Facemasks may also be required if an outbreak is identified in a particular building despite the status of the county. Given how quickly changes can occur and the amount of time between Board meetings, the Superintendent is authorized to make decisions as to whether masks are required without the need for Board approval.</p> <p>The District will require masks (defined as a material covering the nose and mouth of the wearer, excluding face shields) while riding school buses and vans as legally mandated by the CDC's federal Order dated February 1, 2021, issued pursuant to the Public Health Service Act, and requiring the wearing of masks on conveyances and at transportation hubs. This requirement shall cease at such time as said Order either is no longer in effect or is amended to remove the requirement.</p>

<p><b>b. Modifying facilities to allow for <a href="#">physical distancing</a> (e.g., use of cohorts/podding);</b></p>	<p>Teachers will organize classrooms in ways that will allow for social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Classroom seating will be spread out so that students are 3 - 6 ft apart and hallway traffic will be reduced as much as possible to avoid crowding. Students will be encouraged to social distance in the hallways.</p>
<p><b>c. <a href="#">Handwashing and respiratory etiquette</a>;</b></p>	<p>Hand sanitizer will be available at various locations throughout the buildings. Students will be instructed by classroom teachers as to procedures for safe and effective handwashing on a periodic basis. Students will also receive instruction on respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing.</p>
<p><b>d. <a href="#">Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation</a>;</b></p>	<p>We are currently involved in a facilities study to help determine how we can improve ventilation in our buildings through physical improvements to the buildings. We have previously looked at fresh air exchangers and other ventilation to ensure that they are operating at peak capacity and will continue to monitor those.</p> <p>Cleaning occurs daily and we have additional custodial staff to ensure that we can complete periodic deep cleaning and more cleaning tasks during the day to ensure the safety of students and staff. All custodial staff have been trained in use of necessary cleaning products and understand how to use them most effectively. The additional custodial positions that were created in the 2020-2021 school year will be continued for another year allowing buildings to be covered by custodial staff at all times and allowing for periodic deep cleaning in addition to daily cleaning.</p>

e. **Contact tracing** in combination with **isolation** and **quarantine**, in collaboration with the State and local health departments;

Each case (or possible case) will be handled on an individual basis as each case may have different factors that impact the decision making process.

All stakeholders should not come to school and should notify school officials if they have COVID-19 symptoms, are diagnosed with COVID-19 symptoms, are waiting test results, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a confirmed case.

If a student or staff member is identified with COVID symptoms while in school or prior to attending school the district will follow the prescribed DOH protocols.

We will immediately separate individuals with symptoms and contact family members immediately.

Areas used by the sick will be closed off and areas will not be used until after a thorough cleaning/disinfection.

When a student or staff member has been potentially exposed to COVID, the school nurse or other authorized personnel will notify the staff member or the student's parent/guardian. If a student does not have symptoms, they may continue to come to school. The school will work with their parents to monitor their health. If they should become ill, then they will be sent home and required to quarantine as appropriate.

Individuals who are displaying symptoms and are sick will be advised that they should not return to school until they have a physician's excuse and have followed all CDC/DOH guidelines.

	<p>Students who are identified as household contacts will be still required to quarantine as per existing practices and recommendations.</p> <p>The health department will guide the school district staff in handling all situations and necessary contact tracing, isolation, and exclusion of ill students and staff, and any further actions needed to contain the spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>All new procedures will be evaluated regularly and may be adjusted as needed. Contact tracing will be conducted by staff members who have completed the Johns Hopkins course for contact tracing. Buildings will be closed if necessary to allow time for contact tracing to be completed.</p>
<p>f. <b><u>Diagnostic</u></b> and screening testing;</p>	<p>All individuals should still closely monitor their own symptoms and should stay home if symptomatic.</p> <p>It is critically important for employees and students to stay home regardless of whether their symptoms are indicative of COVID, influenza, or other infections that are more commonly transmitted through close personal contact.</p> <p>Employees are required to report positive diagnosis of COVID-19 to administration.</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of students are required to report positive diagnosis of COVID-19 to the school nurse.</p> <p>We will maintain a list of available locations for diagnostic and screening testing and refer students as needed.</p> <p>It is not practical for us to conduct testing onsite since we don't really have a good space to dedicate to testing and again because of our high county-wide vaccination rate and our small population.</p>

<p><b>g. Efforts to provide <a href="#">vaccinations to school communities</a>;</b></p>	<p>Because we have a smaller population than most schools, it is not really practical for us to offer clinics on site. Our county wide vaccination rate is nearly 70%. We will offer transportation to clinic sites when possible and release time if needed for students to access vaccination clinics in nearby areas. We will also continue to support adults wishing to be vaccinated by providing information about clinics and working with them as needed to attend those clinics.</p>
<p><b>h. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities with respect to health and safety policies; and</b></p>	<p>Students with disabilities will have access to the same programs and opportunities as non-disabled peers, as well as accommodations detailed within their IEP or 504 plan based on their individual needs.</p>
<p><b>i. Coordination with state and local health officials.</b></p>	<p>We will communicate with the Department of Health and other appropriate agencies through the offices of the school nurses and the Superintendent as needed. We will continue to participate in regional meetings to ensure that we have the most up to date information that is available.</p>

## Health and Safety Plan Governing Body Affirmation Statement

The Board of Directors/Trustees for **Forest Area School District** reviewed and approved the Health and Safety Plan on **February 16, 2022**.

The plan was approved by a vote of:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes**

\_\_\_\_\_ **No**

Affirmed on: **February 16, 2022**

By:

---

*(Signature\* of Board President)*

---

*(Print Name of Board President)*

\*Electronic signatures on this document are acceptable using one of the two methods detailed below.

**Option A:** The use of actual signatures is encouraged whenever possible. This method requires that the document be printed, signed, scanned, and then submitted.

**Option B:** If printing and scanning are not possible, add an electronic signature using the resident Microsoft Office product signature option, which is free to everyone, no installation or purchase needed.