

Fort Plain Central School District Layered Mitigation School Opening Plan: Fall 2021

UPDATED 9/2/2021

Effective immediately, in accordance with the Commissioner's Determination issued pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.60, any person over the age of 2 (including all students, personnel, teachers, administrators, contractors, and visitors) must wear masks at all times indoors in P-12 school buildings, regardless of vaccination status.

The Fort Plain Central School District is planning for a full return to school in September, providing a full academic program and a wide range of extracurricular and athletic offerings for all students. Our priority is to have all students attend in-person instruction for the 2021-22 school year. The district will employ a layered mitigation approach, including strategies ranging from masking and social distancing, to facilities cleaning and hygiene, to contact tracing and quarantining, to HVAC (ventilation) and the provision of food services, to surveillance testing and vaccination access. Asymptomatic spread makes this virus difficult to find. As a public institution, we must consider everyone in the community and minimize the risk for all. By individually doing our part to keep everyone safe and healthy, we will ensure academic, social, and emotional growth of our students, as well as the safety of the community.

This plan is not a simple matter of choice (preference) versus constraints (mandates). Instead, it is about choosing the appropriate best practices to manage the various stages and implications of COVID-19. Over the past year, we learned how to manage the virus effectively by using many layers of strategies aimed to prevent infection and transmission of the virus in our schools. Having a layered mitigation plan is a measured approach to making layered, tiered adjustments (nuanced) to mitigation strategies based on the **transmission or rate of infections**, ranging from Low Community Transmission >> Moderate Community Transmission >> Substantial Community Transmission >> High Community Transmission. In order to make decisions about strategy adjustment in response to the virus, regional and local data will be assessed on a regular basis. Whenever possible and appropriate, any adjustments to mitigation strategies will be made according to the most local data available.

The intent of the layered, tiered approach is to find and maintain a balance between **prioritizing** health and safety of students and staff, **supporting** the social, emotional, and mental health of students and staff, and keeping as many students and staff in school as possible. This tiered mitigation plan will be fluid, and strategies will change if the data indicates they should change. If the data indicates lower infection or transmission, restrictions could be loosened. If the data indicates the virus is spreading, adjustments may become more restrictive. It is important for students and families to know that there could be changes in strategies based on the data, and so, the plan is not an either/or document, but rather a guiding document in a shifting and changing environment. We will consistently review practices to ensure we are meeting our objectives.

We recognize the clear views on masking and vaccination that exist in the community, and that there may be times of strong disagreement on implementation. The intent of this plan is to make the safest choices for our students, staff, and the community at-large, making it possible for all students to attend in-person instruction and avoid quarantining in the event of a positive case in their classroom. Regardless of positions held on these issues, we can all rally around safety and learning. Safety leads to increased in-person attendance, which leads to increased student growth and support. The District seeks to be responsible in terms of mitigating the spread of COVID, while balancing the provision of educational and extracurricular activities with the preservation of health and safety. These are challenging times and we are all similarly focused on the best interest of our students, staff, and families.

Please review the “Layered Mitigation Plan” below to gain understanding of how the plan will be implemented.

	Mitigation Protocol	Low Community Transmission	Moderate Community Transmission	Substantial Community Transmission	High Community Transmission
1	COVID-19 Vaccines	Encourage all eligible-not mandated	Encourage all eligible-not mandated	Encourage all eligible-not mandated	Encourage all eligible-not mandated
2	COVID-19 Testing- (surveillance, symptomatic) Conducted in partnership with Montgomery County DOH	All unvaccinated faculty and staff will undergo weekly COVID-19 testing Parent consent for potential positive testing	All unvaccinated faculty and staff will undergo weekly COVID-19 testing Parent consent for potential positive testing	All unvaccinated faculty and staff will undergo weekly COVID-19 testing Parent consent for potential positive testing	All unvaccinated faculty and staff will undergo weekly COVID-19 testing Parent consent for any testing of students
3	Facemasks (indoors/outdoors)	Required for all. Regular and appropriate mask breaks Outdoor masking when 3’ social distancing cannot be met	Required for all. Regular and appropriate mask breaks Outdoor masking when 3’ social distancing cannot be met	Required for all. Regular and appropriate mask breaks Outdoor masking when 3’ social distancing cannot be met	Required for all. Regular and appropriate mask breaks Outdoor masking when 3’ social distancing cannot be met
4	Use of plastic barriers	Plastic barriers used on desktops are encouraged	Plastic barriers used on desktops are encouraged	Plastic barriers used on desktops are encouraged	Plastic barriers used on desktops are encouraged

5	Monitoring Community and School-Based Transmission	Ongoing; weekly benchmark	Ongoing; weekly benchmark	Ongoing; weekly benchmark	Ongoing; weekly benchmark
6	Physical Distancing (indoors)	3' distancing <u>and</u> masked	3' distancing <u>and</u> masked	3' distancing <u>and</u> masked	3' distancing <u>and</u> masked
7	School Visitors	Minimal Restrictions; by appointment; Mask required	Minimal Restrictions; by appointment; Mask required	Moderate Restrictions; official business only; strictly limited "outside group" use; Mask required	Strict restrictions; official business only; no "outside group" use of facilities; Mask required
8	Handwashing, Hand Sanitizer, and Respiratory Etiquette	Strongly Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged	Strongly Encouraged
9	Contact tracing & Quarantine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted by local DOH • Process predicated on masking and distancing protocols 	Yes; 6' close contact perimeter and 10-day quarantine unless COVID tested within a 3-5 Day window and proof of negative result	Yes; 6' close contact perimeter and 10-day quarantine unless COVID tested within a 3-5 Day window and proof of negative result	Yes; 6' close contact perimeter and 10-day quarantine unless COVID tested within a 3-5 Day window and proof of negative result	Yes; 6' close contact perimeter and 10-day quarantine unless COVID tested within a 3-5 Day window and proof of negative result
10	Staying Home When Sick (Staff and Students)	Yes, for all students and staff	Yes, for all students and staff	Yes, for all students and staff	Yes, for all students and staff
11	Return to School Protocols (following COVID illness)	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free
12	Return to Work Protocols (following COVID illness)	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free	Complete 10 day isolation; fever free 24 hours; symptom free
13	Cleaning and Disinfection	Strongly encouraged to perform daily Routine Cleaning and daily Disinfection of moderate and high-touch surfaces	Strongly encouraged to perform daily Routine Cleaning and daily Disinfection of moderate and high-touch surface	Strongly encouraged to perform daily Routine Cleaning and daily Disinfection of moderate and high-touch surfaces	Strongly encouraged to perform daily Routine Cleaning and daily Disinfection of moderate and high-touch surfaces
14	Physical Education, Recess, and Performing Arts	3 feet distancing <u>and</u> masked indoors; masks optional outdoors;	3 feet distancing <u>and</u> masked indoors; masks optional outdoors;	3 feet distancing <u>and</u> masked indoors; masks optional outdoors;	3 feet distancing <u>and</u> masked indoors; masks optional outdoors;

		Performing Arts 3 feet distancing and masked when not performing;	Performing Arts 3 feet distancing and masked when not performing	Performing Arts 3 feet distancing and masked when not performing;	Performing Arts 3 feet distancing and masked when not performing;
15	Ventilation and Air Quality	Increased fresh air circulation	Increased fresh air circulation	Increased fresh air circulation	Increased fresh air circulation
16	Transportation	Required masking; seating chart used; windows open for air circulation	Required masking; seating chart used; windows open for air circulation parent encouraged to drive students	Required masking; seating chart; windows open for air circulation parent encouraged to drive student	Required masking; seating chart used; windows open for air circulation parent encouraged to drive student
17	Lunch in Cafeteria	3' social distancing; masks required after eating	3' social distancing; masks required after eating	3' social distancing; masks required after eating	3' social distancing; masks required after eating
18	<p>Athletics</p> <p>Spectators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indoor--Home Spectators only; 3feet distancing and masks required. (Fall sport season. Winter and spring sports to be determined) Outdoor--Spectators allowed; 3feet distancing and masks required. (Fall sport season. Winter and spring sports to be determined) 	<p>Indoor-3 Feet distancing and masked required; Outdoor-3 feet distancing and masked required when not participating;</p> <p>Rapid Testing for unvaccinated students in High Risk Sports (10% random selection)</p> <p>Health monitoring for athletes</p>	<p>Indoor-3 Feet distancing and masked required; Outdoor-3 feet distancing and masked required when not participating;</p> <p>Rapid Testing for unvaccinated students in High Risk Sports (10% random selection)</p> <p>Health monitoring for athletes</p>	<p>Indoor-3 Feet distancing and masked required; Outdoor-3 feet distancing and masked required when not participating;</p> <p>Rapid Testing for unvaccinated students in High Risk Sports (10% random selection)</p> <p>Health monitoring for athletes</p>	<p>Indoor-3 Feet distancing and masked required; Outdoor-3 feet distancing and masked required when not participating;</p> <p>Rapid Testing for unvaccinated students in High Risk Sports (10% random selection)</p> <p>Health monitoring for athletes</p>

Notes:

1. To be clear on the goal with this plan- 1) Every student in our district should be in attendance, in-person, every day. 2) Once in attendance, we are seeking to ensure that students stay in school 3) Masking and distancing protocols that do not meet Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance according to the local health department could result in more extensive quarantining in the event of positive COVID cases 4) Masking and distancing protocols which meet CDC guidance can mean fewer quarantined students in the event of positive COVID cases, less disruption of in-person learning, and less disruption for families

2. Daily health attestations by students and staff are no longer required.
3. NYSED Regulation requires that **remote instruction** for students only applies to those students that qualify for homebound instruction due to a medical disability which prevents attendance at school. Therefore, remote instruction is **ONLY** available to those who have a medical disability, as documented by a physician. The district will review requests on a case by case basis. If you believe your student qualifies for a medically based remote instruction, please contact your building administrator.
4. The four categories for “community transmission” have been developed by the CDC. They are benchmarks by which counties are classified. They have been included in this chart to provide understanding as to current designation procedures. The data criteria can, and will, be used in application to local town and school level infection and transmission rates. We will attempt to follow local town and school level infection and transmission rates to make decisions for weekly protocols. Doing so will allow the District to make more relevant decisions for application of protocols based on our most local situation on infection and transmission.
5. As we move into the school year, and begin to make the weekly data analysis, the determination for the weekly protocols will be made by the Montgomery County Department of Health and communicated to the Superintendent of Schools, as the COVID Coordinator. We will communicate the status weekly by sending a mass message to the community and posting the status on the District website.

References and Resources:

- NYSDOH Commissioner’s Determination on Indoor Masking Pursuant to 10 NYCRR 2.61, see https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/2.61_determination_0.pdf
- NYSED Health and Safety Guide to Reopen NYS Schools, see <http://www.nysed.gov/back-school/health-and-safety-guide-2021-2022-school-year>
- CDCs Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- Description of these levels, please see Appendix A of this document. For tracking of these levels, see <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- Quarantining, in the K-12 classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3-6 feet of an infected student from quarantining if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>
- Mask on buses, see <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/masks/mask-travel-guidance.html>
- Screening Testing, see Part 4, at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>
- Nucleic Acid Amplification Test (NAATs), see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/naats.html>