



Environment Community Opportunity (ECO) Charter School Safe Reopening Plan In-Person Instruction & Continuity of Services

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 global pandemic, and as required by the New Jersey Department of Education, the Environment Community Opportunity (ECO) Charter School Board of Trustees unanimously approved and adopted the school's School Re-Entry Plan. This document, created and supported by a diverse and active stakeholder group, served as the school's guidance document for implementing, monitoring, and preventing the spread of COVID-19 while also providing students and families with programmatic options aimed at keep our community safe as well as supporting our community with sound instructional practices and wellness programming.

We have approached this work with the health and safety of students, staff, and families as the number one priority. Thoughtful consideration was given to the guidelines as outlined by the Center for Disease Control, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the New Jersey Department of Education. We appreciate your understanding, patience, flexibility, and partnership in this process, as we adapt during these unprecedented times. It is our intention to continue to provide a comprehensive, high quality educational learning experience for students.

This outline of the ECO Charter School's Safe Reopening plan is a living document and it will be adapted as circumstances impacting our schools, including federal, state, and local guidance, evolve. We strive to be as transparent as possible regarding the ECO's plan for maintaining the continuity of education.

Return to School

ECO Charter School is fully committed to in-person education. Implementation is focused on full days of school with all students following school-wide safety procedures and protocols.

ECO Charter School Schedule

Tuesday, September 7, 2021 – All students and staff will return for our traditional full day schedule.

- 7:45 am to 4:00 pm

Our school calendar is posted on our website: ecocharterschool.org.

Health & Safety Systems and Routines

ECO Charter School is committed to providing a high-quality education for all of our students. With guidance from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the Camden County Department of Health (CCDOH), ECO Charter School developed our School Safe Reopening Plan to ensure learning opportunities for students continue in an environment that is safe and promotes community health.

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

ECO Charter School will continue to comply with guidelines outlined by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the [Governor's Executive Order 175](#) regarding the wearing of masks.

- Masks that cover the nose and mouth must be worn. Masks with perforations and/or vents are not acceptable. Appropriate masks include products that continuously-cover the nose and mouth, such as disposable dust masks or handmade fabric masks. Scarves and bandanas are not acceptable face coverings. Masks must be free from offensive or controversial slogans, grotesque depictions, or otherwise distracting or inappropriate decorations.
- Masks must be worn:
 - By all adults, at all times, in ECO Charter School buildings unless they are in a room by themselves regardless of vaccination status.
 - Students are required to wear masks at all times in ECO Charter School buildings, including:
 - Bus stops and on buses
 - Classrooms and hallways
 - Going to, and in, the restroom
 - Families are required to provide a clean mask for their child daily.
 - Masks will be optional in the case of extreme heat inside and/or outside school facilities
 - Students may remove their masks under certain circumstances including the following:
 - When the individual is exposed to extreme heat
 - When the individual is eating or drinking
 - When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity
 - When wearing a mask, as determined by a licensed medical professional, may present a health hazard.
 - ECO Charter School defines extreme heat as a temperature or heat index above 79 degrees
 - Information regarding the National Weather Service Heat Index is available online.
 - ECO Charter School classrooms are air conditioned; therefore, the most recent exception for masks in extreme heat indoors does not apply to most of our indoor spaces, if, of course, there were mechanical failures, the exemption would be enacted.
 - Persons younger than two years old, anyone who has trouble breathing, anyone who is unconscious or incapacitated, and anyone who is otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance are exempt from wearing a mask, if issue or condition is medically-documented.
 - Disposable masks will be available if needed. Any visitor entering the school buildings during the academic day will be screened, including a temperature check, upon arrival and before admittance to the school building.
 - If the NJDOE/NJDOH or CDC Guidelines regarding mask mandates change the plan will be updated to reflect those changes for the 2021 - 2022 academic year.

Physical Distancing

ECO Charter School will follow the most up-to-date guidance from the NJDOH regarding physical distancing which is currently outlined as a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students with strict adherence to wearing masks.

- Student Cohorts
 - Pursuant to the updated guidance from Governor Murphy rescinding the remote learning option, distinct student cohorts will be eliminated for the 2021-22 school year
 - All students will attend in person classes, Monday through Friday from 7:45 am to 4:00 pm

- Students will be grouped into two distinct groups per grade level with a maximum of 20 students per homeroom
- Physical Distancing
 - Classrooms
 - Furniture and seating arrangements will be configured according to the NJDOH standard of a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing between students when possible. All students and staff are required to wear a mask.
 - Clear acrylic dividers that were installed in August of 2020, will remain on tables and to promote distancing adherence to hygiene expectations
 - Classrooms will be arranged to minimize face-to-face contact
 - Transportation
 - NJDOH required 3 feet of physical distance on buses will be encouraged when possible. Windows will be opened to improve ventilation. Seats will be assigned for students in Kindergarten through eighth grade, with members of the same household always assigned to sit together.
 - Masks are required as outlined above
 - Appropriate signage will remain in school buildings to reinforce physical distancing

Handwashing and Respiratory Etiquette

ECO Charter School's focus on personal safety measures aims to effectively-implement practices that underscore the mitigation of germ dispersal. As CDC guidelines and government regulations evolve, we will communicate with and train ECO staff on the latest best practices and safety measures.

- As part of Faculty Academy in August 2021, healthy personal hygiene practices will be reviewed with staff members so they can reinforce these practices with students at the start of the 2021-22 school year.
 - Proper handwashing strategies include:
 - washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - Hand hygiene should take place:
 - upon arrival to school
 - before and after snacks
 - when entering/departing classrooms
 - after blowing one's nose, sneezing, or coughing
 - when hands are visibly soiled
 - If soap and water are not available, students and staff will use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol or sanitizing wipes
 - Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms, at building entrances and other needed areas of school facilities.
 - Sanitizing wipes will be provided in all classrooms
 - Students and families will be reminded to wash their reusable face masks to keep them clean. Students and staff will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Maintain use of air purifiers in all classrooms to scrub air within a designated area or room five times per hour
- Appropriate signage will remain in school buildings reinforcing proper personal hygiene

Diagnostic Screening & Testing

ECO Charter School will maintain daily health screenings of all employees, students, and visitors, as required by state and federal government ordinance. As part of the daily screening process:

- Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 are encouraged to stay home
- Upon arrival to school, ECO Charter School arrival team will screen each community member using the following protocols:
 - Daily temperature checks, if an individual's temperature is greater than 100.4:
 - Staff members will be sent home to quarantine, asked to monitor for additional symptoms, and encouraged to contact her or his doctor.
 - Students will be placed in a special area and the School Nurse will contact the student's family to request that a family representative immediately arrive to pick up the student.
 - Individuals will also be asked:
 - Do you have any of the following COVID-19 symptoms?
 - Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
 - Has someone in your household been diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Have you had close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19?
- Any student or staff member exhibiting possible symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to the nurse's office for additional screening and continuous monitoring of symptoms. Each building will have a designated isolation space for any student or staff member who is exhibiting possible symptoms of COVID-19. The individual will be monitored by the nurse.
- Document/track incidents of possible exposure and notify local health officials, staff and families immediately of any exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 at school while maintaining confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records.
- If a student is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, staff should communicate with the parent/caregiver and refer to the student's health history form and/or emergency card.
- Monitor staff and students throughout the day for signs of illness; send home students and staff with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, cough or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- Any community member who believes she or he may have been exposed or who is experiencing COVID-like symptoms are invited to participate in our school's COVID-19 testing program, free of charge.

Testing & Vaccination

ECO Charter School partners with Vault Health to offer test kits to our school community.

- Tests are available for any staff member experiencing COVID-like symptoms.
- The ECO Charter School Board of Trustees is strongly considering weekly COVID testing for all employees.
- Middle School Students: The ECO Charter School Board of Trustees is considering testing requirements for middle school students

ECO Charter School partners with a local health organization to ensure ALL school employees have access to the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, ninety-seven percent of school employees are fully vaccinated. All future employees will have access to the vaccine via our ongoing partnership. As we await recommendations and guidelines for vaccination boosters, our partnership with the health organization remains strong; we have been assured our employees will continue to have access to ongoing medical protocols. Staff members are required to provide proof of vaccination.

ECO Charter School is currently working to establish plans to extend the partnership vaccine protocol to students twelve years and up, per the student's parent/guardian request and approval.

ECO Charter School staff who are not vaccinated will comply with weekly testing mandates.

Quarantine, Exclusion & Contact Tracing

In an abundance of caution and to ensure the health and safety of our school community, ECO Charter School will follow the same procedures from last year for mandatory school exclusions and quarantines. If these individuals are exposed, a 10-14-day quarantine period will apply and students will be provided with remote instruction.

Ill individuals with suspected or known COVID-19 will stay home until at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset and a least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms. Persons who test positive for COVID-19, but who are asymptomatic will stay home for 10 days from the date of the positive test result.

ECO Charter School will follow the exclusion criteria matrix provided by the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH).

ECO Charter School will work with the Camden County Department of Health (CCDOH) to assist in contact tracing and will:

- Notify CCDOH via email at schools.covid@camdencounty.com and follow recommendations from the CCDOH.
- Notify the school community that someone in our school community has tested positive for COVID-19 via email.
- Notify any close contacts of the community member who has tested positive and the close contacts will be encouraged to quarantine per guidance from the CCDOH.
- Maintain strict confidentiality, as required under FERPA and state law related to privacy of educational records

Cleaning and Maintaining Healthy Facilities

All cleaning procedures at ECO Charter School were enhanced to ensure full compliance with CDC guidelines, NJDOE expectations, as well as NJDOH requirements. ECO will continue with the comprehensive cleaning, hand washing, and hygiene protocols implemented during the 2020-21 school year, including:

- Wiping down of "high touch" areas throughout the day
- Use of electrostatic sprayers
- Hand sanitizing stations throughout buildings
- Portable air purifiers in all classrooms
- Continued use of touchless faucets, flushing mechanisms, paper towel dispensers
- Continued use of touchless building entry procedures

If an individual becomes ill with COVID symptoms and meets COVID-19 exclusion criteria while in school:

- Cleaning staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by the ill person
- The area will be closed until it is cleaned and disinfected

Accommodations

Plan and program accommodations and/or modifications are available to students and other stakeholders as outlined in Individualized Education and/or 504 plans. As customary, school employees and service providers will continue to be reminded of and required to be aware of their obligations and responsibilities in accordance with federal and state disability laws. Support will continue to be considered as will adaptations and alternatives to prevention strategies, while maintaining efforts to protect students, teachers, and staff from COVID-19.

Continuity of Services

ECO Charter School leaders will oversee equitable and inclusive programming and policies to support student and staff social and emotional well-being, promote trauma-informed practices, embed strategies and professional development to address equity, social justice and anti-racism, as well as implement specific evidence-based instructional strategies aimed at accelerating student learning.

In order to address students’ academic needs, as well as behavior and mental health, we will implement a series of protocols based on a tiered system of support: supports for all students (Tier I), supports for students identified as at-risk (Tier II), and more intensive supports for students in crisis or those who do not respond to Tier II interventions (Tier III). Each tier includes appropriate assessment practices, intervention practices and ongoing consultation practices.

Tier I – Universal Interventions for All Students

ECO Charter School will implement high-quality instruction, universal design for learning, classroom-based social-emotional learning, and consistent school wide behavioral expectations. Supports for Tier I students include:

	Academic	Behavioral and Mental Health
Assessment Practices	Establish a school-wide systemic screening process in order to identify students’ academic learning assets and challenges	Establish a school-wide systemic screening process in order to identify students’ social emotional assets and challenges
Instruction & Intervention Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentional scaffolding • Cultivating essential background knowledge • Consistent word work and vocabulary mastery • Prioritizing Standards • Wider access to a variety of great level text • Diagnosing essential “missed” learning • Utilizing interdependent collaborative student teams • Increasing student self-awareness and 	Continue Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programming within the classroom for all students. This will be implemented via our daily CREW activities. Place an emphasis on student’s “inner harmony”.

	<p>self-efficacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing meaningful family engagement 	
Consultation Practices	<p>Provide professional development for teachers, administration, and educational staff to cultivate reflective and growth mindset practices aimed at building capacity for professionalism, moving said employees from collegial collaboration to fully-contributing members of an Accountable Professional Community.</p>	<p>Provide professional development for teachers, administration, and educational staff to promote trauma informed knowledge and understanding behavioral and mental health as pertains to the entire school community: students, families, teachers, support staff, and administration. Professional development opportunities will address topics such as the interplay of race and trauma and its effects, self-care and secondary trauma stress.</p>

Tier II – Supplemental Supports and Interventions

ECO Charter School will implement assessment and problem solving strategies, small group academic intervention groups, social skills groups targeted (Tier II) for groups of students identified as “at-risk” through the Tier I screening process or staff referral. Supports for Tier II students include:

	Academic	Behavioral and Mental Health
Assessment Practices	<p>A more comprehensive assessment is conducted to guide evidence-based practices depending on severity of concerns; target priority learning deficits and build in opportunities to evaluate effectiveness via frequent progress monitoring. Include frequent progress monitoring.</p>	<p>A more comprehensive assessment is conducted to guide evidence-based practices depending on severity of concerns; create opportunities for short, individual check-ins with students who have been referred by staff.</p>
Intervention Practices	<p>In addition to Tier One offerings, include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-leverage tutoring Access to school-provided on-line platforms for additional at home and off-school hour practice Small group instruction 	<p>Expanded trauma-informed intervention practices include evidence-based group practices, and trauma-informed behavior support plans.</p>
Consultation Practices	<p>Include Tier I strategies as well as specialized training for intervention and special education staff as well as training of all teachers in intervention application, documentation, and on-going monitoring.</p>	<p>Expanded trauma-informed education and awareness; Restorative practices embedded into school discipline procedures to improve school climate and help students learn valuable skills by engaging students in</p>

		proactively repairing relationships harmed by dysregulated emotions and behaviors.
--	--	--

Tier III - Intensive Interventions - Individual

ECO Charter School will provide supports and interventions for individual students with more intense, or non-responsive to Tier II intervention. Targeted and/or intensive services will be delivered in school or via community providers. Supports for Tier III students include:

	Academic	Behavioral and Mental Health
Assessment Practices	See Tiers I and 2, with the addition of student reviews.	Ongoing progress monitoring and referral practices will be utilized if students do not respond to Tier II or Tier III interventions
Intervention Practices	See Tiers I and 2 with individualized tutoring and access to home libraries as well as more intensive supports as identified via data gleaned from deep analysis of student performance tasks.	Short-term, targeted, evidence-based interventions for individual students will be available; students and/or families may also be referred for community support with the school psychologist serving as the liaison between community provider and school
Consultation Practices	See Tiers I and 2, with additional involvement of families in solution finding.	Actively partner with families to address behavioral and mental health issues and concerns, define family needs and hopes for treatment, and regularly share input about how their child is doing; actively partner with community agencies, DCP&P, Crisis Center and establish a procedure when emergency community resources need to be engaged.

Contingency Plans

If directed by an Executive Order from the Governor or a written directive from the New Jersey Department of Health or Camden County Department of Health, ECO Charter School will be prepared to transition to Blended (Hybrid) Learning or Virtual (Remote) Learning.