



## North Hanover Township School District

### Safe Return Plan

**Date: UPDATED 12/12/23 (1/2/24 BOE Meeting); next update June 2024**

#### **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.

***All plans and protocols described herein reflect current conditions as of 12/12/23. This plan will be updated and any new required directives received from the Burlington County Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Health, New Jersey Department of Education or Governor's Executive Order will supersede what is described herein.***

***North Hanover Schools plan to operate 100% in person for full days during the 23-24 school year. There is no longer any legal authority for remote education in the State of NJ. This currently applies to emergency closure days as well, unless there is a declared State of Emergency and schools are closed more than three consecutive days.***

***Remote instruction is allowed in cases of school or class closure or other action due to quarantine.***

#### **A. Universal and correct wearing of masks**

As of March 7, 2022, mask wearing for all students, staff and visitors, will be **optional** unless required by Law or Executive Order.

If masks are required by law or executive order, the following protocols will be followed unless otherwise directed:

- Face coverings must be worn **at all times** (no indoor mask breaks) inside the school, with the exception of eating lunch and PE class when well ventilated and spaced.
- Masks are optional in PE class in a well ventilated, socially distant space.
- Masks may be removed outside except for students/staff on days 6-10 of isolation due to COVID infection.
- It is recommended by health professionals that fabric masks should be three layers.
  - Masks with an exhalation valve and single layer gaiters should not be worn. Multi-layered gaiters are permitted.
  - KN95s and KF94 masks are preferred
  - Surgical masks are more effective if layered with a fabric mask

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

In the event of a public health emergency that calls for physical distancing, schools in the district will allow for this within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable and in accordance with applicable NJ Department of Health and NJ Department of Education requirements.

- Students will sit a minimum of three feet apart wherever practical
- Classes will be cohorted in accordance with CDC and/or Department of Health recommendations

**C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

- Handwashing signs will be displayed in all buildings.
- Handwashing education will take place throughout the school day, and handwashing breaks will be required in teacher schedules, particularly after going to the bathroom, before/after eating, after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is recommended.
- We have hand sanitizer dispensers in every classroom and at key entry/exit points on campus.
- Students and staff will sanitize or hand wash (depending on location) any time they enter a new space or interact with a new group
- Lessons on respiratory etiquette will be delivered by classroom teachers and supported by school-wide messaging, videos, and signage.
  - These lessons include: Coughing, sneezing, use of and disposal of tissues, and hand washing

**D. Cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities, including improving ventilation**

- **Cleaning/Sanitizing Buildings**
  - In the evening
    - ALL classroom desks and chairs
    - handles on equipment
    - window touch points
    - Lockers
    - cubbies
    - Vacuuming
    - mopping
  - During the school day
    - All entrance touch point surfaces will be sanitized
    - Hallway bathrooms will be cleaned on a rotating basis
    - Classroom bathrooms will be cleaned at the end of the school day.
      - This entails sanitizing all bathroom touch points, cleaning visible messes, and checking dispensers.
- **Cleaning and sanitizer protocols**
  - The day custodian will be cleaning frequently touched surfaces such as, door knobs, touch points, handrails, drinking fountains, elevators, light switches and restrooms during shift.



- The day and evening custodian is responsible for checking and restocking the hand sanitizer dispensers and the bathroom soap dispensers. Hand sanitizer and soap are kept with the custodial supplies. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be in all classrooms and office areas and hand sanitizing stations should be at all entrances, exits and easy to access in common areas.
- Surfaces must be cleaned before being disinfected. This is a two-step process. Cleaning with soap and water to remove dirt and germs, and then surfaces will be disinfected. EPA approved disinfectants will be used with appropriate tools. Custodians will be trained and the products will be used in accordance with product specifications. Custodians will wear all appropriate protective equipment.
- Disinfecting spray and sanitizing wipes will be provided to the faculty as requested . Teachers will be responsible for wiping down their desk throughout the day, and the classroom door knobs and other common touch points inside the classroom.
- **Improving Ventilation**
  - The maintenance staff will closely monitor the HVAC systems for proper air flow, and will continue to replace the air filters on a quarterly basis, which is an increase from the manufacturer's specifications.
  - All HVAC units have needlepoint bipolar ionization technology installed within them at all schools.
- Water Fountains**
  - Water bottle filling stations will remain available and will be cleaned and disinfected every night and throughout the school day.
  - Preschool classrooms will need to use hallway bottle filling stations.
- Devices (laptops, Chromebooks)**
  - Semi-Annually: During the summer and winter break the tech department disinfects student chromebooks and teacher laptops (if left in district) in our UVC-Sanitizing Cabinet.
  - Each principal has access to disinfect any device at any point during the school year

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

- **Contact Tracing**
  - All School Nurses have participated in the Johns Hopkins contact tracing course.
  - In a mask optional environment, contact tracing will be conducted on a “whole class” basis and parents will be notified of cases in their child’s class via a letter from the school, similar to the process for other communicable diseases.
  - Currently, individual cases of Covid are not reportable unless it is associated with a Covid outbreak, an individual is a pediatric ICU case or a novel strain. Schools are still required to report in the SIC Module within CDRSS for weekly data.
    - An outbreak of COVID-19 in a school/ECE setting is defined as five or more individuals (positive by RT-PCR or antigen) among students or staff with illness onsets within a 7-day period, who are epidemiologically linked, do not share a



household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing.

- Each school nurse will maintain a Student Quarantine List as well as a Confidential Staff Quarantine List for all COVID positive tests
- **Students and staff with symptoms**
  - Students and staff with the following symptoms should be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school within 30 minutes.
    - At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose OR,
    - At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder
- **Exposure - Staff/Student**
  - If staff or students have been exposed to COVID19, they should monitor themselves for any symptoms and should isolate and test if symptoms develop.
- **Visitors**

Visitors are welcome to our buildings. Visitors should self-screen for symptoms and exposure. If either are present, visiting a building should be postponed.
- **Travel**

There are no travel restrictions affecting return to school in effect as of this update.

#### **F. Diagnostic and screening /testing:**

For the purposes of school related testing for symptomatic students or staff, antigen tests or PCR tests will be accepted for re-entry.

- **NURSES OFFICE:**
  - Maintain social distancing with students at all times
- **TRIAGE**
  - Ask teacher, when they call to send student, what symptoms they are exhibiting
  - Triage should be done outside nurse's office if necessary
  - If meets criteria for isolation - immediately isolate in room with hepa filter
- **CRITERIA for ISOLATION:**
  - At least two of the following symptoms: fever (measure or subjective), chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion or runny nose
  - OR
  - At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, new taste disorder
- **NURSE EXPOSURE**
  - Nurse is considered *exposed* if isolated student/staff test positive for COVID-19 and full PPE was not worn (must wear a fit-tested N95 mask to be considered full PPE)
    - Would have to quarantine if required by the Burlington County Department of Health
    - Wearing a N95 without being fit-tested is not considered full PPE
    - N95 can be reused multiple times if wearing surgical mask on top and also depending on how saturated they are underneath



- **\*\*limit time exposed to isolated individual to at least 6 feet and less than 15 minutes if possible (if not wearing fit-tested N-95 mask)**
- ADDITIONAL NURSE OFFICE INFORMATION
  - Log all students sent home with symptoms or temp for follow-up
  - Teachers to call nurses office prior to sending any student to assure social distancing can take place and prepare for possible full PPE
  - If clothes given out - NOT to be returned, even if washed
  - Discourage non-essential visits to nurses office (bathroom, getting tissues, staff visits)
  - Nurses office high risk area - encourage teachers to handle minor issues in classroom if possible
    - Nurses should limit their exposure outside of the nurse's office if dealt with isolated student
    - All students (already inside of the building) needing evaluation will need to come to nurses office
  - It is preferred that students use inhalers rather than nebulizers.
  - Parents will make an appointment with nurse to drop off medication and/or to discuss medical information
- RETURN TO SCHOOL: Students/Staff
  - Individuals sent home from school with symptoms of COVID-19 can return as follows:
    - Standard exclusion criteria: If ill individuals have been given an alternate diagnosis by a healthcare provider and have a negative COVID test, they should follow the NJDOH School Exclusion List.
    - COVID-19 exclusion criteria: Ill individuals with suspected or known COVID-19 should stay home until at least 5 days have passed since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms. Individuals may return to school on Day 6 if they are not symptomatic. Masks are encouraged through Day 10.
    - Persons who test positive for COVID-19, but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 5 days from the positive test result. Masks are encouraged upon return, through Day 10.
- QUARANTINE FOR EXPOSED INDIVIDUALS

Quarantine is no longer required for exposed individuals. This who were exposed to COVID19 are asked to self-monitor for symptom, and it is recommended that those who had close contact with a COVID+ individual wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days and get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact

  - Students and staff who were exposed no longer need to quarantine.
  - If COVID-19 symptoms develop, get tested and follow isolation recommendations.

**Additional suggested precautions during and after quarantine**

- **MASK:** Continue to wear a well-fitted mask when around others at home and in public through day 10. For those ending quarantine on day 5, this would be during days 6 through 10.
- **MONITOR FOR SYMPTOMS:** Watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other COVID-19 symptoms for 10 days after last close contact. If symptoms develop, get tested and follow isolation recommendations.



- **TRAVEL:** Get tested at least 5 days after your last close contact and make sure the test result is negative and you remain without symptoms before traveling. If testing is not available, delay travel until a full 10 days after the last close contact. If travel is necessary before the 10 days are completed, wear a well-fitting mask around others for the entire duration of travel. Persons unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.
- **AVOID HIGH-RISK ACTIVITIES:** Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease, including nursing homes and other high-risk settings; do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until a full 10 days. If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, as well as others outside your home throughout the full 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

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

North Hanover School District is committed to supporting our staff and student health in every way.

Three vaccination clinics were arranged and scheduled for North Hanover staff and contractors. Additionally, notifications of available vaccination appointments were circulated to all staff during the Spring of 2021.

Additional information regarding current vaccinations/boosters for COVID may be obtained at <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine> or by calling 1-800-232-0233.

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

- Special Education/Related Services
  - IEP programs will be provided to students based on their individual needs in accordance with their individualized plan. The school district will work with families to adjust IEP's as needed to ensure the health and safety is the main priority for student learning. will receive specialized instruction in accordance with their IEP by certified special education teachers.
  - Related services will be provided to students in accordance with their individualized education plan. Services will be given with healthy and safety protocols in place as needed. Proper cleaning protocols will be used for all service provider areas.
  - 504 Students
    - Students with 504 accommodation plans will receive their accommodations according to their 504 plan. Teachers will review the 504 plans to ensure that the implementation of the accommodations can be delivered. Teachers and 504 coordinators will work with families to adjust the plans accordingly.

## **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. (1000-character limit)

Our district has been operating in person instruction since September 2020. The district will continue to use our multi-tiered system of support for academic, social emotional and mental health needs. Additional supports will be implemented to account for increased needs.



Additional supports include Behavior Specialists, Focused Interventionists, and therapeutic on-site mental health services.

Our detailed plan will include the provision and assignment of mobile devices for students and the employment of building substitutes to ensure continuity of learning in the event of quarantine and if State law allows students to participate remotely in instruction.

The state and our district recognize the important role of climate and culture, more specifically, social and emotional learning (SEL) and how critical it is in re-engaging students, building a sense of community, supporting adults and students, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning.

We have developed a plan to implement many strategies related to staff and student well-being, trauma informed SEL, school culture and climate and the provision of meals to students.

### 3. Public Comment

North Hanover School District has been open for full days of instruction since September 2020. The plan that was developed to facilitate that reopening was done so with the involvement of all who volunteered from the staff and community. Every job category was represented and every Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) was represented. Formal presentations of that plan were scheduled, followed by 8 open Q and A sessions conducted in two languages. The implementation of the 2020-2021 Reopening Plan was discussed at every Board meeting throughout the 2020-2021 school year. During the 22-23 school year, plans were updated 2x per year. This process will continue through the 23-24 school year. All updates to the plan were discussed at Board of Education meetings and the Board received public comment.

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 23-24 plan is an abbreviated version of the original 2020-2021 plan. This format is already familiar to our stakeholders.

If a request is made for an alternative format or language translation, that request will be granted.

