

THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

1648.11 THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

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The Board of Education plans to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. In June 2021, the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) worked collaboratively to develop guidance, The Road Forward – Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year (The Road Forward).

The Road Forward replaces the mandatory anticipated minimum standards outlined in the NJDOE’s “The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education” (June 2020) and provides a range of recommendations rather than mandatory standards. These recommendations are meant to assist school districts in implementing protocols to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for full-time learning.

The Board considered many factors as they prepared for the 2021-2022 school year, including the level of COVID-19 transmission in the community at large and in the school community, as well as vaccination coverage rates in both the community at large and the school community.

For the purpose of this Policy, “Order” shall mean any Governor of New Jersey Executive Order, New Jersey State Agency mandate, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, New Jersey statute, or administrative code requiring compliance by the school district.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop health and safety protocols. The Board will consider all recommended Orders and comply with all mandatory Orders when developing health and safety protocols and reviewing them periodically.

The Board considered the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward to develop the school district’s COVID-19 protocols in the following areas and included in corresponding Appendices:

- A. General Health and Safety Concerns of Students, Staff Members, and Visitors
 - 1. Vaccination – See Appendix A.;
 - 2. Communication with the Local Health Department – See Appendix B.;



THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

3. Mask Wearing Protocol – See Appendix C.;
 4. Physical Distancing and Cohorting
Protocols – See Appendix D.;
 5. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
Protocols – See Appendix E.;
 6. Provision of Meals – See Appendix F.; and
 7. Transportation Protocols – See Appendix G.
- B. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow – See Appendix H.
- C. Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members – See Appendix I.
- D. Contact Tracing – See Appendix J.
- E. Testing – See Appendix K.
- F. Student and Staff Member Travel – See Appendix L.

The absence of one or more of the recommendations outlined in The Road Forward and/or in the school district's health and safety protocols will not prevent the reopening of the school(s) in the district for full-day in-person operation with all enrolled students and staff members present.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9, schools must be in session for 180 days to receive State Aid. The statute requires that school facilities be provided for at least 180 days during the school year. N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(b) indicates when a school district is required to close the schools of the district for more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive and/or recommendation by the appropriate health agency or officer to institute a public health-related closure, days of virtual or remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction will count toward the school district's 180-day requirement.

The school district may be confronted with the incidence of COVID-19 positive cases among staff and/or students. If the school district is required to exclude a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes as a result of possible exposure to COVID-19,



THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

while the school itself remains open for in-person instruction, the school district may offer virtual or remote instruction to those students in a manner commensurate with in-person instruction to the extent possible. In circumstances when the school facilities remain open and in-person instruction continues in those classrooms that are not required to quarantine, those days in session will also count toward the school district's 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9.

The school district anticipates updates to The Road Forward and as such this Policy is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure compliance with Orders that may arise after Board adoption of this Policy. All revisions to Orders affecting this Policy and corresponding Appendices shall be reviewed by the Superintendent with the Board Attorney, School Physician, and Board of Education, if appropriate. The Superintendent may revise the health and safety protocols included in any Appendix as necessary and appropriate. All students, parents, and staff members will be notified of any changes to school district-developed protocols implemented as a result of this Policy, as appropriate.

Adopted: 23 August 2021



Appendices

The Road Forward

Hillsdale Public Schools Board of Education

Note:

As of August 10, 2021, the only mandatory requirements are included in Appendix C – Mask Wearing Protocol and Appendix G – Transportation Protocols. The school district should anticipate potential updates to The Road Forward Guidance as additional guidance becomes available.



Fall 2021

Appendix A

Vaccination

As a Pre-K thru 8 school district the majority of our student population is ineligible for vaccination at this time. We ask all families to speak with their child's health care provider about the role a COVID vaccination plays in the life of each family and each child in the household. At this time there is no vaccine mandate for any individual, staff or student, in the Hillsdale Public Schools, but we will continue to monitor the public health recommendations that are shared with all public schools.

According to the CDC, vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID-19, can reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19, and are effective against variants of the virus that cause COVID-19, including the Delta variant. Everyone 12 years of age and older is now eligible to get a free COVID-19 vaccination.

Vaccination continues to be the leading public health strategy. All staff and students will be considered unvaccinated unless they provide a copy of their vaccination record indicating which vaccination they received (Moderna, Pfizer, or Johnson & Johnson). We ask that school staff and parents share any applicable vaccine information with the school nurse. A vaccinated individual as well as those who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last three months do not have to quarantine and/or miss school, athletic or extracurricular events if they have close contact exposure to someone with COVID-19 and remain asymptomatic.

The District will continue to share guidance on vaccine availability for consideration by families and staff members.



Appendix B

Communication with the Local Health Department

District administrators and school/professional nurses will maintain ongoing communication with local and state health officials and authorities in making decisions regarding the opening of school and our daily protocols to determine mitigating factors as related to COVID-19.

The Hillsdale Public Schools will provide families with information regarding transmission and CALI ratings provided by the NJDOH. Understanding that COVID-19 may impact certain areas of the state differently, NJDOH provides information on COVID-19 activity on a weekly basis.



Appendix C

Mask Wearing Protocol

All students, faculty, staff, and visitors will be required to wear face masks in school buildings and on school buses for the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Executive Order 251 requiring masks from Governor Murphy went into effect on Monday, August 9, 2021. We will continue to monitor masking guidance as it pertains to students and staff in the Pre-K thru 8 setting from the State and collaborate with the Northwest Bergen Regional Health Commission, the Borough of Hillsdale public health nurse and our school nursing staff.

Similar to our experience last year masks will not be worn when students are eating, outdoors for recess, when engaged in high-intensity aerobic activity like physical education class outside, when engaged in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated indoor location and able to maintain appropriate physical distance from all other individuals, or when a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering.

Information will be provided to staff and students on proper use, removal, and washing of masks. The Hillsdale Public School staff are experienced in the use and wearing of masks from our in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. Any staff members that needs guidance on the correct use of wearing a mask will have the opportunity to speak with the school nurse for 1:1 guidance.

The district will encourage that masks be washed after every use and that the most effective fabrics for cloth masks are tightly woven such as cotton and cotton blends, breathable, and in two or three fabric layers. Masks with exhalation valves or vents, those that are loosely woven, or ones that do not fit properly are not recommended. School nurses and main office personnel will have additional masks in case of a mask malfunction or a mask is forgotten.



Appendix D

Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

Students and desks will be spaced a minimum of 3 feet apart during the course of the day where possible and to the maximum extent that is practicable in the learning environment. We will continue to hold as students move through the day and around their classroom he/she may breach the three foot rule, but will be masked during this time.

The Hillsdale Public Schools has refreshed its supply of desk shields over the summer. We will be employing the use of desk shields once again as school opens in September. The new shields are sturdier and offer a clearer view for children. The desk shields will serve as a static barrier and another layer of personal protective equipment to combat the spread of respiratory droplets in the air. Additionally, should the future hold a shift in guidance as it pertains to mask use, we already have established and in practice a COVID mitigation tool to help support a healthy transition away from the use of face masks.

Elementary School - Students will be with their homeroom class throughout the day inclusive of visiting special area classes and eating lunch. Each homeroom class will have a designated location for lunch and recess time.

Middle School - Students will travel from to classes in the middle school building. Students will eat lunch spaced 3 feet apart to the maximum extent possible. Students while at lunch and enjoy recess time with grade level peers only



Appendix E

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

We will maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol): in each classroom (for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer); at entrances and exits of buildings; near lunchrooms and toilets as appropriate. In addition, for classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, the station will be prepared with soap, water and paper towels. Hand hygiene opportunities will be provided during the school day. Students will be reminded to wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:

1. Upon arrival to school
2. Before and after eating
3. After using the bathroom
4. After blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing
5. When hands are visibly soiled

If washing with soap and water is not possible, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer/wipes will be permitted. Signs will be posted to help educate and remind people to use protective equipment when applicable, physically distance and follow good hand and respiratory hygiene practices.



Appendix F

Provision of Meals

The district will employ a lunch period for all students and staff during the 2021-2022 school year.

All Schools: The Department of Agriculture has extended its free lunch for all initiative to all students that choose to participate in the District's lunch program for the 2021-2022 school year. Similar to last year communication will be sent to all families allowing them to pre-order their child's lunch through our food service provider, Maschio's.

Elementary: Students at our elementary school will eat lunch with their homeroom class. Similar to last year outdoor seating will be accessed to the maximum extent possible and when the weather permits. In times of inclement weather, like last year, students will eat lunch in their classroom or in another common area, but with peers from their homeroom only. Lunch will be followed by recess where each homeroom class will have different designated outdoor areas available to move about freely and on a rotating basis.

Middle School: Students at the middle school will eat lunch with their grade level using both the cafetorium and the gymnasium. This will allow for ample spacing between students during times of eating. Following lunch students will go outside with the grade level peers for use of the field and blacktop area. During times of inclement weather recess will be moved to indoor common areas and classrooms allowing for students to socially interact while masked and distanced.



Appendix G

Transportation Protocols

Transportation services will be provided to all eligible and subscription students. Face coverings will be required of all bus drivers and all students utilizing transportation services. Accommodations for students who are unable to wear a face covering will be addressed according to that student's particular need and in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations. Students not complying with the use of a face mask on the bus will lose his/her bus privileges. It is understood that based upon the number of students on a given transportation route, physical distancing may not be possible on the school bus. When weather permits, school bus windows will remain open to maintain a consistent flow of fresh air for bus riders. It is expected of our transportation provider that the cleaning and disinfecting of the buses will be done at the conclusion of each route, prior to the re-entry of any students.



Appendix H

Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

Cleaning/Disinfecting

In coordination with the district's third-party clearing service, Aramark, and with the oversight of the districts cleaning services consultants, Edvocate, the district will provide the following cleaning services to the maximum extent possible:

Classrooms			
DESCRIPTION OF AREAS TO CLEAN/DISINFECT	Pre-Activity (Prior to Usage/Event)	During Activity	Post Activity (After Usage)
Schedule Time of Task:	07:00 am	Varies*	4:00 PM
Classroom Bathrooms	Clean/Disinfect	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Desktops	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Spray)
Door Handles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Spray)
Flooring (Carpet/Tile)	Clean/Disinfect	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Spray)
Light Switches	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Receptacles	NA	NA	NA
Seating	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)
Tabletops	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)

* Depending upon availability and classroom accessibility

Bathrooms				
DESCRIPTION OF AREAS TO CLEAN/DISINFECT	Pre-Activity (Prior to Usage/Event)	During Activity	During Activity	Post Activity (After Usage)
Schedule Time of Task:	7:00 am	10:00 am	1:00 pm	3:00 pm
Door Handles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Stall Doors/Handles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Flooring	Clean/Disinfect	NA	NA	Clean/Disinfect
Hand Dryers/Soap Dispensers	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Light Switches	Clean/Disinfect			Clean/Disinfect
Receptacles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Sinks/Faucets	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Toilets (Tops/Bases/Handles)	Clean/Disinfect	Clean/Disinfect	Clean/Disinfect	Clean/Disinfect
Walls	Clean/Disinfect	NA	NA	Clean/Disinfect



POLICY

HILLSDALE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Administration
1648.11/Page 13 of 20

THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

Cafeteria (George White Middle School)					
DESCRIPTION OF AREAS TO CLEAN/DISINFECT	Pre-Activity (Prior to Usage/Event)	During Activity	During Activity	During Activity	Post Activity (After Usage)
Schedule Time of Task:	10:15 am	11:00 am	11:45 am	12:30 pm	01:15 pm
Door Handles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Flooring (Carpet/Tile)	Clean	Clean	Clean	Clean	Clean/Disinfect
Light Switches	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Seating	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Wipe)
Serving Lines	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)
Tabletops	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)

Cafeteria (Ann Blanche Smith and Meadowbrook Elementary)			
DESCRIPTION OF AREAS TO CLEAN/DISINFECT	Pre-Activity (Prior to Usage/Event)	During Activity	Post Activity (After Usage)
Schedule Time of Task:	11:35 am	12:15 pm	01:00 pm
Door Handles	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Clean/Disinfect
Flooring (Carpet/Tile)	Clean	Clean	Clean/Disinfect
Light Switches	NA	NA	NA
Seating	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Spray)	Disinfect (Wipe)
Serving Lines	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)
Tabletops	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)	Disinfect (Wipe)



Additionally, schedules for stairwells, offices, hallways, entrance ways, and gymnasium/all purpose rooms have been created for respective district schools in coordination with the schedules above. As noted previously, all cleaning products approved for use must be approved and available for use on the [EPA's website](#).

Airflow

Airflow

Fresh air is an important classroom ingredient for everyone. Windows will be open in classrooms as long as it is safe and comfortable to do so, allowing for a regular and consistent fresh air component. Additionally, our classroom univentiaitor filters and window air conditioner units are serviced over the summer to ensure they are clean and ready for the school year.

Moreover, during the 202-2021 school year the Hillsdale Board of Education installed a bipolar ionization system to remove pollutants, dust, allergens, mold, bacteria, and viruses including COVID-19 from the air. The patented technology uses an electronic charge to create a high concentration of positive and negative ions that travel with an incoming stream of air and attach to particles, pathogens and gas molecules that are present. The ions kill these pathogens by robbing them of the life-sustaining hydrogen they need to survive.



Appendix I

Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

COVID positive individuals or those identified as close contacts of COVID positive individuals may be considered for a reduced exclusion period based on community transmission levels as follows: Moderate or Low (yellow or green) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days. High (orange) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days.

Exposed close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms, do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested following an exposure to someone suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19. The individual should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If the individual experiences symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation to care.

Students and staff should remain off-campus if any of the following apply:

- Testing positive for COVID-19
 - Students and staff testing positive for COVID-19 will be allowed to return to school based on the [CDC-issued timeline](#).
- An unvaccinated individual that has recent close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.
 - Close contact, as defined by the CDC, includes: Close Contact through Proximity and Duration of Exposure: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.



THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

- **Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.**
- Showing COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 100.4° F or greater; cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; chills; repeated shaking with chills; muscle pain; headache; sore throat; new loss of taste or smell; fatigue; congestion or runny nose; nausea; vomiting; diarrhea).
- Presenting any symptoms of illness.



Appendix J

Contact Tracing

Contact Tracing Protocol Overview:

Contact tracing is a key factor in keeping our school and our town as safe as possible from COVID-19. Simply put, contact tracing is a process to identify people who have come into contact with individuals who tested positive for the disease. While COVID-19 may be new, contact tracing is not. It has been used for many years here in New Jersey and around the world as a means of keeping communities safe from the spread of communicable diseases. Upon notification that a person has tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department or school nurse will call that person to determine others who may be at risk, people with whom they have been in close contact. The contact tracer will then reach out to those people to recommend their next steps, which could include self-quarantine, testing, and other risk mitigation strategies.

- Local health department and school nurses will work in conjunction to activate contact tracing.
- School nurses will be integral to the district contact tracing procedures.
- School nurses will educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.
- The school safety specialist has been trained with the three hour workshop at Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing course.

When a COVID positive or potential COVID case is identified the contact tracing liaison(nurse) or designee will:



THE ROAD FORWARD COVID-19 – HEALTH AND SAFETY (M)

1. Notify NorthWest Bergen Regional Health Commission(NWBRHC) immediately by phone: 201-445-7217 or the Borough of Hillsdale Public Health Nurse who works under the purview of NWBRHC
2. Immediately compile class lists and known district contacts to be utilized by liaison and county contact tracer. Lists should include name, phone number, address of contact (parent/guardian information to be included as well if contact is a child) and vaccination status.
3. Complete Index Case section on the NWBRHC Exposure Notification Document. School nurses have this document
4. Document close contacts of the Index Case in the Contacts Section of the COVID Exposure Notification Document. Please include the name, address, and telephone number for all contacts listed. Additionally, NJDOH has provided a sample School Illness Log, which school nurses have. This spreadsheet is for your personal use only.
5. Contact the Hillsdale Department of Health Services to notify them of COVID positive/potential COVID case.
6. Fax the completed COVID Exposure Notification Document to NWBRHC at 201- 445-4001.
7. If necessary, institute additional cleaning measures.
8. Notify the school community as per school protocol.
9. Collaborate and facilitate initiation of contact tracing with Hillsdale Department of Health.
10. Coordinate with the Hillsdale Department of Health to call known close contacts to inform them of potential exposure to COVID 19. Instructions to include but not limited to the need to quarantine for 14 days and how that is accomplished, the need to seek medical advice from their healthcare provider, and other risk mitigation strategies
11. Complete initial contact tracing log sheet.
12. Follow up weekly with Hillsdale Department of Health and contacts to provide additional support if needed. (follow up will be provided until case can be safely discharged by Hillsdale Department of Health and no further support is needed)
13. COVID-19 positive cases should be reported to the county office using the NJDOE County Office Incident/Issue Report form. The form can be sent to Irene.Ardizzone@doe.nj.gov



Appendix K

Testing

The Hillsdale Public Schools will work with our local health department to identify rapid viral testing options for the testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.



Appendix L

Student and Staff Member Travel

[As of May 17, 2021 New Jersey's travel advisory is no longer in effect.](#)

The CDC has recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated travelers. Travelers leaving New Jersey should check with the travel destination and transportation carrier (i.e., airline, cruise ship, etc.) to see if there are additional health and safety protocols or requirements, such as proof of a negative COVID-19 test within days of departure. Travelers should also check with their employers, schools, and other entities that may have quarantine policies for individuals returning from travel. **Currently, the CDC recommends delaying travel until you are fully vaccinated.**

Domestic Travel

According to the CDC, unvaccinated individuals who do travel should get tested 1-3 days before their trip, 3-5 days after travel, and stay home and self-quarantine for 7 days after domestic travel.

For those traveling to New Jersey, domestic travel is defined as lasting 24 hours or longer to states or US territories other than those connected to New Jersey, such as Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware.

For more information, refer to the [CDC's guidance for domestic travel](#).

International Travel

The CDC requires all air passengers arriving in the United States from a foreign country to get tested for COVID-19 no more than 3 days before their flight departs and to present the negative result or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 to the airline before boarding the flight.

For more information, visit the [CDC website](#).

