

Harrington Park School District



The Road Forward **2021-22 School Year**

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Introduction

On June 28, 2021, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) worked collaboratively to develop the following guidance document called “The Road Forward for the 2021-22 School Year.” This document outlines the Harrington Park School District’s commitment and plans for providing a safe return to in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.

Harrington Park School District plans to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-2022 school year. This following guidance includes a range of strategies the district will implement to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19 while still allowing for fulltime in-person learning. While the State is committed to a resumption of normalcy for the 2021-22 school year, we will continue to review the data and decisions will be guided by the NJDOH and the BCDOH to ensure that we maintain a safe and healthy school communities. The district recognizes the need to continue to address the potential for increased mental health and learning supports.

1. General Health and Safety Guidelines

1.1 Vaccination

In March 2021 through a coordinated effort, Harrington Park School staff and the residents of Harrington Park’s Brookside senior housing received vaccinations through CVS Pharmacy. During the 2020-21 school year and again this school year, the school provided COVID tests onsite to reduce our student and staff downtime away from the school.

In September 2021, the staff of Harrington Park School was notified of Governor Murphy’s Executive Order 253. Staff were required by October 1st to submit proof of vaccination or then submit to being tested two times a week starting October 18. There is no COVID vaccination requirement for our elementary age students, however we encourage our parents to share this information with our Health Office if students have been vaccinated.

1.2 Communication with Local Health Department

Throughout the pandemic, communication to our school community has been sent out on a regular basis. We conduct a weekly meeting with our town officials, local health officials, school administrations, school nurses, and school medical doctor to discuss the current status of district and the town in regards to COVID. We maintain close communications with the local health department in order to provide and receive pertinent information regarding the COVID transmission and prevention. The district also monitors the COVID19 Activity Level Index for Regional and State data and sends this out to the school community on a regular basis.

The District reports to, receives, and follows the guidance/recommendations of the Bergen County Department of Health (BCDOH). The BCDOH falls under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Department of Health NJDOH. Therefore, all medical-related guidance, recommendations, or mandates received through the Bergen County Department of Health,

will continue to be strictly and uniformly adhered to.

Our expectation has always been and continues to be that health officials make medical decisions.

Understanding that COVID-19 may impact certain areas of the state differently, NJDOH provides information on COVID-19 transmission at the regional level, characterizing community transmission as low (green), moderate (yellow), high (orange), and very high (red).

This information is posted online every week on the NJDOH CDS COVID-19 website.

1.3 Masks Wearing Protocol

The Harrington Park School has started the 2021-22 school year off with students and staff wearing face masks unless it inhibits the individual's health or if there is a medical condition or disability. Visitors and volunteers will also be required to wear masks. If students and staff are outside, they are permitted to remove their masks.

Students, teachers, staff, and visitors have access to additional disposable masks to be used as a back-up if needed. Signs are up throughout the facility reminding students, staff and visitors to wear a mask. As of Friday, August 6th, the Governor formally mandated wearing face masks for any person in any K-12 school building in the state of New Jersey.

This applies to all students and adults, regardless of vaccination status.

On August 5, 2021, the CDC issued new indoor masking recommendations for individuals in K-12 school settings. That guidance is available here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html.

Indoors: In alignment with recommendations from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics, on August 6, 2021, Governor Murphy signed Executive Order 251 which requires that all staff, students, and visitors wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status, in the indoor premises of school buildings. This requirement applies to all public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools. As outlined in the Executive Order, there are limited exceptions to this requirement.

Outdoors: In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. The CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people. Fully vaccinated people might choose to wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised.

1.4 Physical Distancing and Cohorting Protocols

The school district utilizes physical distancing measures as an effective COVID-19 prevention strategy to the greatest extent possible. During periods of high community transmission, we will utilize and prioritize other prevention measures including masking screening testing and possible cohorting.

Within classrooms: maintain 3 feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable, while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.

Outside of classrooms: including in hallways, locker rooms, indoor and outdoor physical education settings, and school-sponsored transportation, maintain physical distancing to the greatest extent practicable.

1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette Protocols

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, the district has installed no-touch hand washing stations in the hallways throughout facility. We encourages regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds prior to/following eating, sharing materials using the bathroom and use of district outdoor equipment. If washing with soap and water are not possible wash with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol should be used. These are offered throughout the facility. Our custodial staff will inspect and maintain the dispensers in their respective areas and refill as needed.

School nurses and teachers will instruct and remind students and staff of the proper procedures for covering coughs and sneezes.

1.6 Meals

The district does not have a lunch program but the school has a HSA (Home School Association) based program that is classroom based. Food is delivered to each classroom for students. Parent volunteers are vaccinated and masked throughout the process. This program will be reviewed on November 1st for its success or the need for modification. In the event that we return to the lunch facility, we will be utilizing plexi-glass during this period. Students will also be grouped by their classroom so to avoid the need to receive the need to create lines and congregate then receiving their food.

These strategies include:

- Maintaining student cohorts and using classroom space for lunch for a period of time at the start of the school year.
- Food options will be individually prepared and served.

Outdoor recess will occur daily depending on weather conditions.

1.7 Transportation Protocols

Any student who is transported during school hours in a school district bus/vehicle or by a contracted transportation company is required to wear a face mask for the duration of the trip. This is a specific NJDOH/BCDOH policy. Bus cleaning shall be performed by properly trained custodial/maintenance staff.

2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

2.1 Limit Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

We will limit the use of shared objects when possible and will be cleaned each day. Each classroom will have their own individual supply for their students. Every effort is made for students to use personal supplies and materials. All classrooms and offices are supplied with hand sanitation stations and/or disinfecting wipes to be used for cleaning hands and/or surfaces. Cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, and objects that are touched often, such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, hand-on learning items, faucet handles, phones, and toys at least daily. Regular checks by the building custodian, the building administrator and support staff will ensure all facilities are stocked and supplied with these necessary materials.

2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

The district will maintain its custodial rotations that will include the use of cleaning products throughout the district. The district will continue using all approved cleaning methods along with electrostatic sprayers to sanitize the school and district equipment and materials. Public health signage (i.e. the importance of hand washing, social distancing markers) will remain in place. The school is equipped with hallway-based hand washing stations so that students and staff have the ability to wash their hands without having to enter the bathrooms.

2.3 Improving Airflow

All ventilation units are equipped with filters that allow us to cleanse incoming air. The district has and will continue to utilize HEPA filters in our HVAC systems in support of our preventative measures. Filter systems have been upgraded and will continue to be utilized throughout the school year. We will continue to use these protocols to support our procedures.

When circumstances allow, activities, classes, or lunches may be held outdoors.

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

3.1 Parental Screening

The district will maintain the current Health Office Medical Center in the event that protocols and procedures require us to implement a more stringent process and protocol. The Medical Center allows us to create a safe and healthy environment for students and staff. Parents and caregivers should be strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness every day as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Students who are sick should not attend school. The district will continue to utilize the health screen app. This allows families the ability to quickly and effectively screen their children at home.

3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff Members

Students and staff that exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 will safely isolate in the Medical Center (Health Office). This is a dedicated area that has two nurses, isolating rooms and proper medical supplies to assist each student or staff member. We also offer onsite COVID testing with results back in one to two days. We also have a door to the outside of the building so no student or staff member will need to go through the facility when sick. After the isolation room is empty proper cleaning protocols will be followed.

3.3 Exclusion

3.3.1 Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

The school nurses will assess for the following:

- Fever (100.0 Fahrenheit or higher), chills, or shaking chills
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- New loss of taste or smell
- Muscle aches or body aches
- Cough (not due to other known cause, such as chronic cough)
- Sore throat, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea when in combination with other symptoms
- Fatigue, when in combination with other symptoms
- Nasal congestion or runny nose (not due to other known causes, such as allergies) when in combination with other symptoms

3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Scenario A for individuals who test positive with COVID

Duration: Self-isolation for COVID-19 positive cases is a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset or after positive PCR or antigen test, if asymptomatic.

Return to school: After 10 days and once they have:

Been without fever for 24 hours (and without taking fever-reducing medications) and have experienced improvement in other symptoms; and

Individuals who do not meet these criteria after 10 days may receive clearance from either public health authority contact tracers (the local board of health or Community Tracing Collaborative) or school health professional before returning.

Note: Return to school should be based on time and symptom resolution. Repeat testing prior to return is not recommended.

Scenario B (B1, B2, B3) : Protocol for asymptomatic close contact with a person with COVID Protocol B1 does not include the following students and staff that remain asymptomatic:

- Students and staff that are fully vaccinated
- Students and staff who have had COVID-19 within three months of the close contact and can provide documentation of positive case.

Note: In some cases, individuals may be asked to follow specific testing and quarantine response protocols (including durations for quarantine/isolation) provided by contact tracers or local health officials which may differ from the recommended protocols below.

Scenario B-2 - For an asymptomatic Individual with close contact with a person with COVID-19 who are not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols

If a student or staff member is exposed, within 6 feet for a total of 15 fifteen minutes of someone who tests positive for COVID-19 are not part of the above exclusions, they shall:

- Students and staff will quarantine for 7 days if they have a negative PCR test result 5 days post-exposure
- Students and staff will quarantine for 14 days if there is no PCR test results

Scenario B-2 (A) – Test and Stay Program (Tentative)

If a student is masked for the duration of the contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19:

Students will not need to quarantine for as long as the following conditions are met:

- Remain asymptomatic
- Wear masks in school at all times, other than when eating or drinking. When these individuals cannot be masked (i.e., when eating or drinking), they should maintain 3 feet of distance from other individuals to the extent feasible.
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

Students and staff that are vaccinated or have had COVID-19 within 3 months of the exposure will not have to quarantine if they remain asymptomatic.

Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate at home if symptoms develop.

Note: If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or develops symptoms during the Test and Stay period or the 14 days following initial exposure, they should follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they should follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Scenario B-3: Traditional protocol

- Duration: Quarantine is at least 7 days from the date of exposure
- Return to School: After 7 days, returning on day 8, provided that they:
- Remain asymptomatic
- Receive a COVID test (PCR or rapid antigen) on day 5 or later and receive a negative result
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14, and self-isolate if symptoms develop.

Note: If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or within the 14 days following initial exposure, they follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Scenario B-3: Alternate protocol for those who choose not to receive a COVID test

Duration: Quarantine is at least 10 days from the date of exposure

- Have not experienced symptoms up to this point
- Conduct active monitoring for symptoms through day 14 and self-isolate if symptoms develop.

Note: If an individual has symptoms at the time they are designated as a close contact or within the 14 days following initial exposure, they follow the protocol for symptomatic individuals (Protocol C). If an individual tests positive at any time, they follow the protocol for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 (Protocol A).

Scenario C: Return to school post-symptoms with test

NJDOH recommends that students with the following symptoms be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- 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, or new taste disorder.

For students with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline should be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

Return to School: Individuals may return to school after:

- Have received a negative PCR test result for COVID-19, Note: So long as the individual is not a close contact if a medical professional makes an alternative diagnosis for the COVID-19-like symptoms, the individual may use this recommendation (i.e., for influenza or strep pharyngitis) in lieu of a PCR test.
- Have improvement in symptoms
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

Note: If the symptomatic individual was a close contact who is not exempt from testing and quarantine response protocols, after symptoms resolve and they receive a negative PCR test, they should follow Protocol B-1 for Test and Stay

If Test and Stay is not available or the family or adult individual opts not to participate, they follow Protocol B-2 or B-3.

Scenario C-1: Alternative protocol for symptomatic individuals who are not close in close contact and choose not to receive a COVID test to return to school

Duration: Isolation is at least 10 days from symptoms onset

Return to School: After 10 days, returning on day 11, assuming they:

- Have improvement in symptoms
- Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.
 - Have improvement in symptoms
 - Have been without fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

3.3.3 Exclusion

The district will adhere to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19:

- Ill individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 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.
- Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result.
- An alternate diagnosis (including a positive strep test or influenza swab) without a negative COVID-19 test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school earlier than the timeframes above.

The COVID-19 Exclusion Table described in NJDOH guidance for Local health departments can be used to determine the need for and duration of school exclusion based on the level of COVID-19 community transmission in their region. In order to facilitate rapid diagnosis and limit unnecessary school exclusion, schools may consider implementing school-based diagnostic testing for students and staff.

The district will adhere to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts:

CDC released guidance with options to shorten the quarantine time period following exposure to a confirmed positive case. While CDC and NJDOH continue to endorse 14 days as the preferred quarantine period– and thus the preferred school exclusion period – regardless of the community transmission level, it is recognized that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus. Additional information is described in NJDOH quarantine guidance.

To that end, excluded individuals who are close contacts of staff or students who tested positive for COVID-19 may be considered for a reduced exclusion period based on community transmission levels as follows:

High (orange) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days.

Moderate or Low (yellow or green) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 10 days (or 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days)

Schools serving medically complex or other high-risk individuals should use a 14-day exclusion period for the exclusion of these individuals or those who work closely with them when identified as close contacts in all levels of community transmission.

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 with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
- If they experience 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.

The aforementioned guidance requires proof of vaccination.

4. Contact Tracing

Upon notification of a positive case, the administration will begin contact tracing immediately. If a positive case is identified and administration is notified, contact tracing will begin immediately to determine close contacts. A school administrator will facilitate contact tracing and work with the Bergen County Department of Health to provide the necessary information. After consulting with the Bergen County Department of Health, the school will confidentially contact parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements. Identified individuals may also include siblings.

5. Testing

For the second year in a row, the Harrington Park School District has offered COVID testing onsite at our school. Our school Medical Center has two nurses that will facilitate the tests. The tests are sent away and we typically have results within one to two days. This helped to keep our school open and in-person for most of last year.

5.1 Diagnostic and Screening Testing

In the event of a potential positive case or close contact is detected, the school nurse will perform an onsite PCR COVID test. Results will be back in one to two days.

Live Streaming/Virtual Learning for Quarantined Students

Technology and Connectivity

Harrington Park School District has put into place the following:

- (1) Each student throughout the district will receive or have access to a district level chrome book. As the district goes through the 1st Trimester, we will conduct a needs assessment to see if the district level need has changed. In the event of a parent request the district is in possession of a surplus amount of units available.
- (2) Consider the attendant needs associated with the deployment of needed technology, including student and parent training and acceptable use policy implementation.
- (3) Prioritize the purchase and roll-out of devices and/or connectivity that may involve learning based on the results of the needs assessment.
- (4) For students with special needs, accommodations according to their instructional program must be addressed as appropriate for each student.

If there is a device shortage, HPSD will address those technology challenges as they arise.

In the event of COVID-19 case(s), the following will be the live stream and virtual delivery for the students:

Kindergarten and Grade One Virtual Schedule:

Synchronous Instruction from 9 - 10 a.m.; Snack 10-10:15; Synchronous Instruction 10:15-11:15 a.m.; Lunch 11:45-1 p.m.; Synchronous Instruction 1-1:45; Win/Small Group Instruction 2-3 p.m.

Grades Two & Three:

Synchronous Instruction from 9-10 a.m.; Snack 10-10:15; Synchronous Instruction 10:15-12 p.m.; Lunch 12:30 -1:15 p.m.; Synchronous Instruction 1:15-2 p.m.; Win/Small Group Instruction 2-3 p.m.

Grades 4-8

Students will follow their normal school schedule from 8:35 - 3:08 p.m.

6. Student and Staff Member Travel

We will follow the recommended CDC guidelines for student and staff member travel out-of-state.

