



# HARDING TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

*Celebrating Excellence Since 1926*

July 27, 2020

In response to the State of New Jersey mandate, requiring all public schools to open for in-person instruction for the 2020 - 2021 school year, Harding Township School has developed a comprehensive safety plan to allow for the return of students and faculty. All students and faculty will return to Harding Township School on a modified schedule. The school day will begin at 8:20am and students will be dismissed at 12:45pm. Additional teacher support will be provided remotely each day, following dismissal. Having all students present for in-person instruction each day will allow for all content areas to be taught, special education plans to be implemented and special services, including counseling, speech/language, physical therapy, occupational therapy to be available. On this modified schedule, students will not have lunch.

As per the State mandate put forth on July 24, 2020, remote learning through synchronous and asynchronous learning methods will be available for families who make the decision not to send their children to school. Parents are able to opt out of sending their children to school for in-person instruction. Parents will have the ability to opt their children back into school by providing two weeks notice. To provide remote learning instruction, Harding Township School plans to utilize webcams to stream live instruction through Google Meet or a similar platform. This plan allows for real-time instruction to occur with authentic interaction between student and teacher. To prepare for this, the district will purchase and install webcams in each K-8 classroom, as well as, Google Meet as a feature on Google Classroom accounts for all K-8 students. The students will be able to access the live instruction through Google Meet or a similar platform. All K-8 students will have Google accounts. Professional development on the utilization of Google Meet will be provided during in-service days to all teachers. Additionally, resources will be developed to support parents and students on the use of Google Meet and Google Classroom. To further support students, district staff will continue to gather and disseminate relevant materials, activities, and resources through Google Classroom or other means in order to support students in their home setting if needed.

We believe providing the opportunity for all students and teachers to return to school together is essential, provided it can be done safely. Students and teachers need to reconnect, re-establish norms and routines and re-engage with the dynamic process of learning. In the plan, CDC recommendations for social distancing are followed with diligence, as are all standards for safety. With a class of approximately 18 being our largest, we are fortunate to be able to welcome all of our students consistent with CDC guidelines. We are committed to working with our Re-opening Committee and the local health department, as we deem necessary, to amend this plan to

reflect any changes to guidelines in the coming weeks. With approval from our Board of Education, this plan will be shared with our school community as will any possible modifications that are made leading up to our school reopening.

## **Ten Critical Areas of Operation for Harding Township School Reopening**

### **1. General Health and Safety Guidelines**

- a. All classrooms will maintain 6 feet of distance between students and teacher
- b. Harding Township School will operate on a modified schedule whereby in-person instruction takes place from 8:20am - 12:45pm five days per week
- c. Integrated Preschool Program will operate on a modified schedule whereby in-person instruction takes place from 8:45am-10:15am and 11:00am - 12:30pm with 30 additional minutes each day of synchronous or asynchronous work through pre-recorded activities, Google Meet or Zoom sessions.
- d. Classrooms will be marked with arrows to indicate flow of traffic
- e. Windows will remain open, when possible, for greater air circulation
- f. Classrooms with HVAC- Univents will be utilized, whenever possible, for classrooms where instruction of students is taking place. Maintenance and upkeep of the filters for the HVAC-Univents will be ongoing throughout the school year.
- g. Physical barriers will be utilized, when feasible, in cases where close proximity is unavoidable (e.g., special services and related services, etc.)
- h. School staff and any visitors will be required to wear face coverings
- i. All school staff are required to complete COVID-19 training on Safe Schools
- j. Students will be required to wear face coverings
- k. School buses will allow one student per seat, staggered per each row, as per State guidelines
- l. Any cleaning/disinfecting procedures will reflect CDC and local health department guidelines
- m. Students and faculty will be screened each day with both a temperature reading completed by an HTS staff member and an electronic health form to be completed by the family
- n. HTS will work in conjunction with the local authorities, including the local Health Department, to track cases and to make informed decisions for the health and safety of the school community
- o. HTS will provide reasonable accommodations, as and when possible, for any person in a higher risk category
- p. HTS will periodically communicate plans as they are developed with the community via email and the school website

## 2. Classrooms, Testing and Therapy Rooms

- a. All classrooms, testing rooms, and therapy rooms will be spaced in accordance with CDC social distancing guidelines (6 feet of distance between students and teacher(s))
- b. Desks will face the same direction
- c. Physical barriers will be utilized, when possible, in cases where close proximity is unavoidable (special education classrooms, evaluations, and related services)
- d. Sanitizing stations will be placed in important positions throughout the buildings
- e. Hand washing, social distancing, and face covering procedures will be visibly posted and enforced by HTS faculty
- f. HTS will utilize hand sanitizer that meets the CDC recommendation of 60% alcohol
- g. HTS will operate on a modified schedule, and therefore HTS will not have lunch
- h. No communal supplies will be utilized; students will maintain their own supplies at their desks, including electronic devices, and student cooperation in this regard will be require/needed
- i. Any items handled by students will be sanitized, whenever noticed and feasible
- j. Students in PreK - Grade 5 will remain with one cohort, in one classroom each day. Specials teachers will travel to the classes and students will remain in one place to minimize movement (A sub-section of students that require resource center classrooms and/or related services will travel to those designated areas).
- k. Students in middle school will remain as a cohort, remaining in one classroom, whenever possible. When students are required to change classes for math and world language, supervision will be provided to enforce social distancing in the halls during passing time. Seats occupied by students during these classes will be single use, once per day, by an individual student, to limit cross-contact on any seats or desk surfaces.
- l. Services for Students with Special Needs: All services will specifically focus on addressing the goals and objectives outlined in each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). For students attending in-person instruction, special education staff members will provide live direct and explicit instruction. For students receiving remote instruction, special education staff members shall provide direct instruction via virtual platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. To further support students, the special education staff will continue to gather and disseminate relevant materials and resources including instructional applications in order to support students in their home setting if needed. Such instruction will continue to be developed in accordance with the goals and objectives and accommodations and modifications as outlined in the students' IEPs and consistent with standards and curriculum assigned to students on remote learning days. Special education staff shall continue to collaborate with general education

teachers and other staff as appropriate to ensure continuity of instruction for special education students and to adapt the learning resources noted above at all grade levels to the learning needs of students. Students enrolled in our half-day preschool program will receive a combination of in-person and thirty minutes of virtual instruction each day. In-person instruction will focus on providing individualized instruction centered on target areas of student need. Virtual instruction will allow for larger group instructional activities designed to facilitate generalization of skills across settings. All instruction will continue to be based on students' individual goals and objectives using age appropriate pre-readiness curriculum. Special Education staff continue to document services via teacher log. Progress pertaining toward student attainment of individual goals and objectives will continue to be provided via triennially progress reports that are made available to parents digitally. The district will continue to provide services within the parameters set forth by the N.J.A.C. 6A:14 with regard to class size requirements and staff to student ratios. All teaching positions will be staffed using appropriately certified personnel. For students who attend Out of District Placements, Child Study Team members will regularly consult with parents as well as representatives from the respective Out of District Schools to ensure continuity of programming for students. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's case manager directly with any specific question or concern.

- m. Counseling Services and Nursing Services: District counseling and nursing staff will be available in person and remotely to interact with students and staff, answer questions they might have, and provide them with support/interventions in person or through either Google Meet, Zoom, telephone or email. Counseling and nursing staff will keep a log of all interactions with students and will follow up with them in person. The school nurse will regularly monitor the symptoms of staff and students. The school nurse will provide on-going training to staff and students on face coverings and hand washing etiquette and adhering to social distancing guidelines. The school nurse will regularly monitor the status of medically fragile students through regular consultation with parents, as well as, the students' treating medical professionals.
- n. Other Related Services: Related service providers will use a variety of tools and modalities to engage students and provide for continuity of service. To the maximum extent possible, related services will be being provided directly to students in person, as well as, through virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, if necessary. The related service providers continue to structure therapy sessions using student's individual goals and objectives outlined in their IEPs. To further support students, the related service providers will continue to gather and disseminate relevant materials and resources including instructional applications in order to support students in their home setting if needed. All activities will be

developed within the context of each student's individual goals and objectives as outlined in their IEP. This applies to all related services including speech, occupational and physical therapy, counseling, behavior consultation, as well as, teacher of the deaf/hard of hearing services. In order to document services, staff will be tracking therapy sessions via individual logs. Progress pertaining toward student attainment of individual goals and objectives will continue to be provided via triennially progress reports that are made available to parents digitally.

- o. Child Study Team Services: Child Study Team members will continue to provide consultation services to students, staff, and parents via in person, as well as, via telephone, email and virtually through Google Meet and Zoom. As appropriate and necessary, child study team meetings such as Initial Identification and Evaluation Planning, Initial Eligibility, Reevaluation(s) and Annual Review(s) will occur via phone conference, as well as, virtually through Google Meet or Zoom and include participation from all required individuals including parents, CST members, General/Special Education Teachers and other personnel as necessary. All CST evaluations that require in-person direct assessment of the student will commence using carefully designed protocols that attempt to mitigate the potential for viral spread. Any evaluations that were placed on hold due to the school closure will be conducted and the CST will communicate with parents in regards to completing those evaluations. Additionally, School Social Workers will continue to conduct social assessments via extensive review of records as well as a clinical interview via phone conference or virtually through Google Meet or Zoom with parents. This pertains to initial evaluations as well as reevaluations. Child Study Team members will regularly consult with families to ensure continuity of services are implemented in accordance with their children's IEPs to the greatest extent possible. Parents are encouraged to reach out to their child's case manager directly with any specific question or concern. The members of the Child Study Team will remain in frequent contact with parents, general and special education teachers, as well as, related service providers to ensure implementation of services for students, as well as, to determine the potential need for adjustments to students' individualized programs. Any such determination will be made on a case by case basis, through the collaborative efforts of the IEP team and be based on a comprehensive review of students' individual needs.
- p. Remote Learning: On July 24, 2020 Governor Murphy required that schools provide all students and families with the option to provide 100% remote learning to any students/families requesting this method of instruction. Harding Township School will offer Remote Learning to all students/families that choose this option. Families will request the remote learning option by August 24, 2020 to allow the district sufficient time to plan. Those choosing to opt out of in-person instruction

and select the remote option, will be allowed to switch to in-person instruction by providing two-weeks notice to the district in writing.

### **3. Transportation**

- a. A survey was distributed to the school community and 50% of bus riders **will not** utilize the bus
- b. Reduction in the number of riders will allow for one student per seat, staggered per each row, as per State Guidelines
- c. Face coverings will be required for all riders
- d. Windows will be open when possible
- e. Before disembarking from the bus, students will have temperatures taken by an HTS staff member and receive hand sanitizer before they are able to properly wash their hands; student cooperation in this regard will be required/needed
- f. HTS will work closely with bus company to monitor compliance with bus transit procedures

### **4. Student, Flow, Entry, Exit and Common Areas**

- a. Students will be greeted individually by an HTS staff member, whether arriving by car or bus, to have temperature taken; student cooperation in this regard will be required/needed
- b. Prior to the start of the school day, waiting areas will be marked to maintain social distancing
- c. Prior to the start of the school day, students will be supervised by HTS staff
- d. Hand-washing procedures will be enforced prior to students entering or reentering a classroom during the course of the day
- e. Once in the classroom, students will remain there, with their cohort
- f. Teachers will travel to classrooms
- g. Lockers will not be utilized
- h. Support staff will be utilized to monitor halls, monitor bathrooms, escort students to the nurse
- i. One-way routes will be marked and utilized in the classroom and hallways, student cooperation will be required/needed
- j. Operating on a modified schedule will eliminate lunch thereby avoiding any congregating in large areas
- k. Dismissal will occur on a staggered schedule to minimize congestion in the halls, stairwells and outside spaces

### **5. Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms**

- a. Families and staff members will be required to complete a health check survey, generated through Genesis (our new school management platform to replace Power School) each day to submit directly to the nurse, daily compliance from parents will be required/needed
- b. Results of the survey will be documented and any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 will be reported to the Administration, local health office, and to any authority that the Administration deems appropriate
- c. All students and HTS personnel will have a temperature check upon arrival at school
- d. HTS will have PPE supplies available for all students and faculty/staff (if any unexpected shortages occur parents will be notified)
- e. All screening processes will account for students with disabilities and will include any necessary accommodations, as much as feasible
- f. Any students or school personnel who are symptomatic will be respectfully placed in a designated isolation space until they are able to vacate the school building, the Administration will be in contact with the family to instruct them on re-entry procedures
- g. Symptoms that would warrant being required to leave the school building include:
  - i. A fever of 100.4 degrees F or greater
  - ii. Cough
  - iii. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - iv. Chills
  - v. Repeated shaking with chills
  - vi. Muscle pain
  - vii. Headache
  - viii. Sore throat
  - ix. New loss of taste or smell
  - x. Fatigue
  - xi. Congestion or runny nose
  - xii. Nausea or vomiting
  - xiii. Diarrhea
  - xiv. Any other symptoms that are deemed a possible COVID-19 risk, or other health related risk
- h. For any person who tests positive for COVID-19, protocols will include:
  - i. Adherence to Communicable Disease Service guideline for reporting
  - ii. Continuous monitoring of symptoms
  - iii. Readmittance policies consistent with the Department of Health and with the approval of the Administration
- i. All policies and guidance for screening symptoms will be prominently publicized to all stakeholders via email, the school website and signage within the school

- j. All school personnel, visitors, and students will be required to wear face coverings at all times except in cases where the face coverings would inhibit the individuals health and/or the face coverings may negatively affect a person due to an individual's disability (e.g., a student/adult diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder may have difficulties wearing a face covering due to a heightened sensitivity,etc.).

## **6. Contact Tracing**

- a. The school safety specialist has completed three hours of training with the Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing course
- b. The school safety specialist and the nurse will educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing
- c. Upon confirmation that an HTS community member has tested positive for COVID-19, HTS is obligated to contact the local health department and they will determine, as much as possible, recent close contacts to recommend steps such as quarantining, and to provide support in risk mitigation strategies.
- d. The nurse is identified as the party responsible for providing notifications of the Administration's contact tracing policy in a prompt, periodic and responsible manner

## **7. Facilities Cleaning Practices**

- a. HTS will enhance cleaning practices and procedures to meet local health department and EPA requirements, to the greatest extent possible
- b. Per State order, the district will develop procedures to establish cleaning/disinfecting schedule, specifying the areas to be cleaned and the methods and materials to be used
- c. HTS will daily clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (desks, chairs, door handles, phones, electronics), to the fullest degree possible
- d. Touchless water filling stations will be operational. Traditional water fountains, with spigots, will not be operational
- e. Students will be assigned an electronic device (e.g. Chromebook) for their individual use throughout the day
- f. Students will keep their own belongings and supplies at their own desk to avoid communal usage of any items, student cooperation in this regard will be required/needed
- g. Items that appear to have been handled in the classroom, will be isolated and sanitized at the end of the school day by the custodial staff
- h. The preschool classroom will be cleaned in the 45 minutes between each session
- i. Hand sanitizing stations will be located in convenient locations throughout the buildings

- j. Support staff will be utilized to monitor bathroom usage and the flow of any foot traffic in the halls
- k. Handwashing procedures will be prominently displayed and enforced: student cooperation in this regard will be required/needed
- l. Operating on a modified schedule, with a 12:45pm dismissal, will allow for more cleaning time at the end of each school day
- m. Maintaining cohorts of students in individual classrooms will reduce the traffic in halls and the usage of extra classrooms and shared spaces
- n. Supplies will be on hand and provided to teachers and staff for use during the school day
- o. HTS will collaborate with the bus company to ensure quality cleaning practices on all buses
- p. Windows will be kept open as much as possible to allow for air circulation

#### **8. Meals**

- a. Operating on a modified schedule, with a 12:45pm dismissal, will eliminate the need for a lunch period
- b. Students in PreK to grade 5, who have snack as part of their daily schedule, will eat on a staggered schedule to minimize the number of students not wearing a mask in the classrooms. Students will be required to follow the proper handwashing protocols during snack time.

#### **9. Physical Education/Recess**

- a. Physical education will be taught in the classroom or outside when possible.
- b. PE lessons will focus on fitness activities that do not require the use of equipment and will avoid contact
- c. Recess will be held for students at home during the second part of the school day

#### **10. Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**

- a. During the period of operating on a modified schedule, HTS will not conduct any extracurricular activities or allow any facilities to be utilized outside of school hours (exceptions, if any, will only be authorized by the Superintendent)
- b. This will be reevaluated should conditions improve and should we return to a full day, daily school schedule

#### **11. Pandemic Response Team Members and Roles**

- a. The Pandemic Response Team will consist of our district's existing Crisis Response/School Safety Team
- b. Pandemic Response Team:
  - 1. Superintendent- Dr. Matthew A. Spelker
  - 2. Principal: Dr. Mary Donohue

3. Director of Student Services: Mr. Christopher Magno
  4. Nurse: Mrs. Dawn McDonough
  5. Guidance Counselor; Mrs. Emily Thony
  6. Building and Grounds Supervisor: Mr. Joseph Pitcher
  7. Harding Township Police Chief: Erik Heller
  8. Town Administrator: Mr. Robert Falzarano
  9. Faculty Representatives: Mrs. Jennifer Baldassari, Mrs. Carol Cochran
- c. Pandemic Team Responsibilities:
1. Provide necessary communication to the district stakeholders
  2. Implement the district's reopening plan with a focus on safety measure and crisis leadership.
  3. Provide faculty and staff with the necessary and appropriate professional development.
  4. Develop and maintain a safe and supportive school climate as necessitated by the challenges of COVID-19.
  5. Provide pathways and forums for school community stakeholders to continuously inform the Pandemic Response Team's decision-making.
  6. Continuously review school health and safety protocols and adjust as necessary.

**Additional resources:**

This plan was drafted by the Superintendent in consultation with the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, and key district stakeholders, as well as our Reopening Committee. The plan was adopted by the Board of Education and submitted to the Department of Education. As always, the Board and administration will endeavor to provide updated information as soon as possible as we understand it is important for parents to remain informed regarding their children's attendance at school. However, we must also balance any reopening plan against the safety of our students and community. Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 crisis, we wish to stress that this plan is subject to change at the Superintendent's discretion, at any time, in order to better meet the needs of the district, while seeking to implement an expedient, efficient and, most importantly, safe return for our district's students and staff. Simply put, the plan is a guideline which will presumably evolve, change and be supplemented as circumstances develop.

For additional information regarding the Superintendent's authority and responsibility to modify the district's reopening plan as necessary, please refer to the following statutes, regulations and

policies. While this is not an exhaustive list, these legal authorities shall be considered, and utilized as necessary, by the District and the Administration during this crisis.

**Statutes:**

N.J.S.A. 18A:17 - 20; 18A: 17 - 43.3; 18A: 27 - 4.1; 18A: 37 - 21; 18A 38 - 1 to 38 - 25; 18A: 40 - 1, et seq.; 18A: 40 - 7, et seq.; 18A: 41 - 7

**Regulations:**

N.J.A.C. 6A: 14 - 4.8, 4.9; 6A: 16 - 5.1; 6A: 16 - 10.1, 10.2, 14; N.J.A.C. 6A: 19 - 3.1, et seq.; 6A: 32 - 4.1 et seq.; 8:57 - 1.3, 1.6, 2.1, et seq.

**Board of Education Policies:**

1120 - Management Team; 1210 - Board-Superintendent Relations; 1230 - Superintendent Duties; 1648 – Restart and Recovery Plan; 1649 – Families First Coronavirus Response Act; 2412 - Home Instruction due to Health Condition; 2481 - Home or Out-of-School Instruction for General Education Pupils; 5310 - Health Services; 7430 - School Safety; 8210 - School Year; 8220 - School Day; 8420 - Emergency and Crisis Situations; 8451 - Control of Communicable Disease; 8600 - Transportation; 8601 - Pupil Supervision After School Dismissal

**Additional Guidance:**

- “The Road Back - Restart and Recovery Plan for Education,” issued by New Jersey Department of Education, June 2020
- “Supplemental Guidance Clarifying Expectations regarding Full Time Remote Learning Options for Families in 2020 - 2021,” issues by the New Jersey Department of Education, July 24, 2020