



# HARDING TOWNSHIP SCHOOL

*Celebrating Excellence Since 1926*

September 8, 2021

As announced in the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)'s April 28, 2021 broadcast, in March 2021 President Biden signed the Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, Public Law 117-2, into law. The ARP Act provides additional financial support in Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) to States and school districts to help safely reopen, sustain the safe operation of schools, and address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on students. The purpose of the additional funding is to support local educational agencies (LEAs) in preparing for and responding to the impacts of COVID-19 on educators, students, and families.

Section 2001(i)(1) of the ARP Act requires each LEA that receives ARP ESSER funds to develop and make publicly available on the LEA's website, a plan for the safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools (Safe Return Plan). A Safe Return Plan is required of all fund recipients, including those that have already returned to in-person instruction. Section 2001(i)(2) of the ARP Act further requires that the LEA seek public comment on the Safe Return Plan and take those comments into account in finalization of the Safe Return Plan.

In response to this requirement, Harding Township School has developed the following Safe Return Plan. This plan will be posted on the school website for public review and open for public comments at the Harding Township Board of Education meeting on September 13, 2021. This proposal incorporates all of the federally-required components of each LEA's Safe Return Plan.

## **SCHEDULING PLANS:**

Harding Township School will begin the 2021 - 2022 school year on Wednesday, September 8, 2021. Instruction will take place on a full-day (8:25am - 3:15pm), in-person basis. Virtual/Remote days will be a minimum of four hours excluding lunch/recess. This scheduling plan is subject to change only as a result of orders from the Governor's office or Board of Health (state or local) directive.

### **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.**

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

As per the Executive Order from the New Jersey Office of the Governor that went into effect on August 9, 2021, masks must be worn in public schools. Harding Township School will adhere to this mandate and require all students, faculty, staff and visitors to wear masks correctly and at all times other than permitted eating periods and during time outdoors. Harding Township School will follow this protocol until guidance from the Office of the Governor and/or New Jersey Department of Health recommendations change.

- **Snack/Lunch:**
  - Students will eat snack outside as often as possible.
  - The Harding Township cafeteria will be equipped with four HEPA filters and will operate with windows open.
  - All cafeteria tables will have partitions to create six separate protected eating areas for students.
  - Upon completing snack/lunch, students will remask and sanitize hands.
- **Recess/Physical Education:**
  - Students are not required to wear masks outdoors, including recess
  - Physical education classes will take place outside as often as possible with no masks
  - During indoor physical education classes, students may remove masks if they are physically distanced
- **Music/Band:**
  - Band will occur outdoors as often as possible
  - Band and music classrooms are equipped with HEPA filters and windows will remain open
  - Masks will be worn by all students except wind players where the instrument itself should be masked.
    - Wind Players will have a normal mask around the neck when playing the instrument which should be used to cover the mouth when not playing.
  - Band/Music classes at Harding Township School are less than 45 minutes. The recommendation for indoor music classes is to not exceed 50 minutes.
  - Students will maintain three feet of physical distance

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

The New Jersey Department of Health recommends all schools should establish policies and implement structural interventions to promote physical distance in school settings based on the regional risk matrix. As of August 26, 2021, Harding Township is identified as a **low risk location**. If we continue to be at low to moderate risk, Harding Township will follow the NJDOH's recommendation for a minimum of three feet of physical distance between students (elementary and middle) to be maintained. Remaining at a low to moderate risk level, HTS **will** permit extra curricular activities (including sports) and **will not** silo classes, permitting movement between classes and movement between buildings. If the risk escalates to high, HTS will adopt more restrictive physical distancing practices in both elementary

and middle and would revert to siloing classes. An escalation to very high risk would necessitate HTS to pivot to full remote learning.

### **C. Handwashing and respiratory etiquette**

Harding Township School will maintain established handwashing and hand sanitizing protocols. HTS will continue to use hand sanitizer that meets the CDC recommendation of 60% alcohol. Students will sanitize hands upon entering and leaving the classroom. Students will sanitize hands before using any communal materials (i.e. playground equipment, library materials) and before eating. Sanitizing stations will be available throughout the buildings and at building entrances. The nurse will continue to educate students on proper techniques.

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

HTS will continue to use cleaning practices, procedures and products that have been deemed to meet local health department and EPA requirements, to the greatest extent possible. HTS will continue with established practices to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (desks, chairs, door handles, phones, electronics). Students will continue to be assigned an individual electronic device. Only touchless water filling stations will be operational.

HTS will continue to use previously purchased HVAC units, ionization filtration units, and individual HEPA filter units for all classrooms and office spaces.

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

The NJDOE and Harding Township School are still requiring schools to contact trace cases of COVID. Close contact is still defined as being within 6 feet of someone for 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period. However, the CDC makes an exception for schools: “In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time.” Thus, if students are 3 feet apart and properly wearing masks, they do not meet the requirements for a close contact and will not be contact traced.

Our goal is to provide for 3 feet of distance between students in all classrooms while students are masked. We will follow similar procedures to last year when we are notifying families of students who have been in close contact with a COVID positive individual.

Students and staff who have been fully vaccinated for two weeks will not be required to quarantine after close contact. In order to help us facilitate identification of who needs to quarantine in the event of a positive COVID case, please consider providing the school with a record of your student’s vaccination. This information will only be available to the school nurse and principal and will only be referenced if contact tracing is required.

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

Harding Township school does not provide on-site COVID-19 testing, but can assist staff & families in locating the appropriate testing site. Harding Township School faculty and students will complete a one-time COVID-19 and temperatures will be taken daily upon arrival. All visitors will be asked to complete a COVID-19 form.

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

Harding Township School is not currently offering on-site vaccinations but is able to provide guidance to staff & families on how to locate a COVID-19 vaccination site. Per orders from the Governor's office, any non-vaccinated staff/faculty member will be required to test weekly.

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

### **Services for Students with Special Needs:**

Per Governor Phil Murphy's announcement on May 17, 2021, portions of Executive Order 175 (allowing remote learning ) will be rescinded. Schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. School districts will be required to fully open buildings beginning Fall 2021, and may only revert to remote learning in the event there is a localized outbreak or other emergency. If buildings are open for in-person instruction, parents or guardians will not be able to opt-out of in-person instruction. **Therefore, all services for students with special needs will resume per usual, in Fall 2021. The following plan for services for students with special needs would only be enacted if remote learning or a hybrid model was implemented due to emergency measures.**

All services would 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 would provide live direct and explicit instruction. For students receiving remote instruction, special education staff members would provide direct instruction via virtual platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. To further support students, the special education staff would 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 would 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 would receive a combination of in-person and thirty minutes of virtual instruction each day. In-person instruction would 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 would be based on students' individual goals and objectives using age

appropriate pre-readiness curriculum. Special Education staff would document services via teacher log. Progress pertaining to student attainment of individual goals and objectives would be provided via triennially progress reports made available to parents digitally. The district would 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 would be staffed using appropriately certified personnel. For students who attend Out of District Placements, Child Study Team members would 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.

### **Counseling Services and Nursing Services:**

The school nurse will fulfill her regular duties, which includes 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 any established 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.

The school counselor will fulfill her regular duties, which includes one-on-one and small group sessions. The counselor and staff will collaborate to identify any students who require support to begin the school year.

Per Governor Phil Murphy's announcement on May 17, 2021, portions of Executive Order 175 (allowing remote learning ) will be rescinded. Schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. School districts will be required to fully open buildings beginning Fall 2021, and may only revert to remote learning in the event there is a localized outbreak or other emergency. If buildings are open for in-person instruction, parents or guardians will not be able to opt-out of in-person instruction. Therefore, all services for students with special needs will resume per usual, in Fall 2021. **The following plan for counseling services and nursing services would only be enacted if remote learning or a hybrid model was implemented due to emergency measures.**

District counseling and nursing staff would 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 would keep a log of all interactions with students and will follow up with them in person.

### **Other Related Services:**

Per Governor Phil Murphy's announcement on May 17, 2021, portions of Executive Order 175 (allowing remote learning ) will be rescinded. Schools will be required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. School districts will be required to fully open buildings beginning Fall 2021, and may only revert to remote learning in the event there is a localized outbreak or other emergency. If buildings are open for in-person instruction, parents or

guardians will not be able to opt-out of in-person instruction. Therefore, all services for students with special needs will resume per usual, in Fall 2021. **The following plan for related services would only be enacted if remote learning or a hybrid model was implemented due to emergency measures.**

Related service providers would use a variety of tools and modalities to engage students and provide for continuity of service. To the maximum extent possible, related services would be provided directly to students in person, as well as, through virtual platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, if necessary. The related service providers would continue to structure therapy sessions using student's individual goals and objectives outlined in their IEPs. To further support students, the related service providers would 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 would 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 would track therapy sessions via individual logs. Progress pertaining toward student attainment of individual goals and objectives would continue to be provided via trimester progress reports made available to parents digitally.

#### **Child Study Team Services:**

Per Governor Phil Murphy's announcement on May 17, 2021, portions of Executive Order 175 (allowing remote learning ) was rescinded. Schools are required to provide full-day, in-person instruction, as they were prior to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. School districts are required to fully open buildings beginning the first day of school and may only revert to remote learning in the event there is a localized outbreak or other emergency. If buildings are open for in-person instruction, parents or guardians will not be able to opt-out of in-person instruction. Therefore, all services for students with special needs are resuming per usual on September 8, 2021. **The following plan for child study team services would only be enacted if remote learning or a hybrid model was implemented due to emergency measures.**

Child Study Team members would 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) would 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 would 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 would be conducted and the CST would communicate with parents in regards to completing those evaluations. Additionally, School Social Workers would 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 would regularly consult with families to ensure continuity of services are implemented in accordance with their children's IEPs to the greatest extent

possible. Parents would be encouraged to reach out to their child's case manager directly with any specific question or concern. The members of the Child Study Team would 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 would 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.

## **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)**

Harding Township is committed to meeting the social and emotional needs of all faculty and students, as well as identifying and addressing the academic needs of all children enrolled in the district. To understand the academic starting point for our students in September, teachers will conduct a variety of assessments. The assessments will be both formal and informal and will establish a baseline for students' skills. Based on data accrued, teachers will differentiate classroom instruction to help all students grow and achieve academic goals. Teachers will share information on student achievement with parents through conferences, report cards and personal communication as needed. Mid-year assessments will be administered to inform academic decisions for the second part of the year. Based on data and observations, teachers will make recommendations for interventions and strategies that could support growth.

Preparing to meet the social and emotional needs of students as they return in the Fall of 2021, teachers will connect with parents prior to the start of the school year. Conversations between home and school will help the school prepare for additional or personalized supports that students may need. When necessary, the guidance counselor, teacher and members of the CST will formulate a plan to start the year successfully and allow a student to identify school as a safe place. Professional development of the topic of social and emotional well-being will be conducted for all faculty and staff during in-service meetings in early September.

An explanation of continuity of services as related to counseling, nursing, related services and Child Study Team can be found in the section above.

#### **Food Services:**

Food services will be provided beginning September 8, 2021. In the event of a mandatory shut down due to increased risk, food services would continue to be provided to families receiving free and reduced lunch. To ensure food services will continue during the course of remote instruction, food delivery services will be provided by district personnel.

#### **Broadband Access and Access to Technology:**

In the spring of 2020, Harding Township School surveyed families to determine accessibility to broadband services as well as access to technology devices to facilitate remote learning. The survey revealed that all Harding Township families had access to broadband services. Based on the survey we distributed devices to any families that indicated need. Throughout the 2020 - 2021 year, families were offered devices to support learning during our episodic periods of remote learning. Should remote learning become necessary due to increased risk in the 2021 - 2022 school year, Harding Township School would take a similar approach with a survey to all families and distribution of devices as necessary to meet the needs of all our students.

### **3. Public Comment**

**A. Describe how the LEA sought public comment on its plan, and how it took those public comments into account in the development of its plan. Note, the ARP requires that LEAs seek public comment for each 60-day revision to the plan. (1000 character limit)**

The Safe Reopening Plan will be reviewed by the Harding Township community at the Board of Education meeting on Monday, September 13, 2021. The meeting will be available to members of the community in person and through remote audio participation, with instructions posted with the announcement on the Harding Township School website. A copy of the Safe Reopening Plan will be posted on the website for community members to review in advance and comment on during the open public comment portion of the Board meeting.

**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. (1000 character limit)**

Oral translation will be made available to a parent with limited English proficiency; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability defined by the ADA.