

NORTH HALEDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Operations Plan 2021-2022

The District Road Forward Plan is an ongoing process and subject to change as directed by Executive Orders of the Governor in collaboration with the NJDOE, CDC, and State Health Department dictated by changing circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

August 12, 2021

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Introduction

The North Haledon School District (NHSD) Operations Plan describes the district's health and safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year, based on recommendations from the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) outlined in [The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#). All schools will be open for full-day, full-time, in-person instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.

The North Haledon School District will follow all current health and safety protocols in accordance with guidelines for PreK-8 schools as recommended by the CDC, Governor's Executive Orders, NJDOH, NJDOE, and the Passaic County Department of Health.

1. General Health & Safety Guidelines

1.1 Vaccination

Vaccinations for eligible individuals are widely available. Schools will continue to partner with state and local health departments to share information on vaccinations and vaccine clinics. Learn more about the [COVID-19 vaccination](#).

To assist with contact tracing, copies of vaccination records can be voluntarily submitted to the school nurse.

1.2 Communication

School officials maintain consistent communication with the Passaic County Department of Health to determine appropriate local guidelines and protocols, share information and resources on COVID-19 transmission, and to establish procedures for response to COVID-19 illness in school settings. Regional COVID-19 community transmission data is provided by the NJDOH and posted [online](#) every week. These CALI and Variant Surveillance Reports, along with [municipal vaccination coverage data](#), are used in combination with local data to determine specific guidelines for the NHSD community.

1.3 Masks

Per Governor Murphy's [Executive Order 251](#), for the start of the 2021-2022 school year, effective August 9, 2021:

Use of face masks is mandatory for staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in the following circumstances:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask without assistance;
- 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 mask;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask;
- When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

The District will continue to monitor guidance from the State and collaborate with the Passaic County Department of Health to monitor local data should districts be permitted to make decisions on the local level.

- Masks and/or barriers do not preclude an individual from being identified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case.

Proper use, removal, and washing of masks:

- 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 use loosely woven fabrics, and ones that do not fit properly are not recommended.
- Masks should be washed after every day of use and/or before being used again, or if visibly soiled or damp/wet.
- Disposable face masks should be changed daily or when visibly soiled, damp or damaged.
- Students, teachers, and staff should have access to additional disposable or cloth masks in case a back-up mask is needed (e.g. mask is soiled or lost during the day).
- Clear masks that cover the nose and wrap securely around the face may be considered in certain circumstances including for the teaching of students with disabilities, young students learning to read, or English language learners.

Transportation: Per [Order of the CDC](#), passengers and drivers must wear masks on school buses, including on buses operated by public and private school systems, subject to the exclusions and exemptions in the Order.

1.4 Maintain Physical Distancing and Cohorting

All instructional and non-instructional spaces will be configured to maintain three feet of distance between students in classroom settings to the extent possible while offering full-time, in-person learning to all students.

During periods of high community transmission, if the maximal social distancing recommendations below cannot be maintained, each school will, where possible, prioritize other prevention measures including cohorting or structural interventions such as:

- Facing desks in the same direction.
- Avoiding grouped seating arrangements.
- Arrange participants of early childhood programs head-to-toe during scheduled naptimes

(refer to CDC Guidance for Operating Childcare Programs).

Outside of the classroom, each school will consider approaches to implement physical distancing in the following areas that may pose greater risk of transmission:

- In common areas, in spaces where students may gather such as hallways and auditoriums.
- When masks cannot be worn.
- When masks may be removed, such as during outdoor activities.
- During indoor activities when increased exhalation occurs, such as singing, band practice, sports, or exercise (even if masks are worn).

1.5 Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand sanitizer will be available at entrances, in instructional spaces, in common areas and in office spaces for use when hand washing is not available. Sanitizing wipes will be available in all instructional spaces. Proper hand washing protocols will be reinforced in all schools, and signs will be posted as reminders. Additionally, proper respiratory etiquette will be encouraged to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses. Specifically, school staff will:

1. Teach and reinforce hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
2. Encourage students and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue if not wearing a mask.
3. Reinforce that used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hand hygiene as outlined above should be performed immediately.
4. Maintain adequate supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no touch trash cans.
5. Reinforce that hand hygiene should take place:
 - a. Upon arrival at school.
 - b. Before and after meals and snacks.
 - c. After going to the bathroom.
 - d. Before leaving for the day.
 - e. After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing into tissue.
 - f. When hands are visibly soiled.
6. Assist/observe young children to ensure proper hand washing.

1.6 Meals

K-8 Lunch

- There will be multiple sessions of lunch within the school cafeteria and multi-purpose room; Lunch spaces will include clear sneeze guards/shields;
- Maschio's will be fully staffed and ready to serve students.

1.7 Transportation

Bus companies will provide transportation to eligible students and follow normal school schedules.

Masks are required on school buses as per the [Federal Order](#).

2. Cleaning, Disinfection, and Airflow

2.1 Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

- Adequate supplies (i.e. classroom supplies, equipment) will be provided to minimize sharing of high-touch materials or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of students at a time and clean and disinfect routinely.
- Hand hygiene practices will be encouraged between use of shared items.

2.2 Cleaning and Disinfection

Schools will follow standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. This means at least daily cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often.

2.3 Improving Airflow

- All classrooms in all schools have fresh air circulation, and dampers will remain open for fresh air circulation in all classrooms.
- Staff will consider having activities, classes, or lunches outdoors when circumstances allow.

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

3.1 Parental Screening

Parents are asked to monitor their children for signs of illness every day. Students who are sick should not attend school. When reporting absences to the school, parents should provide information about symptoms. School nurses will follow-up with the family when COVID-related symptoms are present. Temperature checks will not be taken as students enter school.

3.2 Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

An area or room away from others is designated to isolate individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school. For a symptomatic student, the parent/guardian will be notified and instructed to pick up the student promptly. Should the parent/guardian not be reached, the emergency contact person will be contacted and notified to pick up the student.

3.3 Exclusion

3.3.1 Definition of COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms

Per the [Road Forward](#), parents should not send students to school when sick. For school settings, 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.

3.3.2 When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Children and staff with COVID-19 symptoms will be separated away from others until they can be sent home.

Individuals with COVID-19 compatible symptoms will be sent home and referred to a healthcare provider. Persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms should undergo COVID-19 testing.

- If community transmission is low, ill individuals without potential exposure to COVID-19 should follow the [NJDOH School Exclusion List](#). No public health notification is needed UNLESS there is an unusual increase in the number of persons who are ill (over normal levels), which might indicate an outbreak.
- If ill students have potential COVID-19 exposure OR if community transmission is moderate or high, they should be excluded according to the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.

Regardless of vaccination status, if a student or staff member experiences COVID-compatible symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, and tested for SARS-CoV-2.

3.3.3 Exclusion

COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Persons Who Have COVID-19 Compatible Symptoms or Who Test Positive for COVID-19:

1. 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.
2. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result.

3. 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 may be used to determine the need for and duration of school exclusion based on the level of COVID-19 community transmission in their region.

COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts

1. 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:
 - a. High (orange) exposed close contacts should be excluded from school for 14 days.
 - b. 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)
2. Exposed close contacts who are fully vaccinated and have no COVID-like symptoms:
 - a. Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
 - b. Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
 - c. 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.

For more details, visit the [NJDOH website](#).

Remote Instruction/180-Day Requirement

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. Section (b) notes that where a 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 towards the district's 180-day requirement.

As per the Governor's current guidelines, parents and guardians will not be able to opt out of in-person instruction.

In the event that a student, group of students, a class, or multiple classes must be excluded due to COVID-19 positive cases,

- K-8: Students will be assigned classwork and may have the opportunity to join class virtually.

4. Contact Tracing

Per the CDC, close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with suspected or known COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes during a 24-hour period. In certain situations, it may be difficult to determine whether individuals have met this criterion and an entire cohort, classroom, or other group may need to be considered exposed.

Working in partnership with the schools, it is essential for parents to communicate with the school nurse if your child has been identified as a close contact outside of school. School staff will identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school and will notify parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.