# **Table of Contents**

| Introduction                                  | 1  |
|---|----|
| Communication/Family and Community Engagement | 2  |
| Health and Safety                             | 4  |
| Facilities                                    | 15 |
| Child Nutrition                               | 17 |
| Transportation                                | 18 |
| Social-Emotional Well-Being                   | 21 |
| School Schedules                              | 23 |
| Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism            | 24 |
| Technology and Connectivity                   | 25 |
| Teaching and Learning                         | 26 |
| Career and Technical Education (CTE)          | 28 |
| Athletics and Extracurricular Activities      | 28 |
| Special Education                             | 29 |
| Bilingual Education and World Languages       | 31 |
| Staffing                                      | 31 |
| Kev References                                | 32 |

# **Introduction**

At Highland Central School District (HCSD) our primary commitment is to the students and families we serve. Our priority must be keeping them safe. When the 2020-2021 school year begins, oncampus school will look much different than previous years due to COVID-19 and the health and safety measures that continue to evolve. This School Reopening Plan will define clear guidance for the reopening of our three schools and aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with NYSDOH and the NYS Education Department.

The areas outlined in this plan represent the myriad considerations HCSD will address to reopen schools safely and to sustain their safe operation. It is important to note that our plan retains a strong focus on academic instruction to enhance student performance and address learning loss. An emphasis on the social-emotional needs of our students is a priority and therefore have addressed this within our plan.

After specific guidance is released from the governor's office, we will update the plan to reflect specific schedules, dates, times for all modes of instruction.

This plan includes procedures that will be followed in the following schools:

Highland Elementary School: 691-1070

Highland Middle School: 691-1080

Highland High School: 691-1020

To be clear, the health and safety of our students, our staff, and their families is our top priority. We have developed a plan that intends to ensure that students and employees feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the <u>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</u>, the <u>New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)</u> and the <u>New York State Education Department (NYSED)</u>.

It is possible that we may need to alternate between in-person and remote learning throughout the year due to recommendations and guidance from our partnering agencies, and stay-at-home orders from the Governor. The level of infection, the spread of the virus and response to the disease in our community will be at the forefront of decision making as we move to open our schools.

Thomas Bongiovi, Superintendent of Schools, will serve as the district's COVID-19 Coordinator. He will serve as a central contact for schools and stakeholders, families, staff and other school community members and will ensure the district is compliant and following the best practices per state and federal guidelines.

Of course, as with every plan being developed throughout New York State, this document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, CDC, and NYSED and in consideration of

our families and our staff. We strongly believe the services described throughout this plan are in the best interests of our students, families, staff, and community.

# **Guiding Principles**

The development of this plan was guided by and grounded in the following guiding principles:

- 1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
- 2. Providing the opportunity for all students to access education in the 2020-2021 school year;
- 3. Monitoring schools, students, and staff. When necessary, modifying schedules to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
- 4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities that are emerging from this historic disruption;
- 5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners, such as families, educators, and staff;
- 6. Factoring into decision making the challenges to the physical safety, social emotional well-being, and the mental health needs of our students caused by school closure; and
- 7. Considering the essential need to support diversity in our schools and school district in any mode of education undertaken by the district.

# **Communication/Family and Community Engagement**

To help inform our reopening plan, HCSD sought feedback and input from stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents/guardians of students, local health department officials and health care providers, and employee unions. Engagement efforts included online surveys, virtual forums/meetings and one-on-one conversations.

The district remains committed to communicating all elements of this reopening plan to students, parents and guardians, staff and visitors. The plan is available to all stakeholders via the district website at <a href="https://www.highland-k12.org/Page/6250">https://www.highland-k12.org/Page/6250</a>, and will be updated throughout the school year, as necessary, to respond to local circumstances.

As part of its planning for the reopening of schools and the new academic year, the district has developed a plan for communicating all necessary information to district staff, students, parents/guardians, visitors and education partners and vendors. The district will use its existing communication methods – including School Messenger robocalls/e-mails/texts, individual phone calls as needed, website notifications, letters home to parents and social media outlets – as well as appropriate signage and training opportunities to support the dissemination of consistent messaging regarding new protocols and procedures, expectations, requirements and options related to school operations throughout the pandemic.

Highland Central School District Communication Goals:

- To encourage all students, faculty, staff, and visitors through verbal and written communication (e.g., signage) to adhere to NYSED, CDC, and DOH guidance regarding the use of acceptable face coverings – the wearing of a face mask covering the nose and mouth is required.
- Stake holders will be provided with regular updates about health and safety, scheduling, and all other information.
- To provide information to families through a wide array of platforms including mail, email, telephone calls, text messaging, social media and website postings.
- To provide information on how families can access technology and receive technical support to assist with utilization and maintenance of equipment.

HCSD developed communication materials accordingly, including the creation of sample messages/letters for COVID-19 cases or potential cases for various school audiences. We will utilize communication methods used by the district to inform the school community. Information will be dispersed in a variety of platforms that include:

- District website
- Call list/ROBO Call
- Email blast
- Correspondence (letters) to homes
- Social media accounts used by district

Clear messaging will be prepared and consistently communicated before re-entry, on the first day, during the first week, throughout the first month, and continuously throughout the year. Minimum monthly communication will provide information on the following topics:

- Who to contact with questions, concerns or suggestions. Empower people to make a positive difference and communicate the expectation for them to do so.
- The facts as we currently know them (NYSDOH, CDC).
- The importance of social distancing, monitoring symptoms of COVID-19 and when to stay home.
- Set protocols for entrance (screening) and the review process for when calling in sick. Constant reminders for staff to stay home if they feel sick.
- Encourage and implement social distancing in bathrooms, break rooms, hallways, etc. (Installing social distancing markers on the floors).
- Practice proper hand hygiene. Staff is allowed to use hand sanitizer, but hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is still more effective. Hand sanitizer works best on clean hands.
- Encourage and practice proper respiratory etiquette (i.e., coughing or sneezing into your elbow if a tissue is not available).
- Encouraging personal responsibility for yourself, your belongings, and your work area.
- Educating the school community on district policies/procedures, including how to properly wear and dispose of a face mask/respirator.

# **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of our students, our staff and their families is our top priority. We want students and employees to feel comfortable and safe returning to school campuses. Our reopening plan incorporates recommendations and guidance from the <u>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</u>, the <u>New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)</u> and the <u>New York State Education Department (NYSED)</u>.

The following protocols and procedures will be in place in all district schools for the duration of the 2020-21 school year for any in-person school model unless directed otherwise by an appropriate state or health organization. Anyone with questions or concerns should contact our COVID-19 Safety Coordinator, Superintendent Thomas Bongiovi, at <a href="mailto:thomas-bengiovi@highland-k12.org">thomas-bengiovi@highland-k12.org</a> or 845-691-1014.

To ensure employees and students comply with communication requirements, HCSD will:

- Post signage throughout the buildings to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning/disinfecting protocols.
- Establish a communication plan for employees, visitors, and parents/guardians with a consistent means to provide updated information. This will be accomplished through:
  - Website
  - Email
  - Social media
  - Print copy mailings
  - Voice and/or video messaging
  - Traditional media outlets
- Maintain a continuous log of every person, including staff, workers, and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site, school, or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means.
- If a worker or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the school district must immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.

## **Facility Entry**

- During instructional hours, entry and egress in and out of all buildings will be limited to a single location. All entry to the buildings will occur through the main entrance to a check-in point at the security station.
- A face covering, must be worn by all individuals, students, staff, and visitors on HCSD property unless a staff member is alone in a closed-door space.

- Proper face covering includes, but is not limited to, a surgical mask, cloth mask, balaclava or bandana and must completely cover the individual's mouth and nose.
- A plastic face shield alone is not an acceptable face covering.
- All individuals may choose to utilize their own face covering, however face coverings can and will be provided by HCSD daily.

## **Daily Health Screening**

- Prior to entering all HCSD locations, individuals must complete a medical screening questionnaire which will be available upon entry.
- Staff should complete this screening prior to arriving at work via the electronic submission form
- Staff will be required to monitor their own temperatures prior to arrival on campus and throughout the day. Anyone whose symptoms response changes from a NO to YES during the day, must contact their supervisor immediately and await further instruction.
- Students and visitors will be screened for temperature at arrival.
  - O Parents are encouraged to monitor for temperatures and symptoms prior to sending their student on a bus, however students will be screened at arrival for temperatures.
  - O Visitors will have their temperatures taken upon arrival.
- All staff must sign in and out of each building with the security desk *each* time they enter and exit the building. Temperatures will be checked upon re-entry.
- For multiple individuals entering the building simultaneously, they will be required to stand at the marked out locations on the floor, maintaining social distance until they can be signed in and screened.
- Only after all individuals have been accounted for, cleared through the medical screening and wearing proper face coverings, will access to the building be granted.
- Should a person fail the medical screening, specific procedures should be followed. Please reference the Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case section for guidance.

# **Social Distancing**

- All individuals on HCSD premises must maintain social distancing at all times. Face covering must be worn at all times except when eating or drinking.
- Proper social distancing is defined as a six (6) foot separation between individuals. In common areas, such as breakrooms, hallways or bathrooms, the face covering must be worn.
- Maintain six (6) foot distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance. Acceptable face coverings must be worn at all times, regardless of social distancing.
- Tightly confined spaces will be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings. If an area is occupied by more than one person, keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity.
- Social distance separation will be using tape or signs that denote six (6) feet of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site (e.g., sign in/out stations, health screening stations, reception areas).

- In-person gatherings will be limited as much as possible and we will use tele- or video-conferencing whenever possible. Essential in-person gatherings, such as meetings, will be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants.
- Designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries will be established, limiting contact to the extent possible.

## **Personal Hygiene**

Hand washing - Students and staff must practice good hand hygiene to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Schools should plan time in the school day schedule to allow for hand hygiene.

- Hand hygiene includes:
  - Signage encouraging hand washing and correct hand washing technique;
  - Traditional hand washing (with soap and warm water, lathering for a minimum of 20 seconds), is the preferred method. This can be accomplished by singing or humming the "Happy Birthday" song twice;
  - O Adequate facilities and supplies for hand washing, including soap and water;
- Students and staff should wash hands as follows:
  - Upon entering the building and classrooms;
  - After sharing objects or surfaces;
  - O Before and after snacks and lunch;
  - After using the bathroom;
  - o After helping a student with toileting;
  - After sneezing, wiping, or blowing nose or coughing into hands;
  - Anytime hands are visibly soiled;
  - O When handwashing is not available use a hand sanitizer;
- Hand Sanitizer At times when hand washing is not available, students and staff may use a hand sanitizer. In order for the sanitizer to be effective, it must contain a minimum of 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol. Students should be monitored and supervised when using hand sanitizers. Using hand sanitizers should include:
  - Signage placed near sanitizer dispensers indicating soiled hands should be washed with soap and water;
  - Placement of sanitizer dispensers should be located near entrances and throughout common areas.

### **Visitor and Vendor Practices**

No outside visitors or volunteers will be allowed on school campuses, except when attending to the safety and well-being of students. Parents/guardians will report to the main entrance door of the building and not go beyond unless it is for the safety or well-being of their child. Essential visitors to facilities and parent/guardian visitors will be required to complete a health screening, wear face coverings and will have restricted access to our school buildings.

#### **Visitors**

- All visitors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times.
- All visitors will check in for screening and to fill out the COVID-19 CHECK-IN SCREENING provided. The visitors must sign in with their identification for a visitor badge. This will indicate the visitor has been screened.
- No visitor should enter a building unless necessary. All meetings should be held outside or via virtual meetings when possible.
- All visitors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing. All visitors should be accompanied by a staff member.
- Should a visitor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they are visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.
- At the end of each day, the receptionist/designee must scan the sign-in/out documents and send them to a designated email recipient.

### Vendor

- All vendors must be wearing proper face covering prior to entering any building and it must be worn at all times.
- No vendor should enter a building unless necessary for completion of their job. All meetings should be held outside or via conference call when possible.
- All vendors must sign in and out at the main entrance of each building stating their destination at that building for contact tracing. All vendors should be accompanied by a staff member.
- Should a vendor become ill while on campus, they must alert the staff member they're visiting to report the issue and then immediately seek medical attention.
- At the end of each day, the receptionist/designee must scan the sign-in/out documents and send them to a designated email recipient.

## **Training**

HCSD will train all personnel on new protocols and frequently communicate safety guidelines. Training on the precautions listed below will be conducted either remotely or in person. Social distancing and face coverings will be required for all participants if training is conducted in person.

HCSD will ensure all students are taught or trained how to follow new COVID-19 protocols safely and correctly, including but not limited to hand hygiene, proper face covering wearing, social distancing, and respiratory hygiene. Additional training will be provided in:

- Prevention of disease spreads by staying home when they are sick.
- Proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Avoiding the use of communal objects. If communal objects must be used, provide
  information on proper disinfection procedures between use. Examples of communal objects
  include, but are not limited to, other workers' phones, desks, offices, computers or other
  devices, other work tools and equipment.
- Provide employees and students with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19.

• Risk factors and protective behaviors (i.e., cough etiquette and care of PPE).

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html

## **Training for Screeners**

HCSD will identify individuals familiar with CDC, OSHA protocols, and DOH guidelines in each building who will be a trained screener. Screeners will wear appropriate employer-provided PPE.

## Signs and Messages

Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures pdf icon and describe how to stop the spread pdf icon of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face cover image icon).

## **Space Design and Capacities**

### **General Office Area**

- Where applicable all offices and small spaces will be limited to one (1) individual at a time.
- In a multiple occupant office, 6ft of separation will be maintained between individuals.
- Where applicable due to conditions, additional protective barriers such as polycarbonate screens will be utilized to create a physical separation without hindrance to egress or airflow.
- HCSD will adjust shift start and end times greater than normal when possible (while still ensuring safe operations), to eliminate employees from congregating during the shift change-over, and from overcrowding at entrances and exits.
- Will reduce tasks requiring large amounts of people to be in one area.
- Employees will be encouraged to use virtual meeting tools, including phone and virtual teleconference, in lieu of in-person meetings, whenever possible.
- If in-person meetings are essential, then the number of participants will be based on current state guidelines.

#### **Conference Rooms**

- Will limit in-person meetings (refer to NYS guidance), if virtual meetings are not feasible.
- If meetings are to occur in person, they will be conducted in a quick manner.
- Social distancing among participants will be required.
- Lingering and socializing before and after meetings shall be discouraged.

#### **Break Rooms and Lunch Rooms**

- Breakroom use is discontinued.
- Staff are advised to take their lunch and breaks in their private offices or classrooms; in their vehicles or outside at the picnic tables throughout the campus.
- Staggered break schedules may be utilized to assist with separation concerns.
- Communal meals will not be provided to employees, and food will not be available in common areas where employees may congregate.

#### **Copier Rooms/Areas**

- Congregating in copier rooms/areas is discouraged.
- Cleaning supplies will be provided at copier stations.
- Staff are encouraged to wipe down touch surfaces post and prior use.

#### **Elevators**

- One person in an elevator at a time except when an adult is accompanying a student.
- Personnel must wear acceptable face coverings when in common use areas.
- Elevators will be frequently disinfected.

#### Restrooms

- All bathrooms regardless of size will be limited to one person at a time.
- In special circumstances where a student must be assisted in the use of the lavatory, the adult
  present must be wearing all applicable personal protective equipment including a face
  covering and when medically applicable, the student will be wearing a proper face covering as
  well.
- Signage will be posted on entry indicating one person at a time.

### Hallways/Stairwells

- Where feasible hallway traffic may be limited to single flow direction.
- Where single flow is not applicable, bi-direction traffic will be permitted.
- Directional flow will be identified by indications on the floor/stairs
- All individuals must also allow for adequate space between when traveling in the same direction.

#### Classrooms

- Occupancy in each classroom will be specific and determined based on 6ft separation.
- Overall class sizes will be reduced to accommodate all safety parameters.
- Students, teachers and support staff will be required to wear a proper face covering.
- Where possible special area teachers and PPS staff will travel to the classroom to provide instruction.
- Restrict items in the classroom to that of obvious use.
  - Remove any unnecessary furniture.
  - O Remove any soft surfaces that are difficult to disinfect such as:
    - Area Rugs
    - Soft fabric chairs

#### **Nurse Stations**

- All students and staff are required to wear appropriate face coverings.
  - o N95 Respirator use for nurses should be limited to situations of suspected COVID-19
  - Nurses must receive proper training and fitment of N95 Respirators prior to use.
- Where applicable, nurse stations have been reconfigured to:
  - Maintain social distancing of no less than 6ft.
  - Physical separation will be achieved by utilizing:
    - Individual exam rooms
    - Retractable dividing curtain walls or other barriers.

#### **Isolation Room Per Building**

- Where possible, separate, independent room with a door in close proximity to the exterior will be utilized for quarantining individuals who present with symptoms representative of COVID-19.
- These rooms have been identified in each building
  - O Highland Elementary School Room 415 (former PE office)
  - O Highland Middle School Room 109
  - O Highland High School Room E-37

#### **Reception Areas**

Reception areas will remain at all main entrances of each building.

- They will serve as the primary location for accounting for all individuals entering and exiting the building, unless otherwise directed by building or district administration.
- Polycarbonate barriers will be installed to protect all individuals.
- Floor demarcations have been installed to indicate where visitors shall stand to maintain social distance.
- Reception areas have had seating removed or adequately spaced to provide at minimum of 6ft of separation.

### **Computer Labs**

- In general, students will be using their own, district issued electronic device.
- Tables of computers will be reconfigured so as to not face each other or a polycarbonate barrier will be installed to create a physical barrier.
- Cleaning and disinfection of computer labs and keyboard will be frequent
  - Keyboards should be wiped and disinfected before and after each use.
  - Keyboard covers may be utilized to aid in the cleaning and disinfection process.
- Students should be instructed to wash hands/sanitize prior to and after touching the keyboards along with other frequently touched surfaces.

#### **Library Spaces**

• Remove all soft covered surfaces that cannot be properly cleaned and disinfected.

- Bean bag chairs
- Upholstered couches or chairs
- Area rugs
- Reconfigure space to ensure social distancing.
  - Tables will be limited to one individual at a time where applicable.
  - Desks should be arranged so as to not face each other.
  - Small reading nook use should be discontinued unless:
    - limited to one person at a time.
    - Cleaned and disinfected routinely
- Borrowing of materials such as books may need to be discontinued if adequate disinfection cannot be achieved.
- Create directional traffic flow patterns between bookcases to ensure social distancing

## **Engineering Controls**

- Portable hand wash stations will be installed in the buildings.
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer will be available in each entry, all corridors, and each classroom.
- Bathrooms
  - O Limited to one occupant at a time.
  - Entry doors to bathrooms will be left open where applicable.
- Water Fountains
  - To reduce cross contamination the bubbler/drink spout has been removed or disabled.
  - Automatic/touchless bottle filling equipment is installed.
  - These appliances will be routinely cleaned and disinfected as described in the Cleaning and Disinfection Section.
- Floor Demarcations
  - All entrances or areas of static wait have floor signage installed allotting for a minimum of six (6) feet of separation between all individuals
  - Corridor floors and stairways will have appropriate signage indicating directional traffic flow and social distancing.

#### Ventilation

- When ambient air temperatures allow, the district will increase the amount of outside air being delivered to occupied spaces. This will be accomplished by increasing the open setting for outside air dampers (up to 100%).
- The district will encourage the opening of windows and interior doors when ambient air temperatures allow.
- The district will increase its ventilation preventive maintenance plan (PMP). This will include, where applicable, checking motors, belts, bearings and outside air dampers (including actuators & linkages).
- The district will utilize its energy management system (EMS) to supplement physical inspections.
- The use of pedestal and box fans in occupied locations will be discouraged.

## **Cleaning and Disinfection**

The HCSD will ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19," and the "STOP THE SPREAD" poster, as applicable. Cleaning and disinfection logs will be maintained that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.

Examples of facility types where cleaning and disinfection frequency will be distinguished include:

- Bathrooms
- Health offices, isolation rooms
- Administrative offices (main office, reception area)
- Frequently touched surfaces in common areas (door handles, elevator buttons, copy machine keypads, etc.)
- Breakrooms
- Cafeterias/Kitchens
- Classrooms
- Maintenance offices and work areas
- Bus Garage
- Buses, school vehicles
- Libraries
- Large meeting areas (auditoriums, gymnasiums, music rooms)
- Outdoor seating areas (plastic or metal)

Students, faculty, and staff will be trained on proper hand and respiratory hygiene, and such information will be provided to parents and/or legal guardians on ways to reinforce this at home.

The district will provide and maintain hand hygiene stations around the school, as follows:

- For handwashing: soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels.
- For hand sanitizing: an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
- Accommodations for students who cannot use hand sanitizer will be made.

Regular cleaning and disinfection of the facilities will occur, including more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk and frequently touched surfaces. This will include desks and cafeteria tables, which should be cleaned and disinfected between each individual's use. Cleaning and disinfection will be rigorous and ongoing and will occur at least daily, or more frequently as needed.

The district will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of restrooms. Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected more often depending on frequency of use.

Disinfectants must be products that meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2, the virus that

causes COVID-19, and be appropriate for the surface.

## **Suspect or Confirmed COVID Cases**

- Emergency Response Students and staff with symptoms of illness must be sent to the health
  office. A school nurse (Registered Professional Nurse, RN) is available to assess individuals as
  chronic conditions, such as asthma and allergies or chronic gastrointestinal conditions may
  present the same symptoms as COVID-19 but are neither contagious nor pose a public health
  threat. Proper PPE will be required anytime a nurse may be in contact with a potential COVID19 patient.
- Isolation Students suspected of having COVID-19 awaiting transport home by the parent/guardian will be isolated in a room or area separate from others with a supervising adult present utilizing appropriate PPE. Multiple students suspected of COVID-19 may also be in this isolation room if they can be separated by at least 6 feet. If they cannot be isolated in a separate room from others, then facemasks (e.g., cloth or surgical mask) will be provided to the student if the ill person can tolerate wearing it and does not have difficulty breathing, to prevent the possible transmission of the virus to others while waiting for transportation home. Students should be escorted from the isolation area to the parent/guardian. The parent or guardian will be instructed to call their health care provider, or if they do not have a health care provider, to follow up with a local clinic or urgent care center; Other considerations include:
  - O Closing off areas used by person suspected of COVID-19 and not using these areas until after cleaning and disinfection has occurred;
  - Opening outside doors and/or windows to increase air circulation in the area;
  - Waiting at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfection. If waiting 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible;
  - O Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, such as offices, classrooms, bathrooms, and common areas.
  - Once the area has been appropriately cleaned and disinfected it can be reopened for use.
  - o Individuals without close or proximate contact\* with the person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 can return to the area and resume school activities immediately after cleaning and disinfection.
- Notification the NYS and local health departments will be notified immediately upon being
  informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by an individual in school facilities or
  on school grounds, including students, faculty, staff and visitors.

## **Contact Tracing**

Public Health Officials assume the task of contact tracing, once notified.

To ensure the school district and its employees comply with contact tracing and disinfection requirements, the HCSD will do the following:

- In the case of an employee or student testing positive for COVID-19, CDC guidelines will be followed regarding cleaning and disinfecting your building.
- Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
- Open outside doors and/or windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and copier machines.
- Vacuum the space if needed. Use vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.

#### **Return to School After Illness**

The HCSD has established protocols and procedures, in consultation with the local health department(s), about the requirements for determining when individuals, including staff and students, who screened positive for COVID-19 symptoms can return to the in-person learning environment at school. The district will work closely with the Ulster County Department of Health to determine protocols in accordance with the most current information available.

The district will refer to DOH's <u>"Interim Guidance for Public and Private Employees Returning to Work Following COVID-19 Infection or Exposure"</u> regarding protocols and policies for faculty and staff seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the faculty or staff member had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

The district requires that individuals who were exposed\* to the COVID-19 virus complete quarantine and have not developed symptoms before returning to in-person learning. The discharge of an individual from quarantine and return to school will be conducted in coordination with the local health department.

\*"Exposure", "close" or "proximate" contact to COVID-19 is defined using the CDC definition: Individual who has had close contact (< 6 feet) for ≥15 minutes.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html

#### **Closure Considerations**

When a person has been identified (confirmed) or suspected to be COVID-19 positive; the COVID Coordinator will work closely with the Ulster County Department of Health to determine closings as follows:

- Having school administrators collaborate and coordinate with local health officials to make school closure and large event cancellation decisions.
- Establish a plan to close schools again for physical attendance of students, if necessary, based on public health guidance and in coordination with the local DOH. Establishing a decision-making tree at the district level.
- Closing of schools could be a regional decision.
  - o 7 metrics NYS Dashboard
    - Schools will reopen if a region is in Phase IV and the daily infection rate remains below 5% using a 14-day average
    - Schools will close if the regional infection rate is greater than 9% using a 7-day average after August 1, 2020
- Thresholds will be determined on a case-by-case basis dependent on the numbers (school closures may be a response).

## **Facilities**

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infection in the district, facilities operations will be geared toward meeting social distancing requirements and cleaning frequently touched spaces regularly. In carrying out projects or tasks supporting infection control, requirements will be met for changes associated with building spaces. Plans for changes or additions to facilities that require review by the Office of Facilities Planning (OFP), will be submitted to comply with the requirements of the 2020 New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code (BC) and the State Energy Conservation Code.

The function, position and operation of stairs and corridor doors, which have closers with automatic hold opens (and are automatically released by the fire alarm system), will remain unchanged.

The Highland Central School District plans to meet the deadline for submission of Building Condition Survey or Visual Inspections on time. In addition, lead in water sampling will be carried out upon the reopening of school under conditions consistent with when the building is "normally occupied."

Upon reopening, the district plans to increase ventilation, to the greatest extent possible. Water systems will be flushed in buildings that have been unoccupied.

The following actions will be taken as needed:

- Work with engineers to establish sufficient fresh air exchange.
- Drinking Water Facilities: Reduce number of drinking fountains available, in order to facilitate frequent cleaning. However, drinking fountains are a code required plumbing fixture.
- Minimum number of toilet fixtures that must be available for use in a building is established in the building code.
- Maintain adequate, Code required ventilation (natural or mechanical) as designed.

## **Emergency Response Protocols & Drills**

The 2020-2021 school year may include hybrid models of the traditional school day. Emergency response drills, including evacuation and lockdown drills, may be spread across the different student populations dependent on the day each population is present the day the drills are scheduled.

## **Emergency Response Protocols**

- Shelter-In-Place
- Hold-In-Place
- Evacuation
- Lockout
- Lockdown

#### Shelter-In-Place

Areas will be identified in each school that will be used for the Shelter-in-Place along with areas that cannot be used due to certain types of environmental hazards (i.e.: high winds, tornado, etc.). Shelter-In-Place protocols will be the same with the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Shelter-In-Place
- Use of face coverings throughout the event
- If 6 feet between staff and students cannot be achieved, face coverings should be worn at all times during the event
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Listen for updates and respond accordingly

#### Hold-In-Place

Hold-In-Place protocols will be the same the following changes:

- Provide 6 feet of space between students and staff during the Hold-In-Place
- Use of face coverings throughout the event
- If 6 feet between people cannot be achieved, face coverings should be worn at all times during the event
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Listen for updates and respond accordingly

#### **Evacuate**

Evacuation protocols will be routinely the same with some minor adjustments:

- Identify areas outside of the building in advance that will allow 6 feet of separation of students and staff. Verify that students and staff will not impede emergency responders
- In effort to get all staff and students out of the building as quickly and efficiently as possible, face coverings will be worn at all times
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Identify, in advance, who will be holding the door to get out of the building, therefore reducing the amount of people touching the door hardware when leaving the building.

- Personnel that will be conducting this task may be assigned to holding the door for one or more classrooms or until confirmation that everyone has vacated the building
- As written in the established protocols, bring all necessary items needed and consider adding the following items: extra face coverings, in the event a face covering becomes unusable, and hand sanitizer
- If no extra face coverings are available, instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event

### Lockout

Lockout protocols will be the same, besides maintaining six (6) feet of space between students and staff in the area.

#### Lockdown

During a Lockdown, there will be a violation of the six (6) foot recommendation between people. In order to protect life safety, lockdown protocols will be mostly the same process as they have been conducted in the past.

- Evaluate, in advance, if there is room to social distance without being in the line of sight
- Face coverings should be worn during the event at all times
- Plan to have extra face coverings on hand in the event that a person does not have one
- Instruct anyone that does not have a face covering to use their shirt to cover their nose and mouth during the event

## **Child Nutrition**

All schools in the HCSD will follow SFA policies when communicating about school meal services, eligibility, options and changes in operations. All communications will be provided through a variety of communication methods including website, social media, emails, robocalls, newsletters, and regular mail and translated into the languages spoken by families if necessary and upon request.

HCSD has identified Maria McCarthy, Director of Food Service, 845.691.1057 as the contact person to receive and respond to communications from families and to school staff. Families will be reminded in food service communications during the summer and periodically that they can submit a new application for free and reduced-price meals any time during the school year. Applications are available in each school building, on our website and through email or regular mail as needed. Phone in and in-person support to complete the application is available from our building support personnel (ie Social Worker, etc.).

School meals will continue to be available to all students, including those attending school in-person and those learning remotely.

#### **Meals Onsite**

For students onsite, meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students. Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating so long as they are appropriately socially distanced.

The district will ensure social distancing between individuals while eating in the school cafeteria. If not feasible, meals may be served in alternate areas (e.g., classrooms) or in staggered meal periods to ensure social distancing and proper cleaning and disinfection between students.

The sharing of food and beverages (e.g., buffet style meals, snacks) is prohibited, unless individuals are members of the same household. Adequate space will be reserved for students, faculty, and staff to observe social distancing while eating meals.

## Meals offsite/remote

HCSD will provide meals for students who qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch on days when they are at home in the hybrid schedule, and for students who are on remote-only instruction. The specific procedure and schedule will be communicated with all parents before the start of the school year.

HCSD will adjust the food service program as necessary once school begins to ensure that all qualifying students receive food allocations.

# **Transportation**

HCSD will conduct transportation activities that are consistent with state-issued public transit guidance and NYSED School Reopening guidelines. Students and school staff must wear acceptable face coverings at all times on school buses (e.g., entering, exiting, and seated) and should maintain appropriate social distancing to the extent practicable.

Students who are able will be required to wear masks and social distance on the bus to the extent practicable; however, students whose physical or mental health would be impaired are not required to wear a face covering but must be appropriately socially distanced. Members of the same household may be seated within 6 feet of each other. Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to drop off or walk students to school to reduce density on buses.

All buses that are used every day by districts and contract carriers will be cleaned/ disinfected once a day. High contact spots will be wiped down after the morning (AM) and afternoon (PM) run and between Secondary (High/Middle School) and Elementary runs depending upon the disinfection schedule.

School buses shall not be equipped with hand sanitizer due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district. School bus drivers, monitors and attendants must not carry personal bottles of hand sanitizer with them on school buses.

Wheelchair school buses will configure wheelchair placement to ensure social distancing of 6 feet.

Whether school is in session remotely or otherwise, pupil transportation will be provided to nonpublic, parochial, private, charter schools or students whose Individualized Education Plans have placed them out of district whose schools are meeting in in-person sessions.

All students are entitled to transportation by the district to the extent required by law. Transportation departments do not have the ability or the right to deny transportation for children who are in foster care, homeless or attend private or charter schools. Parents who may have missed the due date to request out of district transportation due to a reasonable excuse may file a 310 appeal with the Commissioner of Education.

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Refer to the cleaning standard operating procedures guidance for further information.

- Buses and other transportation vehicles will be cleaned and disinfected daily (focus on high touch areas) and in between runs if scheduled for multiple routes. At the end of the day clean and disinfect the entire bus
- Daily Cleaning
  - All trash removed
  - Floors swept and dust mopped
  - Walls and windows cleaned
- High Touch Surfaces
  - Bus seats and seat backs
  - Seat belts
  - o Door handles, handrails
  - Driver operator area
- Cleaning and disinfecting products approved by the EPA will be used according to instructions.
- Eating and drinking will be prohibited on the bus
- Buses will be inspected to ensure cleaning/disinfecting protocols are followed on district owned and contracted buses
- All cleanings/inspections will be documented (via trackable log) and monitored by the Head Bus Driver.

## Bus protocols for a reported case of Covid -19 on a school bus

Cathy Mekulik, Head Bus Driver, 691-1041, will be notified, the transportation department will then notify building administration and a plan will be implemented to contact parents of students on that bus.

Bus will be taken out of service for 24 hours before the bus can be used again after a report of COVID-19. Bus will be disinfected following CDC guidelines.

## **Students on Transportation**

- As was outlined in the Health and Safety section of this guidance, all parents/guardians will be
  encouraged to ensure their child/children are not experiencing any signs and symptoms of
  COVID-19 and do not have a fever of 100 degrees or more prior to them boarding their
  method of transportation to school; in addition, all students' temperatures will be screened
  when they board the bus, before entering the school building.
- Students must wear a mask on a school bus if they are physically able. Students who are
  unable to medically tolerate a face covering, including students where such covering would
  impair their physical health or mental health are not subject to the required use of a face
  covering\*;
- Students must social distance six (6) feet on the bus unless they are from the same house hold;
- Students who do not have masks must be provided one by the district;
- Students with a disability which would prevent them from wearing a mask will not be compelled to do so or denied transportation.

## **Transportation Communication**

- HCSD will emphasize to parents and students prior to reopening schools that the District has thoroughly disinfected all buses and student transportation vehicles.
- HCSD will communicate with parents and students that student transportation vehicles are included in the district's COVID-19 plans and what part students and parents will play in ensuring safety and minimizing infection while utilizing District transportation services.
- Advise parents not to send their children to school or board the bus if sick or with an elevated temperature.
- Parent's will be surveyed regarding transportation, including an "opt-out" option.
- Remind students/parents/guardians that social distancing requirements extend to the bus stop.

## **Density Reduction, Social Distancing, Bus Capacity**

- Students will be seated one student per row, all students wearing masks. (Source: National council on school facilities and cooperative strategies).
- Siblings or those that live in the same household will sit together and wear masks
- Floor decals and/or tape will indicate where students should sit and mark six (6) foot distances in aisles
- Do not seat students directly behind the driver

<sup>\*</sup>Parents/guardians must submit medical documentation to their building health office if their child is unable to medically tolerate a face covering.

- There will be additional adult supervision (monitors) on buses to manage social distancing
- Students shall wear face masks while in transit
- Student attendance/screening on every route, every day, to and from school. The attendance sheets will be documented and retained for contact tracing.

## **Routing**

- HCSD will develop transportation routes that fulfill the needs of our school schedules and reduce bus occupancy.
- HCSD will limit the rotation of substitute drivers and aides if possible
- Limit student movement between bus routes
  - Discontinue allowing students to ride different buses on different days of the week unless parent or guardian makes plausible requests at the beginning of the school year (childcare, custody arrangements)
  - Parents/guardians who wish to make a change to the established bus route must make the request to the transportation office two (2) weeks in advance.
  - Parents/guardians will no longer be able to write a note or call to change destinations on a day by day basis.

## Loading/Unloading & Pickup/Drop-off

- Students shall be loaded in sequential route order. First student on the bus sits in the back, when going to school, last student off sits in the back when going home from school.
- Loading will be staggered to best suit building needs and to promote social distancing.
- Adjustments will be made by buildings:
  - For unloading and entry, and loading and departure.
  - o Route timing which will be affected by delayed loading/unloading processes.
  - o Arrival and departure activities shall be supervised to ensure social distancing.
- HCSD will add or modify bus routes to reduce load levels on buses.

# **Transporting to BOCES**

- HCSD will be transporting to BOCES and will follow similar protocols as previously described
- HCSD will keep a log of attendees on the trip in both directions from the BOCES building. Upon request, schools may need to supply the log of passengers in addition to cleaning logs in the event BOCES must assist in contact tracing due to exposures either at the BOCES buildings, or during transportation
- Highland High School students participating in the BOCES CTE program will be transported from their home to and from the Ulster BOCES Port Ewen site.

# **Social Emotional Well-Being**

In planning for our re-entry in September, the District has formed committees to examine the guidance provided by the Department of Health and NYSED for our re-entry in the Fall. Our work is

grounded in our beliefs that the most equitable opportunities for educational success relies upon the comprehensive support for students and families provided in our schools with our professionals and the systems of support we have built. These supports include academics as well as the social and emotional well-being of our students. We are committed to prioritizing social emotional well-being - not at the expense of academics, but in order to create the mental, social and emotional space to access rigorous academic content with confidence.

Research shows the importance of mental and emotional well-being for students and staff, which has both psychological and ultimately academic outcomes. We know, after this prolonged closure, many of our students and staff will require social-emotional supports to help them re-engage and re-enter work and school. As a District, our commitment is to create emotionally and physically safe, supportive and engaging learning environments promoting all students' social and emotional well-being and development. The pandemic has elevated the role of leaders in creating conditions that help students practice empathy, create social bonds across distance and adapt to new learning experiences. Community-based wrap around supports will play an extremely important role in the adjustment period when buildings reopen and access to school counselors and school-based health programs will be invaluable supports to our students. The district has created a resource for accessing those supports (<a href="https://www.highland-k12.org/domain/50">https://www.highland-k12.org/domain/50</a>).

In addition, it will be critical to determine students who might be at risk for needing mental health supports. We remain committed to supporting all students and maintain our whole child commitment as well as equipping all staff to connect, heal, and build capacity to support our students. Resources and supports are available to help meet the social emotional needs of students as a result of the COVID-19 school closure (<a href="https://www.highland-k12.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=14&DomainID=143&PageID=5823&ModuleInstanceID=8824&ViewID=fa1f7d98-e7bf-458b-a7e2-7d51c266e481&IsMoreExpandedView=True">https://www.highland-k12.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=14&DomainID=143&PageID=5823&ModuleInstanceID=8824&ViewID=fa1f7d98-e7bf-458b-a7e2-7d51c266e481&IsMoreExpandedView=True</a>).

Additionally, all HCSD employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which offers many free services including face-to-face and virtual counseling. Information about all social-emotional supports will be made widely available to the Highland community through the Community Resources Tab (<a href="https://www.highland-k12.org/domain/50">https://www.highland-k12.org/domain/50</a>) on our website. We are committed to developing/making accessible family/caregiver-appropriate social and emotional learning (SEL) content to be used during all phases of our re-entry.

Transitions are important every year, and they will be even more important this fall returning from continuous remote learning to in-person instruction in buildings or a phased in approach to in-person instruction. Districts should support transitions in a culturally responsive manner and engage students, families, and communities in the process of identifying needs and supports. Transitions take many forms and include returning to school in the fall, moving from one grade band to another, or dealing with the varying emotional needs as a result of the health pandemic.

The following considerations guided our building level planning:

## Emotional reactions to coming out of quarantine may include

Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine
- Other emotional or mental health changes

## **Addressing Social-Emotional Health**

- Establish/sustain a culture that supports and emphasizes mental health services available for faculty, staff, students and families
- Assist in adequate training for staff/faculty as requested to assist them in understanding:
  - Social Emotional Learning (SEL) competencies; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making
  - o The warning signs for quarantine related mental health needs
  - o How to access crisis support and other mental health services

#### What Mental Health Professionals can do in schools

- Educate staff, parents, and students on symptoms of mental health needs and how to obtain assistance.
- Promote social emotional learning competency and build resilience.
- Help ensure a positive, safe school environment.
- Teach and reinforce positive behaviors and decision-making.
- Encourage good physical health.
- Help ensure access to school-based mental health supports; facilitate the expansion of school-based mental health supports.

# **School Schedules**

# In-person/hybrid schedule

The district will divide the student body roughly in half, K-12, by alphabetical order:

Cohort 1: Students' last names, A-K\*

Cohort 2: Students' last names, L-Z\*

\*The division of the two cohorts will be dependent on balancing the number of students in each cohort between days.

Students in the same family unit with different last names will attend school on the same day. Determination for the family will be made by using the last name of the *oldest student* in the district. Parents will be notified before the start of school which cohort their child(ren) will attend.

Students will follow the schedule below by cohort. Start and end times remain similar to past years.

|                                | Monday   | Tuesday  | Wednesday*   | Thursday | Friday   |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|--|----------|----------|
| In person,<br>at school        | Cohort 1 | Cohort 2 | Collaboration<br>and<br>Communication<br>Day                           | Cohort 1 | Cohort 2 |
| Remote<br>learning,<br>at home | Cohort 2 | Cohort 1 | Remote instruction for all, HHS CTE students attend at BOCES Port Ewen | Cohort 2 | Cohort 1 |

<sup>\*</sup>When a school holiday falls during the week, the Wednesday schedule may be modified to ensure equity of instructional exposure to cohorts. A calendar of these weeks will be shared with parents.

## **Remote Only Instruction**

The remote experience will be designed specifically as a virtual experience, with teachers dedicated to that program. Remote students will not be remote members of the "in person" class. Students will have daily video conferencing times with their teacher(s) and a structured schedule during regular school hours. Schedules and instructors will be shared with students before the opening of school.

If Governor Cuomo announces that all students will participate in remote instruction or the DOH advises us to close school for some period of time during the 2020-21 school year, students will remain with their assigned teachers of record from in-person/hybrid instruction.

# Attendance, Attendance Reporting and Chronic Absenteeism

#### **Attendance and Attendance Reporting**

All schools in the HCSD will take daily attendance whether school opens in September in-person, hybrid, or remote. Attendance policies and procedures will be communicated with families and students prior to the start of the school year or if the instructional model changes during the year. Communication will take the form of building level parent letters/newsletter, robocalls, emails, text messaging, and social media. Teachers will record daily attendance in SchoolTool, our student management system, based on the required daily scheduled student contact and engagement. Daily reports will be generated to identify students who are absent and/or chronically absent. Contact

with the families will be made daily to determine reasons for absence and needs or barriers the student may have to participate in daily lessons.

#### **Chronic Absenteeism**

While there is no one-size-fits all approach to addressing chronic absenteeism, HCSD is committed to providing interventions to prevent and address health-related and mental health chronic absenteeism. We recognize that many factors will influence student attendance and may be greatly impacted by the instructional models provided; in-person, hybrid, and remote.

The Highland Central School District addresses chronic absenteeism as follows.

- Nurture a culture of attendance
  - Communicate clearly to families and students what the attendance policy is and expectations for participating based on the model of instruction
  - o Explain the importance of attendance to the entire school community
  - Track daily attendance, tardiness, and student engagement in one central, secure location with a tool that helps you can quickly see how these data points impact student behavior.
- Early Identification and Intervention
  - Each school regularly monitors attendance data and communicates with parents about issues as they arise.
  - Use data to identify which students are at risk, so you can intervene before isolated absences become chronic absenteeism.
  - Establish intervention plans; parent phone call, home visit, counseling, instructional modifications, engage community partners, etc.
- Create a more positive school culture and a focus on engaging instruction
  - o Evaluate and address your students' engagement in learning
  - Provide teachers and school leaders with multiple levels of support to help students stay more engaged and act positively.
  - Help students achieve positive social and emotional character development, while reinforcing the behaviors that make up your ideal school culture.
  - Use goal-based incentives and rewards to motivate attendance and positive student behaviors where age appropriate.

# **Technology and Connectivity**

Access to technology is essential for the successful roll-out of this plan. HCSD is committed to ongoing planning and implementation of district technologies to ensure equitable access for staff and students. The team has initiated plans that are mindful of student home access to reliable internet and computers.

- The district will continue to assess the ongoing needs of our families for technology and connectivity (survey, interviews, school outreach, etc.) In the event, students and/or teachers do not have access, the district will take the necessary steps to meet their needs where plausible.
- Conduct and/or maintain an inventory of equipment and other assets.
  - o Identify which students, families, and staff have district assets in their possession.
- Procure, manage and/or maintain hardware, software, licenses, learning management systems, etc. to support and improve virtual instruction and student engagement.
- Identify professional learning needs for teachers and continue to support their development of skills and pedagogy in a virtual learning environment.
- We created a "Helpdesk" system (<u>Helpdesk@highland-k12.org</u>) for parents/students/teachers
  to report technical issues that might be experienced during remote learning. Communicate
  protocols to these stakeholders to inform them in advance of how to gain assistance in such
  cases.

HCSD will provide all students with access to learning materials and resources in multiple formats, wherever possible. Further, the district will support teachers through professional development and coaching on pedagogical methods that enable students to participate in multiple ways, so that they can demonstrate mastery of Learning Standards in remote or blended models through the use of both synchronous (i.e. Microsoft Teams or other web conferencing tool) and asynchronous technologies (i.e. Schoology or SeeSaw). In the event students do not have sufficient access to devices and/or high-speed internet, the district will provide the students with alternate methods to access materials and instruction, i.e. pick up materials at school, drop off materials to students' homes, etc. The district will also schedule opportunities to connect with families to educate them on how to use the technologies and connect to the instructional activities.

# **Teaching and Learning**

In an effort to assure high-quality teaching and learning a continuity of learning plan has been developed for the 2020-21 school year. This plan considers and plans for teaching and learning inperson, remotely, and through hybrid models of instruction. Our plan assures that Instruction is aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and assures equity as well as quality for all learners.

Equity is at the heart of all school instructional decisions. All instruction in our district will be designed so that whether it is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model due to a local or state school closure, there are clear, comprehensive, and accessible learning opportunities for all students. Such opportunities will be aligned with state standards. Our teaching and instructional plan outlines routine, scheduled times for students to interact and seek feedback and support from their teachers. Our plan is centered on instruction and academic programming that includes regular and substantive interaction with an appropriately certified teacher regardless of the delivery method (e.g., in-person/hybrid, or remote).

The school calendar typically includes one or more staff-only days before students arrive at school. Acknowledging the challenges that our teachers and staff have faced this spring delivering remote

instruction under stressful circumstances, the district will focus these in-service days on providing support to staff in the areas of health & safety, social-emotional health, and technology integration.

As we enter the new school year, teachers will be encouraged to spend time building relationships, supporting students with the transition back to school, and teaching social distancing etiquette at developmentally appropriate levels. As a result, the first week or two of school will focus less on academics and more on getting to know one another and familiarizing students with the protocols for safety and remote learning.

Acknowledging that the typical content in a given grade level or course may need to be adjusted, content will be prioritized to ensure that students receive instruction for the prioritized learning standards, key understandings, and skills necessary for students' success in future study. Grading and assessment will follow traditional protocols and practices.

## In-person hybrid Instruction

Upon reopening, the number of students in each of our classrooms will be reduced by approximately 50% to adhere to CDC guidance regarding proper social distancing. Class size will reflect the need to ensure that students' desks/seats are positioned no less than six feet apart.

All instruction will continue to be aligned to the New York State Learning Standards.

Our schools will minimize the movement of students. This potentially means having students eat lunch in their classroom instead of the cafeteria and eliminating assemblies, field trips and other large-group activities. Special-area subjects (e.g., art, music, physical education) may be pushed into the classroom. Whenever possible students will utilize outside space for physical education instruction. We will adhere to 12 feet between students when engaging in physical education, band or chorus.

To the extent possible, students will remain in small cohorts if/when leaving the classroom, such as for recess or any necessary transition, so as to reduce their exposure to additional students.

This model had been designed to facilitate transition to a fully remote mode of learning in the event that the district is asked to close schools for some period of time due to COVID 19.

For information on school schedules, visit the School Schedules section of our reopening plan.

#### Remote

The remote experience will be designed specifically as a virtual experience, with teachers dedicated to that program. Remote students will not be remote members of the "in person" class. Students will have daily video conferencing times with their teacher(s) and a structured schedule during regular school hours.

If the district is required to close for some period of time, as noted previously, student schedules will remain the same whether instruction is in person or remote so that students do not encounter conflicts wherein synchronous lessons for different subjects are offered simultaneously.

Remote learning opportunities for secondary students will include a greater emphasis on synchronous instruction, with teachers finding ways to provide live instruction and lessons to students. Teachers will ensure that their students are directly engaged with them and their class peers in experiential learning on a regular basis.

To ensure high-quality remote learning experiences, we will standardize the use of a single online learning platform, to the extent possible, and develop a common, coordinated set of guidelines for teachers to follow when using the platform with students.

# **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

While planning for CTE instruction, whether in-person, remote or hybrid models, HCSD has collaborated with Ulster BOCES to ensure high school instructional plans are aligned. Ulster BOCES has developed models that ensure NYS learning Standards, applicable industry certification requirements, clinical and work-based learning hours have been met. In addition, their plans follow all NYS/DOH health and safety guidelines and social distancing.

## **Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

### **Interscholastic Athletics**

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, districts have delayed the Fall sports start date until Monday, September 21. With NYS approval for the opening of schools in September and with appropriate social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection of equipment, the following will be implemented:

- Cancel NYS Fall Regional and State Championship events
- Waive seven-day practice rule to enable greater opportunities for local participation
- Maintain current practice requirements
- Encourage geographic scheduling for games & contests
- Schools would have the option, if permitted by state officials, to offer off-season conditioning workouts.

If the Fall sports season is interrupted or impacted by COVID-19 crisis (i.e. state official guidance, school closings, cancelation of high-risk sports, etc.) then a condensed seasons plan will be implemented. This plan takes into consideration the competitive and interactive aspects of each sport and would include the following, with the stipulated dates being tentative.

- **Season I** (Winter Sports)
  - o Dates: Jan. 4-Mar. 13 (Week 27-36) 10 Weeks
  - \*Note: tentative dates Sports: basketball (girls & boys), bowling (girls & boys), gymnastics, ice hockey (girls & boys), indoor track & field (girls & boys), skiing (girls & boys), swimming (boys), \*wrestling, \*competitive cheer. \* Because of the high risk

nature of wrestling and competitive cheer, sports may have to be moved to Season II or season III.

- Season II (Fall Sports)
  - o Dates: Mar. 1-May 8 (Week 35-44) 10 Weeks
  - \*Note: tentative dates Sports: football, cross country (girls & boys), field hockey, soccer (girls & boys), swimming (girls), volleyball (girls & boys), Unified bowling. Note: Weather will have an impact upon outdoor sports in some parts of the state in March and potentially early April. Girls Tennis moved to Season III.
- **Season III** (Spring Sports)
  - o Dates: Apr. 5-Jun. 12 (Week 40-49) 10 Weeks
  - \*Note: tentative dates Sports: baseball, softball, golf (girls & boys), lacrosse (girls & boys), tennis (girls & boys), outdoor track & field (girls & boys), Unified basketball.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular Activities are an important part of the overall school experience for social emotional well-being and building school community. HCSD will maintain as many clubs and activities as possible using a virtual environment. Meetings will be conducted virtually. Any activities planned will be done in accordance with our social distancing, cleaning and disinfection, and PPE usage protocols.

# **Special Education**

HCSD reopening plan provides a framework to ensure that all students with disabilities continue to have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living in the least restrictive environment (LRE). In consideration of the health, safety, and well-being of students, families, and staff, our plan is designed to enable transitioning between in-person, remote, and hybrid learning environments to ensure the provision of FAPE consistent with the changing health and safety conditions that exist.

Special education programs and services of HCSD provide equity and access for students with disabilities to be involved in and to participate and progress in the general education curriculum with access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students. While not all formats allow for maximum benefit to students, these programs and services can be provided in all formats (live-person, hybrid, or remote). The Highland Central School District will document the programs and services offered and provided to students with disabilities as well as to the communications with parents in their preferred language and mode of communication (eg. Related Services Log). The district will ensure access to the necessary accommodations, modifications, supplementary aids and services, and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the unique disability related needs of students.

HCSD is committed to providing meaningful parent engagement in the parent's preferred language or mode of communication regarding the provision of services to his/her child to meet the requirements of the IDEA. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process.

HCSD will plan and support collaboration between the committees on preschool special education (CPSE) and committees on special education (CSE) and program providers representing the variety of settings where students are served to ensure there is an understanding of the provision of services consistent with the recommendations on individualized education programs (IEPs), plans for monitoring and communicating student progress, and commitment to sharing resources.

HCSD will maintain records to document the implementation of each IEP. The documentation will include, but will not be limited to: narrative records of how the student is adjusting to live, hybrid, and remote instruction during 2020-21, a record of what instruction and services were provided, a record of formative, summative, and standardized assessments and their results as well as progress monitoring documentation, a record of school-family collaboration, and the provision of compensatory services records.

### **HCSD K-12 Special Education Programs**

### In-person/Hybrid Instruction (K-12)

- Students enrolled in a (12:1:1) program will attend school in-person four days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday). Students will receive online support on Wednesdays.
- Students enrolled in a (15:1) program will attend school two days a week with their assigned Cohort as described in the In-Person/Hybrid model.
- Students enrolled in an Inclusion (ICT) program will attend school in-person two days a week with their assigned cohort as described in the In-Person/Hybrid model.

|        | Monday       | Tuesday      | Wednesday*                                   | Thursday        | Friday       |
|--------|--------------|--------------|--|-----------------|--------------|
| 12:1:1 | All Students | All Students | Communication<br>and<br>Collaboration<br>Day | All<br>Students | All Students |
| 15:1   | Cohort 1     | Cohort 2     |  | Cohort 1        | Cohort 2     |
| ICT    | Cohort 1     | Cohort 2     |  | Cohort 1        | Cohort 2     |

#### Full Time Distance Learning (K-12)

- Special education classes and related services will be provided via distance learning.
- Teachers will work to schedule programming in a way to minimize conflicts to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students.
- Students will be provided with the necessary instructional and technological supports to meet their unique needs as per the IEP.

|                       | Monday                | Tuesday               | Wednesday                                    | Thursday              | Friday                |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 12:1:1<br>15:1<br>ICT | Remote<br>Instruction | Remote<br>Instruction | Communication<br>and<br>Collaboration<br>Day | Remote<br>Instruction | Remote<br>Instruction |

# **English as a New Language**

Highland Central School District provides world language instruction in Spanish and French, 7-12, and English as a New Language (ENL) instruction for ELLs/MLLs, K-12. Support of English language learners (ELLs) will be comprehensive, high-quality, and culturally responsive. If we reopen using inperson or hybrid instruction we will complete the ELL identification process within 30 school days of the start of the school year for all students who enrolled during COVID-19 school closures in 2019-20, as well as all students who enroll during summer of 2020 and during the first 20 school days of the 2020-21 school year. After this 20 day flexibility period, identification of ELLs will resume for all students within the required 10 school days of initial enrollment as required by Commissioner's Regulations Part 154.

HCSD is committed to comprehensive, high-quality, and culturally responsive instruction for ENL students, we will provide the required instructional Units of Study to all ELLs based on their most recently measured English language proficiency level during in-person or hybrid instruction. Further, we will maintain regular communication with the parents/guardians and other family members of ELLs to ensure that they are engaged in their children's education during the reopening process. We will provide all communications for parents/guardians of ELLs in their preferred language and mode of communication.

HCSD will provide professional learning opportunities for our district that support best practices and equitable instruction for ELLs as well as general education students to help address learning gaps caused by the COVID-19 school closures. The district also has access to the Ulster BOCES Professional Learning Catalog to support teachers to assure ENL and world language instruction is personalized and research-based.

# **Staffing**

## **Teacher and Principal Evaluation System**

All teachers and principals will continue to be evaluated pursuant to the district's approved APPR plan. HCSD will consider whether their currently approved APPR plans may need to be revised in order to be consistent with their plans for re-opening under an in-person, remote or hybrid instructional model. School leaders will continue to attend annually required Lead Evaluator training.

# **Certification, Incidental Teaching and Substitute Teaching**

All teachers will hold valid and appropriate certificates for teaching assignment, except where otherwise allowable under the Commissioner's regulations (e.g., incidental teaching) or education law.

#### **Student Teachers**

Student teachers from NYSED registered college or university programs can serve under the supervision of fully certified teachers in the Highland Central School District. Student teachers will follow all of the social distancing, mask wearing, health status reporting, and other COVID-19 procedures that the teachers follow. Student teachers will serve under the supervision of our full time certified teachers only. At no time will a student teacher be used as a teacher of record.

# **Key References**

- <u>State Education Department Issues Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools</u> (July 16, 2020)
- State Education Department Presents Framework of Guidance to Reopen New York State Schools (July 13, 2020)
- <u>Interim Guidance for In-Person Instruction at Pre-K to Grade 12 Schools During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, NYS Department of Health (July 13, 2020)</u>

## **Additional References**

- Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency
- (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Food Services during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Office-Based Work during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- (June 26, 2020)
- Interim Guidance for Public Transportation Activities during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. (June 26, 2020)
- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- New York State Education Department Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website

Once finalized, reopening plans must be posted on the district's website. By July 31, 2020, districts will need to complete a survey through the Portal, providing NYSED with:

A link to the public website where each school plan has been publicly posted. A set of mandatory assurances that the reopening plan includes all of the mandatory elements outlined in the NYSED guidance

NOTE: Information submitted through the Portal will not include detailed narratives or descriptions of specific actions to be taken by a school or district as part of their reopening Plan; those details must be articulated in the materials that are publicly posted on the school/district website.

Also by July 31, 2020, districts must complete a short companion <u>Department of Health survey that includes a link to the publicly posted plan on the district/school website.</u>