

2021/22 HOLLAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT HEALTH, SAFETY, AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT PROTOCOLS

Designed and Implemented in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

BOE APPROVED
NOVEMBER 23, 2021
JANUARY 3, 2022
FEBRUARY 22, 2022

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

- THE ROAD FORWARD HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR
 - NJDOE AND NJDOH JUNE 2021

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Introduction

HTSD health, safety, and learning environment protocols follow recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NJ Department of Health (DOH), the NJ Department of Education (DOE), and requirements set forth in NJ Statutes, Codes, and Executive Orders. Protocols are intended to reduce risks to students and staff from SARS-COV-2 while allowing for fulltime in-person programming.

Procedures will be updated as information is received from the CDC, NJDOH, NJDOE and as NJ Statutes, Codes and Executive Orders are implemented or edited.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

Vaccination

The HTSD does not require students or staff members to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Effective August 23, 2021, Governor Murphy signed Executive order 253 requiring all public school employees to be fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at a minimum of one or two times per week. Executive Order 253 shall be effective on October 18, 2021.

Holland Township Employees who do not present a valid vaccination card will submit a saliva test weekly through the NJDOH state contracted vendor, Mirimus. Test results will be reported by the contractor to the district health office by Friday of each week. Employees refusing to submit to a saliva test through the school vendor, will need to complete testing independently each week and produce a negative test result by Wednesday. Failure to do so will result in personal time off.

Communication

The Superintendent of Schools will maintain ongoing communication with the Hunterdon County Health Department, Hunterdon County School Districts, and the NJDOE through the Hunterdon County Office.

Knowing that SARS-COV-2 may impact certain areas of the region and county differently it is vitally important to maintain continued communication with the Hunterdon County Health Department and the NJDOH to ascertain information regarding transmission levels at the regional and local levels. This information will be used to make informed decisions regarding HTSD procedures and may necessitate changes to existing protocols.

The Superintendent of Schools will share information with the Board of Education and convey information to the School Community via email communication. As permitted, the Superintendent of Schools will obtain community input via surveys and during Board of Education meetings.

Masks/Face Coverings

Effective July 6th, Governor Murphy signed Executive order 251 requiring individuals to wear masks indoors, regardless of vaccination status. HTS will comply by this order for its duration. **If rescinded** the following mask protocol **may** be followed.

On July 14, 2021, the Superintendent of Schools requested input from the school community (parents, guardians, and staff members) regarding mask usage among students.

307 parents/guardians responded as follows:

- 62% No masks for students.

- 17% Masks for all students with scheduled mask breaks throughout the day.
- 21% No masks for vaccinated students, masks for unvaccinated students with scheduled mask breaks throughout the day.

Input from staff members further included a request for information regarding staff use of masks. 65 staff members responded as follows:

Students:

- 55% No masks for students.
- 29% No masks for vaccinated students, masks for unvaccinated students with scheduled mask breaks throughout the day
- 15% Masks for all students regardless of vaccine status with scheduled mask breaks throughout the day.

Staff:

- 45% No masks for vaccinated staff members, masks for unvaccinated staff members.
- 42% No masks for staff.
- 14% Masks for all staff regardless of vaccine status.

If permitted per requirements set forth by the NJDOH, NJDOE, NJ Statutes, Codes, and Executive Orders, and in compliance with community and staff input, the district will implement a mask optional procedure for students when the regional level of community transmission is characterized as low (green) or moderate (yellow) when in controlled environments which accommodate social distancing. Additionally, a mask optional procedure will be implemented for fully vaccinated staff members when the regional level of community transmission is low (green) or moderate (yellow). Proof of vaccine status is required. In areas of the building/school day where social distance cannot be controlled (bus, hallways, group activities within the classroom) masks will be required regardless of community transition rates and vaccination status.

When/if the regional level of community transmission reaches the high (orange) or very high (red) level, all students and staff will be required to wear masks while on school property regardless of vaccine status until the level returns to low (green) or moderate (yellow).

Per CDC Federal Order, masks must be worn by all passengers and drivers on school buses regardless of vaccine status and regional level of community transmission.

Permitted face coverings: Per CDC recommendations, face masks and gaiters which consist of two or more layers of washable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly against sides of face without gaps, and have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask are permitted.

Face coverings that are NOT permitted: Face masks made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape, and face shields alone are not permitted.

UPDATED FEBRUARY 22, 2022-

On March 7th, 2022 the mask mandate for school buildings expires. The Holland Township BOE will adopt the following protocol:

1. Mask optional for all students, staff and visitors. With the following EXCEPTIONS when masks will be mandated:
 - a. School buses (CDC)
 - b. Required quarantine periods for COVID positive students returning to school asymptomatic within the ten day exclusion period(5 days after positive test)

- c. During periods of school transmission/outbreak(per grade level)
 - d. During periods where North West Cluster falls within the RED risk category for transmission and case rate
2. Students who engage in “mask shaming” of their classmates will be subject to disciplinary intervention through the school Code of Conduct.

Physical Distancing and Cohorting

A minimum of 3' social distancing between students in classrooms and common areas will be maintained. In classrooms, student desks will be organized in rows and face the same direction. Classrooms include traditional classrooms as well as the gymnasium. Small group seating arrangements may occur intermittently throughout the day to provide an appropriate educational setting as needed for student instruction. 6' social distancing between students and staff will be maintained as appropriate. Students will remain in homeroom cohorts as much as possible with some students cross-cohorting to receive appropriate educational services and instruction. In the cafeteria, students will be seated with cohorts and physically distanced using individual seating accommodations. Students will be served lunches by staff members at their seating accommodations.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) are located in each classroom, at the entrances and exits of buildings, and in bathrooms. Students' daily schedules include regular hand washing intervals throughout the school day and before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their noses, coughing, and/or sneezing. When soap and water is not available, washing with an alcohol-based sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) will be used.

To contain respiratory secretions, all persons with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection, regardless of presumed cause, are instructed to cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing; use tissues to contain respiratory secretions; dispose of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use; and perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

Meals

School lunches shall be provided to all interested students at no cost via the National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option for the 2021/22 school year.

Eligible students will be provided meals while school is in virtual session through our food service provider. Families will be given a weekly pick-up time in the district to receive their meals.

The district contracts with Maschio's Food Service, Inc. to provide school lunches. ***Maschio's will provide lunches each day to those children who order hot lunch during their homeroom period.***

Transportation

Masks/Face coverings are required on school buses regardless of vaccination status per the CDC's Federal Order.

Permitted face coverings: Per CDC recommendations, face masks and gaiters which consist of two or more layers of washable fabric, completely cover the nose and mouth, fit snugly against sides of face without gaps, and have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask are permitted.

Face coverings that are NOT permitted: Face masks made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape, and face shields are not permitted.

Students will board buses from back to front and disembark front to back. Family members will be seated together.

To improve air flow, bus windows may be open when weather conditions permit.

Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Airflow

Limited Use of Shared Supplies and Equipment

District provided educational supplies and equipment may be shared between students in the same cohort and will be cleaned and disinfected between use by different groups of students.

In the case of physical education, art, and music instruction students will be required to wash hands or use hand sanitizer before and after classes. Supplies and equipment shared during these instructional sessions will be cleaned and disinfected between groups.

Cleaning and Disinfection

The district has developed a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. The district utilizes EPA-approved products for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and follows the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). Frequently touched areas in schools such as classroom desks and chairs, door handles and push plates, bathrooms, light switches, and shared computer keyboards are cleaned and disinfected daily.

Improving Air Flow

All HTSD facilities have adequate ventilation, including operational heating and risk systems where appropriate. Recirculated air has a fresh air component. Filter(s) for A/C units are maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.

Classroom doors may remain open during the school day to increase air flow. Windows, when appropriate, will be opened. To improve air flow on school buses, windows may be open weather permitting.

Screening, Exclusion, and Response to Symptomatic Students and Staff

COVID-19 Screening

Parents/Guardians will submit a **2021/22 COVID-19 Self-Certification and Verification Form** for each child prior to the beginning of the 21/22 SY. Each staff member will also submit a **2021/22 COVID-19 Self-Certification and Verification Form** prior to the beginning of the 21/22 SY. Form submittal is required annually, daily screening is required each school day. Non-vaccinated staff will submit to weekly testing

When Illness Occurs in the School Setting

Students and staff members who arrive at school with or develop the following COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be isolated from others in designated isolation spaces identified in both schools:

- ⊕ *At least **TWO** of the following symptoms:* fever, 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 and staff with chronic illness, only new symptoms or symptoms worse than baseline will be used to fulfill symptom-based exclusion criteria.

Student and staff exclusion are based on potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the level of community transmission.

When the regional level of community transmission is low (green) or moderate (yellow), students and staff with COVID-19 compatible symptoms without potential COVID-19 exposure will be:

- ✓ Sent home and referred to a healthcare provider;
- ✓ Referred for COVID-19 testing; and
- ✓ Excluded based on the NJDOH School Exclusion List.

When the regional level of community transmission is high (orange) or very high (red), students and staff with COVID-19 compatible symptoms with potential COVID-19 exposure will be:

- ✓ Sent home and referred to a healthcare provider;
- ✓ Referred for COVID-19 testing; and
- ✓ Excluded based on the COVID-19 Exclusion Criteria.

School nurses will notify the Hunterdon County Health Department when students or staff:

- ✓ Display COVID-19 compatible symptoms and have potential COVID-19 exposure; or
- ✓ Realize an increase in the number of persons with COVID-19 compatible symptoms.

Exclusion Criteria for Ill Students and Staff

The district will comply with the NJDOH and NJDOE exclusion recommendations which are based on potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days, the level of community transmission, and vaccination status. The following will occur:

- ✓ Ill students and staff who have not been tested and those who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from school at least 10 days since symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever reducing medications and improvement in symptoms.
- ✓ Asymptomatic students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will remain home for 10 days from the positive test result.
- ✓ A negative COVID-19 test may indicate an earlier return to school.
- ✓ An alternate diagnosis without a negative COVID-19 test will not permit an early return to school.

Exclusion Criteria for Close Contacts

The district will comply with the NJDOH and NJDOE exclusion recommendations which are based on potential exposure to COVID-19 in the past 14 days, the level of community transmission, and vaccination status. The following will occur:

Close contacts who are NOT fully vaccinated will be excluded as follows:

- ✓ When community transmission is characterized as low (green) or moderate (yellow), close contacts will be excluded from school for 10 days OR 7 days with a negative COVID-19 test at 5-7 days.
- ✓ When community transmission is characterized as high (orange) or very high (red), close contacts will be excluded from school for 14 days.

Close contacts who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic

- ✓ Are not required to quarantine;

- ✓ Will not be excluded from school;
- ✓ Will not be referred for COVID-19 testing;
- ✓ Should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following date of exposure; and
- ✓ Should isolate themselves if symptoms develop, be evaluated for COVID-19, including SARS-CoV-2 testing, and inform their healthcare provider of vaccination status.

Close Contacts (Updated 8/23/21 per NJDOH guidelines)

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.

Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) where both the infected student and the exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting. (updated 8/21)

School staff should identify school-based close contacts of positive COVID-19 cases in the school. } As with any other communicable disease outbreak, schools will assist in identifying the close contacts within the school and communicating this information back to the Hunterdon Health Department. } With guidance from the Hunterdon Health Department, schools will be responsible for notifying parents and staff of the close contact exposure and exclusion requirements while maintaining confidentiality.

School nurses and district administration will work in collaboration with the Hunterdon County Department of Health to identify and contact close contacts.

Remote Instruction

Remote instruction shall be provided for excluded students as needed throughout the school year. Students will be required to use Zoom, Google Classroom, Sites, and email to participate in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish synchronous instruction sessions. The Remote Student Code of Conduct shall be in place to ensure appropriate school behavior and use of district-provided materials and equipment. Health and Physical Education, Art, Media Technology(library) and Music shall be provided asynchronously.

Should the entire district be required to close for more than three consecutive days due to a declared 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, the district will provide remote instruction commensurate with in-person instruction that will count towards the district's 180-day requirement. The following will occur:

- ✓ Staff Schedules. Individual staff schedules subject to change.

Staff Schedules. 8:00 am – 3:05 pm	
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Instruction and student supervision
12:00 pm – 12:30 pm	Lunch
12:30 pm – 1:10 pm	Prep
1:10 pm – 3:05 pm	Office Hours for student/parent communication

Student Schedules. 8:00 am – 12:00 pm	
8:00 am – 12:00 pm	ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies & Spanish Instruction
12:05 pm	Dismissal

- ✓ Direct, synchronous instruction will be provided in ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish. Student schedules will be developed.
- ✓ Asynchronous instruction will be provided for health, physical education, art, media technology(library) and music.
- ✓ In the event road conditions are hazardous due to snow/ice, instruction will be delivered remotely.
- ✓ Eligible students will be provided meals while school is in virtual session through our food service provider. Families will be given a weekly pick-up time in the district to receive their meals.
- ✓ In the event substitutes cannot be located to cover staff absences, the district will deliver instruction remotely.
- ✓ If schools are required to deliver instruction through a fully virtual environment during limited periods throughout the school year due to a local or Statewide health emergency, the district will implement a tele instruction program in accordance with P.L. 2020, c.27 and the districts' Emergency Closure Preparedness Plan as follows:
 - A school day shall consist of not less than four hours and will follow the student's schedule for the 21/22 school year.
 - Scheduling will support a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction which allows for contact time between educators and their students, as well as time for students to engage with their peers.
 - Student attendance will be documented daily.
 - Students with special needs and ELL students will receive instruction in a manner designed to meet their individual needs.
 - Network access will be provided to those who require it through Verizon hot spots
 - A 1:1 device scenario is provided to all students K-8 in the district