

# LEA Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services

**LEA Name:** High Bridge School District  
**Date:** June 1, 2021  
**Date Revised:** August 31, 2021  
November 15, 2021

For the 2021-2022 school year, High Bridge School District will return to a more traditional school year with full in-person instruction for all students. The school day will return to the normal school hours. All athletics, extra-curricular activities, and cafeteria will run as in a traditional school year. *Note: Virtual instruction is no longer an option for students per the expiration of the Governor's Executive Order which allowed for virtual instruction as an alternative.*

## **1. Maintaining Health and Safety**

*For each mitigation strategy listed below, please describe how the LEA will maintain the health and safety of students, educators, and other staff and the extent to which it has adopted policies, and a description of any such policies, on each of the following safety recommendations established by the NJDOH.*

### **A. MASKS**

Per Governor's [Executive Order 251](#), starting on August 9, 2021, **it is mandatory that face masks be worn indoors in all district and school buildings by all students, employees, parents/visitors, no matter your vaccination status.** Exceptions include the following as noted in the Order:

- a. When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- b. When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face masks without assistance;
- c. When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face mask;
- d. When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- e. When the individual is engaged in activity that cannot physically be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating or drinking, or playing a musical instrument that would be obstructed by a face mask;
- f. When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;

- g. When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- h. When wearing a face mask creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task

**Masks are also required for all individuals while on a school bus regardless of vaccination status** as they are still required on public transportation and this requirement is also noted in the New Jersey Department of Education's recent ["The Road Forward"](#) document.

Following the guidance we received from the Hunterdon County Department of Health in September 2020, bandanas, gaiters and masks with vents are not acceptable face coverings; only surgical, cloth or clear masks will be allowed in schools.

### **B. PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

The CDC's recommended physical distancing of three feet apart in schools will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. All student desks will be spaced apart as far as possible per each classroom's dimensions. Desks will be faced in the same direction and group seating arrangements will be avoided. Students will be requested to physically distance themselves to the greatest extent possible in the hallways and during large group settings such as study halls, lunches, assemblies, etc.

Cohorts were eliminated in May 2021 and will not be implemented in the 2021-2022 school year. The entire student body will be in school for in-person instruction each school day.

Visitors in the buildings during school hours will be restricted. Visitors must be pre-approved by the building nurse. Exceptions may be made based on community transmission levels.

### **C. HAND WASHING AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

We will continue to reinforce proper hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to all students and employees. Touchless hand sanitizers installed in classrooms last school year and mobile sanitizing stations at main entrances and common areas will remain in place for the 2021-2022 school year. The signage regarding proper hand washing and respiratory etiquette posted during the last school year will remain up for the 2021-2022 school year. Reminders will also be sent out from the nurses' office periodically throughout the year. Teachers will also be reminded that the sharing of equipment and supplies is discouraged unless items can be cleaned between uses.

#### **D. MEALS AND CAFETERIA**

The cafeterias at both schools will return to full operation for the 2021-2022 school year offering daily hot meals and a la carte items. Students will be physically distanced in the cafeterias to the greatest extent possible during lunch periods.

#### **E. TRANSPORTATION**

If occupancy allows, students will be asked to physically distance themselves on the school bus. Windows will be opened to increase airflow.

**Masks are required for all individuals while riding the school bus regardless of vaccination status as they are required on public transportation** (exceptions to mask wearing are outlined in section A above and in [Executive Order 251](#)).

All bus contractors will be thoroughly cleaning buses before departure in the morning and after the last run of the day. Disinfecting wipes will be used between runs as well.

#### **F. CLEANING/DISINFECTION OF FACILITIES, AIRFLOW AND VENTILATION**

Enhanced cleaning protocols established in the 2020-2021 school year will continue into the 2021-2022 school year. The Protexus electrostatic sprayers will continue to be used throughout the buildings every day. Common touch points such as door handles, knobs, railings, water fountains, etc. will be disinfected on a rotating basis throughout the school day. Custodial crews will continue to thoroughly clean and disinfect daily once students are dismissed.

In regards to airflow and ventilation, the HVAC system checks and monthly filter changes for proper air quality will continue. Classroom windows and doors will be opened when possible to increase airflow.

#### **G. HEALTH SCREENING**

[District Covid Daily Pre Attendance Screening](#) survey must be reviewed by the parent/guardian prior to sending your child to school. Students who are sick should not attend school. If your child is exhibiting COVID-like symptoms (as noted in the screening survey ) or tests positive for COVID-19, please inform the school health office immediately (MS: 908-638-4101 ext 4118, ES: 908-638-4105 ext 4218).

Same protocol applies to employees. Employees should monitor their symptoms and not report to work if they are not feeling well. If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, he/she needs to inform the school health office or immediate supervisor.

For COVID-19 testing locations, please visit the Hunterdon County Department of Health's website:  
<https://www.co.hunterdon.nj.us/Coronavirus/testingsite.html#other>

## **H. CONTACT TRACING, CLOSE CONTACTS AND QUARANTINING**

Students and employees with COVID-like symptoms who are in school will be separated away from others until they can be sent home. Sick individuals will be provided with a mask if they do not have one, unless the individual has a contraindication to doing so. Any confirmed cases of COVID-19 should be reported directly to the school health office.

**Isolation** is still in effect for ill individuals or those who test positive for COVID-19 as follows:

1. Ill individuals with COVID-like symptoms who have not been tested or individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home until at least 10 days have passed from symptom onset and at least 24 hours have passed after resolution of fever without fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms. (Note: if the county level is at High for COVID-19 activity, quarantine is 14 days. Levels are determined by the NJ Department of Health).
2. Persons who test positive for COVID-19 but who are asymptomatic should stay home for 10 days from the positive test result. (Note: if the county level is at High for COVID-19 activity quarantine is 14 days. Levels are determined by the NJ Department of Health).
3. An alternate diagnosis (including a positive strep test or influenza swab) without a negative COVID-19 test is not acceptable for individuals who meet COVID-19 exclusion criteria to return to school earlier than the timeframes above. (Note: Exceptions may be made based on level of community transmission and COVID-19 exposure status).

The district will follow the NJ Department of Health state guidelines for isolation and quarantine timeframes listed here:  
[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID updated quarantine timeframes.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID%20updated%20quarantine%20timeframes.pdf)

**Close contacts** - 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. However, the CDC has an exception for close contacts in K-12 indoor classroom settings as follows: "the close contact definition excludes students who are within 3-6 feet of an infected student if both the infected student and exposed student(s) correctly and consistently wore well-fitting masks the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff or other adults in the indoor classroom setting." Therefore, if students are wearing masks properly over their mouth and nose indoors, there is no quarantine required for close contacts (under 3 feet apart will require contact tracing). Vaccinated students also do not have to be quarantined if they are identified as close contacts, unless they show symptoms or test positive, see information below.

In circumstances where masks are not worn, such as lunches, sports, etc., the following guidelines will be followed for close contacts:

- **Unvaccinated** individuals identified as close contacts of an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 should be excluded from school and quarantined for 10 days, or 7 days with a negative test result collected at 5-7 days. If the community COVID-19 activity level reaches High, close contacts should be excluded from school and quarantine for 14 days. *Note: COVID-19 Activity Levels are determined by the New Jersey Department of Health.*
- Exposed close contacts who are **fully vaccinated** and have no COVID-like symptoms:
  - Do not need to quarantine, be excluded from school, or be tested following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
  - Should still monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure.
  - If they experience symptoms, they should isolate themselves from others, be clinically evaluated for COVID-19, including testing and inform their health care provider of their vaccination status at the time of presentation of care.

**Vaccinations** - As per Executive Order 253, p5,1: the vaccine is a requirement for all school staff beginning October 18, 2021.

a. Staff must provide proof of vaccination to the school nurses by or before October 18, 2021. Any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof that they are fully vaccinated must submit to a minimum of weekly or twice weekly testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

b. If your child has been vaccinated for COVID-19, please send in a copy of the vaccination record to the health office so that they may add it to your child's immunization file and it will assist with contact tracing if needed. The vaccine is not a requirement, but it is a great way to keep your student's records updated and all in one place.

The school district will continue to work with the Hunterdon County Department of Health to inform them of new cases and to assist with contact tracing as needed.

Students who are quarantined will receive assignments either via Google Classrooms or with take home packets. Please contact your student's teacher.

#### **I. EFFORTS TO PROVIDE VACCINATIONS TO EDUCATORS, OTHER STAFF, AND STUDENTS, IF ELIGIBLE**

The district has continued to share opportunities to obtain the COVID-19 vaccine in the local area with employees and parents.

## **J. APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES WITH RESPECT TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES**

The IEP team will review physician's order and other formal and informal data to determine whether any additional accommodations are required with respect to the health and safety policies to support the safe return and/or continuity of services and in-person attendance of students with disabilities. When it is determined that additional accommodations and supports are needed, the student's IEP would be revised accordingly.

Teachers and staff will continue providing increased supports for maintaining appropriate hygiene in regards to hand washing, sanitizing, and maintaining social distancing.

### **2. Ensuring Continuity of Services**

*Describe how the LEA will ensure continuity of services, including but not limited to services to address students' academic needs and students' and staff's social, emotional, mental health, and other needs, which may include student health and food services.*

All students in the High Bridge School District will return to a full school day for the 2021-2022 school year, as the option for remote learning is no longer in effect for the 2021-2022 school year per the expiration of the Governor's executive order. All athletics, extra-curricular programs and other programs such as food services will return to regular operation as in a traditional school year.

The district will continue to assess students' progress in key subject areas and identify where remediation is needed. Supplemental information will be provided to parents and students related to learning strategies to help students succeed. Please reach out to your child teacher if you need any assistance or support.

The district's guidance counselors will continue to focus on student mental health and continue to share resources with families to assist them in this area.

If students have any issues with their Chromebooks, they are reminded to contact their building's main office.

### **3. Public Comment**

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

The Safe Return Plan for 2021-2022 school year was listed on the Board of Education meeting agenda for September 13,2021 with an opportunity for public comment.

*B. Describe how the LEA ensured that the plan is in an understandable and uniform format; is to the extent practicable written in a language that parents can understand or, if not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, will be orally translated for such a parent; and upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the ADA, will be provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.*

The residents of High Bridge School District are primarily English-speaking citizens so the Safe Reopening Plan for 2021-2022 will be written in English and divided into sections for ease of navigation. Any parent/guardian can request a translation of the plan by emailing the District's superintendent or if needed in an alternative format by contacting their child's case manager.