

# HPS Reopening Plan: SY 2021–2022 Update



**BULLETIN:** On June 28, 2021, the Office of the Governor of the State of New Jersey published a press release announcing guidance for the 2021–2022 school year. The document presents “a series of coordinated recommendations and guidance documents to assist school districts and educators as they develop local reopening plans for the 2021–2022 school year.” All public school districts in New Jersey are to provide full-time, in-person instruction for the upcoming school year, and High Point School of Bergen County is fully prepared and more than ready to do so. This update serves as both an addendum to our state-approved reopening plan and a summary of measures and protocols applicable to in-school operations for fall 2021 and onward.

## Overview Status Report

New guidelines have been made available to all New Jersey public school districts for the safest and most effective return to full-time, in-person instruction statewide in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines, published as “[The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021–2022 School Year](#)” — authored by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and endorsed by Governor Philip D. Murphy; Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver; Angelica Allen-McMillan, Ed.D., NJDOE Acting Commissioner; and Judith M. Persichilli, R.N., B.S.N., M.A., NJDOH Commissioner — replaces protocols outlined in Executive Order No. 175 and in NJDOE’s earlier “[The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education](#).”

Accordingly, HPS’s “[Emergency School Health-Related Closure Plan](#)” has now been rendered obsolete, and our “[School Reopening Plan](#),” last updated in August 2020 in preparation for the 2020–2021 school year, has now also been superseded by NJDOE’s “The Road Forward.”

The following is brief account of what’s changing, what’s staying the same, and HPS’s pledge to follow NJDOE guidelines to the best of our ability, in the best interests of our students.

## Statement of Intent

NJDOE’s overarching project titled “The Road Forward: Engage, Recover, and Reimagine Education in New Jersey” is a three-part initiative comprised of:

- “School Year 2021–2022 Health and Safety Guidance”: Health and safety strategies to reduce risks to students and staff from COVID-19, while still prioritizing full-time in-person learning
- “School Year 2021–2022 Self-Assessment”: District readiness to accelerate learning and provide supportive school climates
- “Learning Acceleration Guide”: A compilation of learning acceleration principles and practices in New Jersey

All information on the project can be found at: <https://www.nj.gov/education/roadforward/>.

It should be noted that all state-supported strategies have been formally deemed “recommendations, not mandatory standards,” meaning that implementation practices can and should be adapted as needed to accommodate particular school settings and particular student populations. HPS will therefore adopt these recommendations as they’ve been designed — as a “roadmap” and “blueprint” for moving forward — custom-tailoring them to our students with special needs to best meet those needs, on an individual student basis.

As a state-approved private special education program and ASAH member school, we nevertheless have every intention of following state guidelines for public school districts whenever and however we can, as applicable to our highly diverse body of grade 6–12 students with a wide range of eligibilities and exceptionalities.

### **Areas of Ongoing Attention & Observation**

The large majority of practices and protocols put in place to allow for school reopening in 2020–2021 remain in effect for 2021–2022, and thus the following measures will still be observed for the foreseeable future:

- Social distancing where and when practical to allow for full-time, in-person instruction
- Increased ventilation by means of open windows and doors, weather and instruction permitting
- Maintaining a full inventory of materials and substances intended to reduce or eliminate the spread of COVID, including hand sanitizers, soap, disposable paper towels, hands-free trash receptacles, etc.
- Continued adherence to CDC and NJDOE procedures if and when staff and students report or exhibit COVID symptoms
- Continued adherence to CDC, NJDOE, and local school district procedures for contact tracing of COVID-positive individuals on campus
- Limited use of shared items; sanitation of items between shared use
- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of the school

Details on all existing and ongoing COVID-related practices and protocols can be found in HPS’s [“School Reopening Plan”](#)).

Amended guidelines recommended by NJ Department of Education include:

- Instituting a monitoring system to accurately record which students and staff have been vaccinated
- Allowing reduction in social distancing from 6 feet to 3 feet in classroom settings when desirable and/or more conducive to in-person instruction
- Not requiring quarantine, exclusion from school, or COVID testing of students/staff who may have been exposed to close contact to a COVID-positive person if they are fully vaccinated and not exhibiting symptoms; however, exposed individuals should still monitor for symptoms for 14 days following exposure and should isolate themselves if symptoms present
- A concentration on learning acceleration in 2021–2022, not just remediation/recovery for lost in-person learning time since spring 2020, as much as is possible and realistic for HPS students

### **Important Update on Mask Usage**

On August 6, 2021—in response to the recent surge of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus—the Office of the Governor of New Jersey announced an updated mask policy, which was anticipated prior to the start of the new school year, to give all NJ schools up-to-the-minute guidance on how to proceed with mask usage at the start of the 2021–2022 school year.

This “Indoor Mask Requirement” took effect as of August 9, 2021, and is to continue on into SY 2021–2022 until further notice. Details of the updated policy include:

- Continued mandatory mask usage on school buses
- Required wearing of face masks inside school buildings for all students, educators, staff, and visitors *regardless of vaccination status*
- Parents/guardians cannot opt children out of full-time in-person instruction on the basis of this mandatory policy
- **Exceptions** to the mask requirement remain unchanged from the 2020-2021 school year and include:
  - When doing so would inhibit the individual’s health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors
  - When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance
  - When a student’s documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes the use of a face covering
  - When the individual is under 2 years of age
  - When an individual is engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering
  - When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anerobic activity
  - When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet from all other individuals
  - When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task

High Point leadership will keep all our families informed of developments that are sure to unfold regarding mask usage as the school year progresses.

### **Resources**

- Governor Murphy’s 6/28/2021 Press Release Announcing School Year 2021–2022 Guidance: <https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210628a.shtml>
- “The Road Forward” home page: <https://www.nj.gov/education/roadforward/>

### **Contact Information**

For further information about High Point School’s 2021–2022 school year operations, please contact:

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