



Bridge to Normalized Instruction
Hybrid Instructional Model

Spring 2021



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Introduction

The Howard County Public School System began planning for the eventual transition back to a normalized, in-person instructional model soon after schools were initially closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The planning involved in shifting between instructional models is extremely complex, balancing multiple priorities for accommodating student needs, family preferences and operational requirements. HCPSS' guideposts for this process, and at all other times, have remained consistent: to lead with equity and prioritize student and staff well-being, while providing students with a robust learning program, regardless of the format of the instructional model.

This document summarizes the main facets of the planned transition to a hybrid instructional model that includes in-person, virtual and concurrent instruction and begins on March 1, 2021, as the first stage to the gradual return to normalized instruction. All aspects of HCPSS' plans are covered:

- Instructional components, including hybrid and virtual options, timeline for student return, daily schedules, and professional development
- Provisions for student meals and transportation
- School building components, including building modifications, HVAC adjustments and cleaning protocols
- Health and safety provisions, including PPE, social distancing, staff and student screening, as well as protocols during and following instances of confirmed or suspected infection

The priorities and feedback expressed by members of the Board of Education, parents/guardians, staff members and students have been instrumental at all stages of the planning process, and their ongoing support and collaboration are greatly appreciated.

Hybrid Model

Instructional Options

Parents/guardians were asked to complete a two-question survey to select the type of instructional model - hybrid or fully virtual - that they chose for their child. All HCPSS students were offered the opportunity to return to in-person instruction. They were given the following options:

- My child will attend school in-person either 1 or 2 days per week, whichever option is available.
- My child will attend school in-person 2 days per week, if available. If HCPSS only offers in-person learning 1 day per week, my child will remain fully virtual.
- My child will receive fully virtual instruction for the remainder of the school year.

Some students were invited to participate in a full-week program, including but not limited to students receiving Special Education services, those who were identified for the HCPSS small group program earlier in the year, and others as identified by school administrators. These students coming to school five days a week will be placed in Group E.

Students who have elected to remain virtual for the rest of the 2020-2021 school year will be placed in Group V. Parents/guardians who opt for their child to remain fully virtual may request to switch to the hybrid in-person model at any time during the 2020-2021 school year. However, approval of that request is dependent on available space, social distancing guidelines, and other factors.

Students not in Group E (5 days a week) or Group V (Virtual) will be placed in two groups, A and B. These groups will be assigned to come into schools two days a week assuming a minimum of $\frac{1}{3}$ of all students elect to remain virtual. In the event that less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of students elect to remain virtual, to maintain social distancing on buses and in classrooms, students in groups A and B might be brought in only one day a week.



Timeline

Below is the Board of Education approved timeline for the implementation of the hybrid model. Student/staff return will be based on 4 staggered phases.

- General Preparation
 - February 10: Parent/guardian decisions on instructional commitment, Secondary educator professional learning focused on hybrid and concurrent teaching
 - February 16: All school-based administrators report to buildings, Central Offices move to Step 3 of Central Office Reoccupation Plan
 - February 17: Elementary educator professional learning focused on hybrid and concurrent teaching, Secondary educator follow-up professional learning focused on hybrid and concurrent teaching
- Phase 1: Students with IEPs and students identified for Group E
 - February 24: Staff needed to support Phase 1 report to buildings
 - March 1: Phase 1 Group E students return to buildings five days a week and all students begin using the new hybrid schedule.
 - March 3: Educator professional learning to support hybrid and concurrent teaching
- Phase 2: Students in Pre-K-2
 - March 10: Staff needed to support Phase 2 return to buildings
 - March 10: Educator professional learning to support hybrid and concurrent teaching
 - March 15: Phase 2 Grades Pre-K-2 students in Groups A & B return to schools two days a week
- Phase 3: Students in grades 3–5, 6, 9, 12 and ARL students
 - March 24: Staff needed to support Phase 3 return to buildings
 - March 24: Educator professional learning to support hybrid and concurrent teaching
 - March 29: Phase 3 Grades 3–5, 6, 9, 12 and ARL students in Groups A & B return to schools two days a week
- Phase 4: Students in grades 7, 8, 10 and 11 (all remaining students)
 - March 31: Remaining staff return to buildings
 - April 12: Phase 4 All remaining students return to schools

Hybrid Model

Phase 1 of the full day hybrid model will begin on March 1. Families have the option to have their children remain virtual for the remainder of the school year. Families will select their commitment for students to remain virtual or to attend in-person using [HCPSS Connect](#). Once family selections are made, students will be assigned to one of four groups:

- Group A (attend school Mondays and Tuesdays),
- Group B (attend school Thursdays and Friday),
- Group E (attend school five days a week), or
- Group V (attend school virtually Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday).

If the number of students who select the in-person options exceed bus, classroom and/or cafeteria capacity, the cohorts will be subdivided so that each cohort attends school one day per week.

Subdivision of cohorts will occur on a school by school basis.

Cohort Schedule for Hybrid Instruction

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Groups A & E in school	Groups A & E in school	Group E in school 2 ½ hours in the morning	Groups B & E in school	Groups B & E in school
Groups B & V virtual	Groups B & V virtual		Groups A & V virtual	Groups A & V virtual

The Hybrid Instructional Day

School start and end times will return to a schedule similar to the schedule prior to March 2020, with a 20 minute later start and end time. The shift in schedule is necessary to allow buses to complete all necessary drop offs and pickups.

Beginning March 1, all class schedule start and end times will be adjusted to reflect a full day schedule on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Class schedules will be shared with families prior to March 1 so students and families will know when each class begins and ends. While class times will be adjusted, the Google Meet class nicknames for logging in will remain the same.

The teacher of record will be responsible for teaching both in-person and virtual students at the same time. Each class/instructional block will consist of a combination of the following:

- **Whole Group Instruction:** During this time, the teacher will be teaching concurrently (simultaneously) to students in-person and students virtually using Google Meet. Within this block, the teacher will have the flexibility to use a variety of instructional strategies, including breakouts, group activities, using digital tools, etc.
- **Small Group/Synchronous Support:** During this time, the teacher will be able to support a smaller group of students. Not all students would be expected to be on Google Meet at the same time. This time could be split so that the teacher spends some time with just the in-person students and then time to provide synchronous support to the students who are virtual that

day. Small group sessions may include concurrent (simultaneous) small instruction for virtual and in-person students. The teacher should apportion this time so that both virtual and in-person students receive support throughout the week.

- **Independent Work:** Students will be tasked during this time to complete independent work. This may occur during whole group instruction and/or while the teacher is working with a small group.

Implementation of Special Education Services/Supports

Students receiving special education and related services and supports through an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) will continue to receive services and supports in accordance with the IEP to the greatest extent possible. Students who have related or support services on their IEP and are attending in-person will also receive in-person therapy or intervention to the greatest extent possible. If a student is attending hybrid and needs to receive in-person therapy/intervention, they may miss some class time as is the case under normal operations. The service and/or support aligned with the child's goals, objectives, and supplemental aids will be provided inside and/or outside of the general education setting. In most cases, the service and/or support is 20-30 minutes per session. Staff will prioritize scheduling these services during the last 20-30 minutes of the class period to minimize conflicts with whole group instruction when possible. Students may work in small groups in either of these settings. Staff, including but not limited to general educators, special educators, and paraeducators, are expected to be part of the students' service teams. Additionally, implementation of close adult supervision will mirror levels of support in place during normal operations in accordance with the student's IEP. Some students' developmental needs, as well as building space layout, may preclude distances of 6 ft apart being maintained in the in-person learning environment for instruction, therapy, toileting, and behavioral interventions. Wednesdays may also be utilized for special education services and supports. Instruction on Wednesdays may be in-person or virtual for the scheduled half day. IEP team meetings will continue to be scheduled and held virtually throughout the workday for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Students receiving early intervention services through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) will continue to receive virtual services and supports in accordance with their plans. Determining the provision of such services in the home and/or community settings will continue to be under careful consideration and in accordance with our state educational agency and local health department guidance.

Implementation of Section 504 Plans

Students with Section 504 plans will continue to receive accommodations, supports, and related services as written in their individual 504 plans to the greatest extent possible while engaging in the instructional model of choice. Student services staff, classroom teachers, and administrators will provide 504 services and supports as written in 504 plans. Related services for students with 504 plans will be provided throughout the school day and to the best extent possible will occur in-person or through alternative service delivery models. For the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, 504 meetings will continue to be scheduled and held virtually throughout the workday.

Implementation of English Learners (EL) Plans

English learners will continue to receive first instruction in English language development in accordance with their EL plans. English language development services are proportionate to the student's proficiency in English and should decrease as the student's proficiency increases.

School Schedules

Prior to the schedule shift on March 1, schools will share the grade level and/or school schedule with general start and end times. Teachers will share the specific times that students will need to join with Google Meet for synchronous instruction. The samples below are for general planning purposes.

Elementary School

Elementary schools will have the following start and end times:

8:15-2:45	Cedar Lane School
8:35-3:05	Cradlerock
8:55-3:25	Bollman Bridge
9:00-3:30	Lisbon, Northfield, Talbott Springs
9:05-3:35	Bryant Woods, Centennial Lane, Hollifield Station, Manor Woods, St. John's Lane, Swansfield
9:10-3:40	Ducketts Lane, Hanover Hills, Rockburn
9:15-3:45	Longfellow, Phelps Luck, Triadelphia Ridge
9:20-3:50	Dayton Oaks, Hammond, Jeffers Hill, Laurel Woods, Stevens Forest
9:35-4:05	Atholton, Clemens Crossing, Forest Ridge, Waverly, West Friendship
9:40-4:10	Bushy Park
9:45-4:15	Bellows Spring, Clarksville, Deep Run, Elkridge, Fulton, Gorman Crossing, Guilford, Ilchester, Pointers Run, Running Brook, Thunder Hill, Veterans, Waterloo, Worthington

Sample Elementary School Hybrid Schedule

The following schedule shows the instructional blocks for elementary school students:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A and E In School	Group A and E In School	Group E In School	Group B and E In School	Group B and E In School
Group B & V Virtual	Group B & V Virtual	Group A, B, and V Virtual	Group A & V Virtual	Group A & V Virtual
SEL	SEL	Mathematics	SEL	SEL
ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
Related Arts	Related Arts	Asynchronous Work Time	Related Arts	Related Arts
Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess		Lunch/Recess	Lunch/Recess
Content (Science/Social Studies, Health, GT CEUs)	Content (Science/Social Studies, Health, GT CEUs)		Content (Science/Social Studies, Health, GT CEUs)	Content (Science/Social Studies, Health, GT CEUs)
Mathematics	Mathematics		Mathematics	Mathematics

Note: Elementary schools will have staggered start times to accommodate bus routes. The individual daily schedules will vary by grade level and school.

The following schedule shows a SAMPLE comparison of a student day for a student attending in school compared to a student attending virtually:

Subject	Time	In School Student	Virtual Student
Arrival	9:20-9:25	Arrival and Set Up	N/A
SEL	9:25-9:40	Whole Group SEL	Whole Group SEL (Google Meet)
ELA	9:40-10:00	Whole Group Reading	Whole Group Reading (Google Meet)
	10:05-10:25	Independent Reading	Small Group Reading (Google Meet)
	10:25-10:45	Small Group Reading	Independent Reading
	10:45-11:05	Independent Activity or Lexia Core5	Independent Activity or Lexia Core5
	11:10-11:35	Whole Group Writing	Whole Group Writing (Google Meet)
Related Arts	11:40-12:05	Whole Group Related Arts 1	Whole Group Related Arts 1 (Google Meet)
	12:10-12:35	Whole Group Related Arts 2	Whole Group Related Arts 2 (Google Meet)
Lunch/Recess	12:40-1:40	Lunch & Recess	Lunch & Break
Mathematics	1:40-2:25	Whole Group Math	Whole Group Math (Google Meet)
	2:25-2:40	Independent Work or Dreambox	Small Group Math (Google Meet)
	2:40-2:55	Small Group Math	Independent Work or Dreambox
Content	3:00-3:45	Whole Group Content	Whole Group Content (Google Meet)
Dismissal	3:45-3:50	Pack Up and Dismissal	N/A

Note: The schedule above is just a sample. Class start and end times will vary by school and grade level.

Expectations for Elementary Instructional Blocks (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)

The following chart outlines the expectations for Grades K-5 instructional blocks.

K-5 Blocks	In-Person Hybrid (March-June)
SEL (15 min)	15 min whole group instruction No asynchronous assignments
ELA (2 hrs)	20-25 min whole group reading 20-25 min whole group writing Three 20-min small group Independent work when not in small group: may include independent daily reading (IDR), writing, Lexia Core5, word work Wednesday: 15-20 min Lexia Core5, 15-20 min independent reading
Mathematics (75 min)	40-45 min whole group instruction Two 15-min small groups Independent work when not in small group: may include math assignment or Dreambox Wednesday: 15-20 min Dreambox
Content (45 min)	40 min whole group No asynchronous work
Related Arts (60 min)	One 50-55 min or Two 25 min whole group No asynchronous work
Total Daily Synchronous Time (September-February): 3 hrs 35 min (215 minutes) Total Daily Synchronous Time (March-June): 3 hrs 40 min to 4 hrs (220 min-240 min)	

Note: The Kindergarten schedule includes Self-Selected Activities. While traditional centers can not be used, teachers can incorporate gross motor and fine motor activities, outdoor play/games, or self-directed table-top activities. Teachers can incorporate 30-40 minutes throughout the day, based on student need (e.g., two 15-minute blocks).

Expectations for Full Day Pre-K Instructional Blocks

The following sample schedule reflects the 9:00-3:30 student day:

Sample Time	In-Person Hybrid (March-June)
9:00-9:30	In-Person Only (Arrival, Transition, Breakfast)
9:30-10:00	Welcome and Read Aloud (30 min whole group) Total synchronous time : 30 min
10:00-10:30	Gross Motor/Fine Motor/Table-Top Centers (30 minutes)
10:30-11:30	Small Groups (20 min each group) Total synchronous time: 20-40 min
11:30-12:30	Lunch and Recess (60 minutes)
12:30-1:00	Related Arts (30 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 30 min
1:10-1:30	Connect (15-20 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 15-20 min
1:30-2:15	Nap (45 min) / Family Connection
2:15-2:45	Fast Focus, Read Aloud, and Closure (20-30 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 20-30 min
2:45-3:30	Gross Motor/Fine Motor/Table-Top Centers/Prepare for Dismissal (45 minutes)
Total Daily Synchronous Time (September-February): 95-145 min Total Daily Synchronous Time (March-June): 115-150 min	

Sample Virtual Log-In Schedule:

- 9:30-10:00 (Welcome & Read Aloud)
- 10:30-10:50 (Small Group)
- 12:30-1:00 (Related Arts)
- 1:10-1:30 (Connect)
- 2:15-2:45 (Fast Focus, Read Aloud, and Closure)

Expectations for Half-Day Pre-K Instructional Blocks

The following sample schedule reflects the 9:00-11:30 (2.5 hours) student day:

SAMPLE Time	In-Person Hybrid (March-June)
9:00-9:30	Welcome and Read Aloud (30 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 30 min
9:30-10:00	Gross Motor/Fine Motor/Table-Top Centers (30 minutes)
10:00-10:15	Connect (15-20 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 15-20 min
10:15-11:15	Small Groups (20 min each group) Total synchronous time: 20-40 min/day
11:15-11:30	Fast Focus and Closure (15 min whole group) Total synchronous time: 15 min
Total Synchronous Time (September-February): 55-75 min Total Synchronous Time (March-June): 80-105 min	

Sample Virtual Log-In Schedule:

- 9:00-9:30 (Whole Group Welcome & Read Aloud)
- 10:00-10:35 (Connect + 1 Small Group)
- 11:15-11:30 (Fast Focus/Closure)

Middle School

Middle schools will have the following start and end times:

8:00-2:45	Dunloggin, Folly Quarter, Glenwood, Mount View, Patuxent Valley
8:15-3:00	Oakland Mills
8:20-3:05	Burleigh Manor, Elkridge Landing, Lake Elkhorn, Mayfield Woods, Wilde Lake
8:25-3:10	Hammond, Harper's Choice, Patapsco
8:30-3:15	Bonnie Branch, Thomas Viaduct
8:45-3:30	Clarksville, Ellicott Mills, Lime Kiln, Murray Hill

Sample Middle School Hybrid Schedule

The following schedule reflects the 8:00-2:45 student day:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Groups A & E in school Groups B & V virtual	Groups A & E in school Groups B & V virtual	Group E in school 8:00-10:30 Group A, B, and V Asynchronous	Groups B & E in school Groups A & V virtual	Groups B & E in school Groups A & V virtual
8:00-9:25 Period 1	8:00-9:25 Period 1	8:00-8:25 Period 1 Group E Services/Supports 8:30-8:55 Period 2 Group E Services/Supports	8:00-9:25 Period 1	8:00-9:25 Period 1
9:30-10:55 Period 2	9:30-10:55 Period 2	9:00-9:25 Period 3 Group E Services/Supports 9:30-9:55 Period 4 Group E Services/Supports 10:00 - 10:30 FLEX/SEL 10:35-11:05 V Sync Support	9:30-10:55 Period 2	9:30-10:55 Period 2
10:55-1:15 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	10:55-1:15 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	Lunch Asynchronous Work Time	10:55-1:15 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	10:55-1:15 Period 3 w/duty free lunch
1:30-2:45 Period 4	1:20-2:45 Period 4		1:30-2:45 Period 4	1:20-2:45 Period 4

On Wednesdays, students in Group E will travel to each of their classes for additional support. Once Group E students have been dismissed, teachers will provide office hours for students in Group V.

Note: Middle schools will have staggered start times to accommodate bus routes.

Expectations for Middle School Instructional Blocks:

While most instructional blocks on M, T, R, F are designated at 85 minutes, teachers are expected to split this instructional block to provide time for synchronous instruction and asynchronous supports, including supports for students receiving IEP services and supports. During the instructional block, 50-60 minutes should be dedicated to whole group instruction and the remaining 25-35 minutes should be dedicated to small group, synchronous support and/or independent activities, which will also allow for students to receive specialized supports and services with minimal disruption to instruction of new content.

High School

All high schools will follow the same master schedule so that students in ARL classes may travel to ARL.

Sample High School Hybrid Schedule

The following schedule reflects the 7:45-2:30 student day.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A and E In School Group B & V Virtual	Group A and E In School Group B & V Virtual	Group E In School 7:45 - 10:15 Group A, B, and V Asynchronous	Group B and E In School Group A & V Virtual	Group B and E In School Group A & V Virtual
7:45-9:10 Period 1	7:45-9:10 Period 1	7:45-8:20 Period 1 Group E Services/Supports	7:45-9:10 Period 1	7:45-9:10 Period 1
		8:15 - 8:40 Period 2 Group E Services/Supports		
9:15-10:40 Period 2	9:15-10:40 Period 2	8:45 - 9:10 Period 3 Group E Services/Supports	9:15-10:40 Period 2	9:15-10:40 Period 2
		9:15 - 9:40 Period 4 Group E Services/Supports		
		9:45 - 10:15 FLEX/SEL		
		10:20-10:50 V Sync Support		
10:40-1:00 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	10:40-1:00 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	Lunch Asynchronous Work Time	10:40-1:00 Period 3 w/duty free lunch	10:40-1:00 Period 3 w/duty free lunch
1:15-2:30 Period 4	1:05-2:30 Period 4		1:15-2:30 Period 4	1:05-2:30 Period 4

Note: All high schools will begin at 7:45 and end at 2:30.

Expectations for High School Instructional Blocks:

While most instructional blocks on M, T, R, F are designated at 85 minutes, teachers are expected to split this instructional block to provide time for synchronous instruction and asynchronous supports, including supports for students receiving IEP services and supports. During the instructional block, 50-60 minutes should be dedicated to whole group instruction and the remaining 25-35 minutes should be dedicated to small group, synchronous support and/or independent activities, which will also allow for students to receive specialized supports and services without interfering with instruction of new content.

Athletics

The HCPSS 2020-2021 winter athletic season, scheduled to start on January 11, 2021, was canceled due to the continuing high rates of COVID-19 infection in Howard County. The fall athletics season is scheduled to begin in-person practices on February 13, 2021 and the spring athletics season is scheduled to begin on April 17, 2021. Face coverings will be required for all students and staff while on school property. Face coverings are to be worn during roll, instruction, warm-ups, cool downs and whenever not engaged in physical exertion. Face coverings may be removed during actual conditioning exercises.

Students need to follow the student home screening protocol before coming to in-person activities. The use of locker rooms is prohibited. Students must show up “ready to practice and play” with their own equipment, towels, and water bottles labeled with their name. The sharing of water bottles will not be permitted. Hand sanitizer will be available at all gymnasium and stadium entrances and indoor/outdoor restrooms will be designated for athletes to use. Personal items that are brought to practice will be spaced out in the designated practice area. Handshakes, fist bumps, and other activities that promote transmission of illness will not be permitted. Parents/guardians who choose to remain on site must remain in their vehicles and should avoid congregating in the parking lot. Spectators will not be allowed to attend competitions at this time.

Online registration for fall athletics began on January 12, 2021, via [HCPSS Connect](#). Students selecting virtual or in-person instruction can still participate in the fall and spring athletics seasons. Visit the [HCPSS Athletics website](#) for the most up to date information.

Supporting Hybrid Instruction

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All students who are two years of age or older and staff will be required to wear face coverings (masks). If staff or families provide their own mask, it must comply with [CDC recommendations](#) for non-valved, multi-layer cloth masks to prevent transmission of COVID-19. The mask must cover a person's mouth and nose to prevent spread of respiratory secretions when they are talking, sneezing, or coughing. Students and staff may wear a gaiter if they already have a face mask underneath the gaiter; they cannot be worn alone. Exceptions to this are staff and students with a physician-documented health condition(s) that prohibit wearing a face covering safely and may include students with disabilities. A supply of PPE has been provided to all schools based on the guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The following will be provided to schools and offices:

- Nitrile gloves for all staff
- Reusable, 3-ply cotton face masks for all staff and students
- Clear face masks to support individuals with hearing/speech needs
- Supply of disposable masks for school use as needed
- Hand sanitizer
- Desk shields and tabletop sneeze guards, where required
- Face shields for all staff and students
- Disinfectant wipes
- Extra facial tissues
- N95 respirators, for nurses/health assistants

Sufficient quantities of PPE will be provided to meet staff and student needs throughout the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Staff will instruct students on proper social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing. Staff will utilize the HCPSS code of conduct to ensure that students adhere to safety expectations and protocols when appropriate.

Technology

Students who have been provided with a school-issued Chromebook should bring the device and power cord, as well as any optional peripheral devices that support their use of the device, including external keyboards, mice and headphones. Students without an HCPSS device should bring their own device and power cord, or request an HCPSS device for school use. Students who have headphones are encouraged to bring them.

Classroom environments are all equipped to provide wireless internet access for all students and staff. Classrooms are equipped with a document camera and LCD projector. Every teacher has been provided with a laptop that includes a built-in microphone and webcam. Additional technology may be provided to staff for concurrent instructional needs, including wireless headsets with microphones, additional monitors, and external web cameras.

Food and Nutrition Program

HCPSS Food and Nutrition Services ensures the seamless and continuous feeding of students during all phases of school reopening. School meals are critical to student health and well-being, especially for low-income students, and it is essential that they have access to the nutrition they need to learn, whether physically in-person or virtually. Meal service options ensure that all students receive meals regardless of their instructional group. Free meals will be available to all students until the end of the 2020-2021 school year.



Students Returning to School In-Person Five Days a Week (Group E)

- Students will come to the cafeteria to receive free breakfast, which will be eaten in the classroom or other designated spaces. Free snacks will be provided at lunch for students to take home at the end of the school day.
- Students will come to the cafeteria to receive lunch, which will be eaten in the cafeteria or other designated areas. Social distancing and other safety measures will be enforced. Students are expected to wear masks before and after eating their meals.
- All food will be individually wrapped or packaged. Students will not be permitted to self-serve any items, including food, milk, condiments, and utensils.
- Meals will be available for pick up on Wednesday and will include the following:
 - Supper for five days
 - Weekend meals (includes breakfast, lunch, snack, and supper for two days)
 - Pre-ordering is not available

Students Returning to Schools In-Person Two Days a Week (Group A and Group B)

- Students will come to the cafeteria to receive free breakfast, which will be eaten in the classroom or other designated spaces on the days they are in-person. Free snacks will be provided at lunch for students to take home at the end of the school day.
- Students will come to the cafeteria to receive lunch, which will be eaten in the cafeteria or other designated areas. Social distancing and other safety measures will be enforced. All food will be individually wrapped or packaged. Students will not be allowed to self-serve any items, including food, milk, condiments, and utensils.
- Meals will be available for pick up on Wednesday and will include the following:
 - Breakfast, lunch, snack for three days.
 - Supper for five days.
 - Weekend meals (includes breakfast, lunch, snack, and supper for two days).
 - Pre-ordering is not available.

Students Continuing Virtual Learning (Group V)

- Meals will be available for pick up on Monday and Thursday and will include breakfast, lunch, snack and supper.
 - Monday pickups will include meals for three days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday).
 - Thursday pickups will include meals for four days (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday).
- Online meal pre-ordering will be available on [Nutrislice](#) for these pick up days. All meal orders must be placed two school days in advance.

- Meals will be available in all schools, including those presently closed for construction (BMMS and HAHS) and those presently closed because of inadequate staffing (WLMS).
- Effective March 1st, pick-up times at all meal sites will change as follows:
 - Elementary schools: 7:45 am – 8:45 am.
 - Middle and High schools: 9:00 am – 10:00 am.
 - There will be no pick-ups on Tuesday and Friday.
- Students/parents/guardians will continue to have the flexibility/option to go to any of the designated meal distribution sites that are most convenient for meal pick-ups.
- No meals will be picked up inside schools. Students are not allowed in schools unless they are in Group A, Group B, or Group E according to their in-person schedule.
- Outside meal pick up locations will be available on [Nutrislice](#).

School Building Alterations and Modifications

Classrooms

Each classroom will be configured to maximize social distancing that can be maintained in support of the Maryland Recovery Plan for Education and the CDC’s Considerations for Schools. Classroom configurations will not be consistent with one another due to varying square footage and room layouts.

All classrooms and learning spaces will include the following arrangements:

- Students desks will be spaced 6 feet apart
- There will be a designated area for instructional staff
- There will be limited sharing of classroom supplies
- Students will remain 6 feet apart in learning spaces without desks. Some students’ developmental needs may preclude them from maintaining distances of 6 ft apart. Strategies will be employed to help all students adhere to safety expectations and protocols to the extent possible

In addition to classroom configurations, building alterations and modifications have been made to maintain health and safety.

Cafeteria

Students receiving in-person instruction will eat lunch in the cafeteria during their assigned lunch shift. Students will eat at desks in the cafeteria that are spaced six feet apart. Capacity in the cafeteria will be determined by the amount of students that can be seated while allowing for 6ft of distance between students. Cleaning will be performed between lunch shifts and signage will be provided for social distancing within lunch lines.



Lockers

Lockers will not be issued to students at the middle or high schools due to the inability of the students to practice social distancing while in use. This will also reduce the touch points required to be cleaned by the custodial staff. Students will be required to bring all personal belongings home at the end of each school day.

Bathrooms

To promote social distancing in bathrooms, only two occupants will be allowed at a time and restrictions are indicated on signage outside of each bathroom. Social distancing signage on the floor/wall will assist with maintaining 6ft of distance while waiting to use the restrooms. Some sinks, urinals, and stalls will be removed from service to allow for appropriate social distancing.

Physical Barriers

Plexiglass dividers or desk shields have been installed in areas of schools and offices where staff members work in close proximity to each other and workspaces that are publicly facing. Barriers have also been installed in other areas of the schools such as serving lines in cafeterias, restrooms and offices. Related service providers will have access to portable barriers when needed. Work spaces have been rearranged as needed to ensure social distancing.

Signage and Building Flow

Signage is expected to be highly-visible and posted/placed throughout school facilities to remind and reinforce social distancing, the wearing of face coverings, and hand sanitizing (washing with soap and water or the use of hand sanitizing stations). Signage will comply with the CDC's recommendations and standards pertaining to reopening of schools. Building flow will be determined on a school-by-school basis by the school's principal and administrative staff. Signage will be provided to reinforce building flow patterns, (one way stairwells, hallways, etc.).



HVAC Systems

In accordance with the recommendations of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the HCPSS Division of Operations has provided updates to HVAC systems. Between July 8, 2020 and September 4, 2020, the HVAC Shop in Building Maintenance replaced 12,439 air filters in the HVAC units serving all HCPSS buildings. In some cases, HVAC units are equipped with two air filter tracks, one for a prefilter and one for a final filter. In these cases, MERV 8 air filters were installed in the prefilter position and MERV 13 air filters were installed in the final filter position. If there was only one air filter track in the airstream (i.e., there was no prefilter), MERV 13 air filters were installed.

During summer and fall 2020, HCPSS Operations staff and outside contractors checked the operation of outdoor air dampers and airside economizers for over 900 HVAC units in all HCPSS buildings. Deficiencies were identified and addressed at the time if they were minor; otherwise, deficiencies were noted for follow-up work, which was completed in January 2021.

HCPSS Operations staff checked the operation of over 900 exhaust fans in all HCPSS buildings during summer and fall 2020. Minor deficiencies were identified and immediately addressed; other deficiencies were noted for follow-up work, which was completed in fall 2020. Systems will be run for two hours before occupancy and two hours after occupancy to maximize airflow. It should be noted that in addition to the HVAC upgrades, all domestic water systems in all HCPSS buildings have been flushed every two months to prevent any stagnation and ensure health and safety.

Cleaning Procedures

To date, Custodial Services has successfully implemented and maintained daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols to support small group instruction, student assessments and child care programs. Additionally, to minimize the chance of infectious transmission, all custodial staff follow the HCPSS COVID-19 Work Practices guidelines, which emphasize hand washing, social distancing, wearing face coverings, and refraining from sharing equipment and tools. Staff will continue to uphold these enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols as HCPSS transitions to a hybrid learning model.

Each Custodial Team is provided with written direction and training on cleaning and disinfecting procedures, including guidance on safely storing cleaning supplies, a cleaning schedule for each facility, an outline of daily expectations, and procedures when a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 case occurs. Instructions will address frequently touched areas in classrooms, offices, restrooms, public areas, and health suites, as well as other procedures.



Facilities will be cleaned and disinfected more frequently during the day and every evening, with special emphasis on frequently touched surfaces and restrooms, which include desks, chairs, door handles, water fountains, hallways, sink fixtures, toilets, dispensers and other surfaces. Custodial staff work shifts may be adjusted as needed to ensure all guidelines are appropriately performed for the occupancy of the facility. Managerial staff will have an increased presence in schools/offices to ensure implementation of enhanced protocols.

Hand sanitizer will be located throughout the buildings and in areas such as the front entrance, cafeteria, media center and gymnasium. All classrooms will be provided access to cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer. Students or teachers can utilize supplies to wipe down surfaces that may have been used by a previous occupant. Instructional activities will be structured to minimize the need to exchange materials. If sharing of materials is required, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer will be used to disinfect surfaces and hands.

Confirming School Readiness

Prior to students entering schools, all schools will have a walkthrough by a School Readiness Review Team made up of the school administration, a member of the School Management and Instructional Leadership Team, a representative from the Division of Operations, and the chief custodian to assess the readiness of the building. The walkthroughs will focus on seven areas:

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies and Procedures
- HVAC Enhancements
- Health Room/Isolation Room
- Socially-distanced Space Arrangements
- Signage
- Physical Barriers

Teams will review supplies, procedures, changes and enhancements made to the building to prepare for the return of students in the hybrid schedule. The Readiness Checklist below will be utilized to document this process.



School Readiness Checklist

School Name _____

Principal _____

Status: X - Complete / - In Progress

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- General PPE for staff (masks, face shields, gloves)
- General PPE for students (masks, face shields)
- Enhanced PPE for specialized staff (gowns, specialized masks, etc.)

Notes:

Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies and Procedures

- Review daily cleaning procedures
- Cleaning supplies
- Hand sanitizer stations, hand sanitizer bottles and disinfectant wipes

Notes:

HVAC Enhancements

- MERV-13 filters in all HVAC systems as applicable
- Outside air dampers are operational
- Proper operation of airside economizers and exhaust fans

Notes:

Health Room/Isolation Room

- Supplies
- Procedure for individuals exhibiting symptoms
- Lab confirmed case algorithm and procedures for quarantine

Notes:

Socially-Distanced Space Arrangements

- Classrooms
- Cafeteria/Eating areas
- Staff spaces

Notes:

Signage

- Bus areas/Front entrances
- Hallways and classrooms
- Cafeteria
- Restrooms/Water fountains

Notes:

Physical Barriers (Plexiglas, tape, etc.)

- Reception areas
- School counselor suites
- Bathrooms
- Related service providers
- Kitchen
- Offices

Notes:

Date Reviewed: _____

School Readiness Review Team (Please print name)

Principal/Admin: _____

SMIL Member: _____

Operations: _____

Custodian: _____

Health and Safety Protocols

Student Home Screening Protocol

To ensure students are healthy enough to attend in-person instruction, parents/guardians are to perform a symptom check every day before the student leaves home. A student having any of the following symptoms should not be sent to school and may continue to access their classrooms virtually if they are well enough to do so: [Maryland Department of Health Response to COVID 19 Positive Cases or COVID 19 Like Illness](#)

- 1 of the following:
 - New onset cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing;
 - New loss of taste or smell; OR
- 2 of the following:
 - Fever over 100.4 or chills within the past 24 hours;
 - Fatigue;
 - Muscle or body aches;
 - Headache;
 - Sore throat;
 - Congestion or runny nose;
 - Chills or shaking chills;
 - Nausea or vomiting;
 - Diarrhea.

Additionally, students who have been in close contact (within < 6 feet for a cumulative of >15 minutes over the past 24 hours with or without a mask) with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 or is suspected of having COVID-19 (exhibiting Covid-like Illness and has not tested negative after exhibiting symptoms) should not enter any HCPSS building.

Parents/guardians will assess their children for symptoms of COVID-19 illness and refrain from sending/transporting them to school until after they have been symptom-free at least 10 days after the onset of symptoms, have no fever for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever-reducing medication, and have continued improvement of symptoms and/or medical consult with their primary care physician.

Employee Self-screening Protocol

HCPSS employees were required to complete SafeSchools COVID-19 Workplace Reentry training to acknowledge they understand their responsibilities as we reopen our physical worksites.

Employee Health Self-Check

Prior to the day when on-site work is scheduled to resume, employees should self-monitor their symptoms by checking their temperature and answering these questions before reporting to work. The self-check does not need to be documented.

Employee Self-check Questions

YES or NO, since your last day of school/work/visitation, have you experienced any of the following symptoms?	Yes	No
A fever of 100.4°F or higher?		
Any use of fever reducing medication within the last 3 days?		
A new cough that is not due to another health condition?		
New shortness of breath or difficulty breathing that is not due to another health condition?		
New chills that are not due to another health condition?		
A new sore throat that is not due to another health condition?		
New muscle aches that are not due to another health condition, or that may have been caused by a specific activity (such as physical exercise)?		
A new loss of taste or smell?		
Have you had a positive test for the virus that causes COVID-19 disease within the past 10 days?		
In the past 14 days, have you had close contact (within approximately 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?		
In the last 14 days, have you traveled to an area that has been experiencing a prolonged rise in the number of COVID-19 cases?		

If an employee answers **YES** to any of the screening questions, the employee should stay home, enter the absence in Workday and not report to work.

Additional details can be found in the [HCPSS Return to the Workplace Guide](#).

Visitor Protocol

Visitors are not permitted under HCPSS Infectious Disease Plan. Exceptions are made for emergency services, contractors, and special situations. Facility special visitors will be limited and should occur by scheduled appointment only. No walk-in visitors are permitted. As much as possible, appointments to meet with parents and customers should be accommodated via telephone, video conference, or other suitable technology. When a face-to-face visit is necessary, the school or office must schedule an appointment time with the visitor and follow the following steps:

- Once the visitor has arrived at the building and parked, they must call the school/office to check-in.
- The administrator, or staff member admitting the visitor, must ask the health screening questions listed above as part of the employee self-screening protocol.
- If visitors are suspected to be sick and/or have recently experienced COVID-19 symptoms, they are not permitted to enter the building and must reschedule.
- Visitors who pass the health screening should be instructed to access the building through the front doors or appropriately designated entrance and be greeted by an employee, who will wear a mask, for escort to the appointment. Hand sanitizer should be available for visitor use upon entry.
- Visitors must wear a mask, enter the building alone, and follow social distancing guidelines. Any family members or friends accompanying the visitor will be asked to remain outside or in a vehicle unless otherwise approved by administration. (For ex. baby/small child, meeting with both parents/advocate)
- There will be a table or drop box in the vestibule or front entry hallway to allow parents or others to drop off items for students and/or staff. School administrative staff will provide signage to instruct visitors on the procedures to be followed.



Isolation, Exclusion, Quarantine and Return to School Protocol

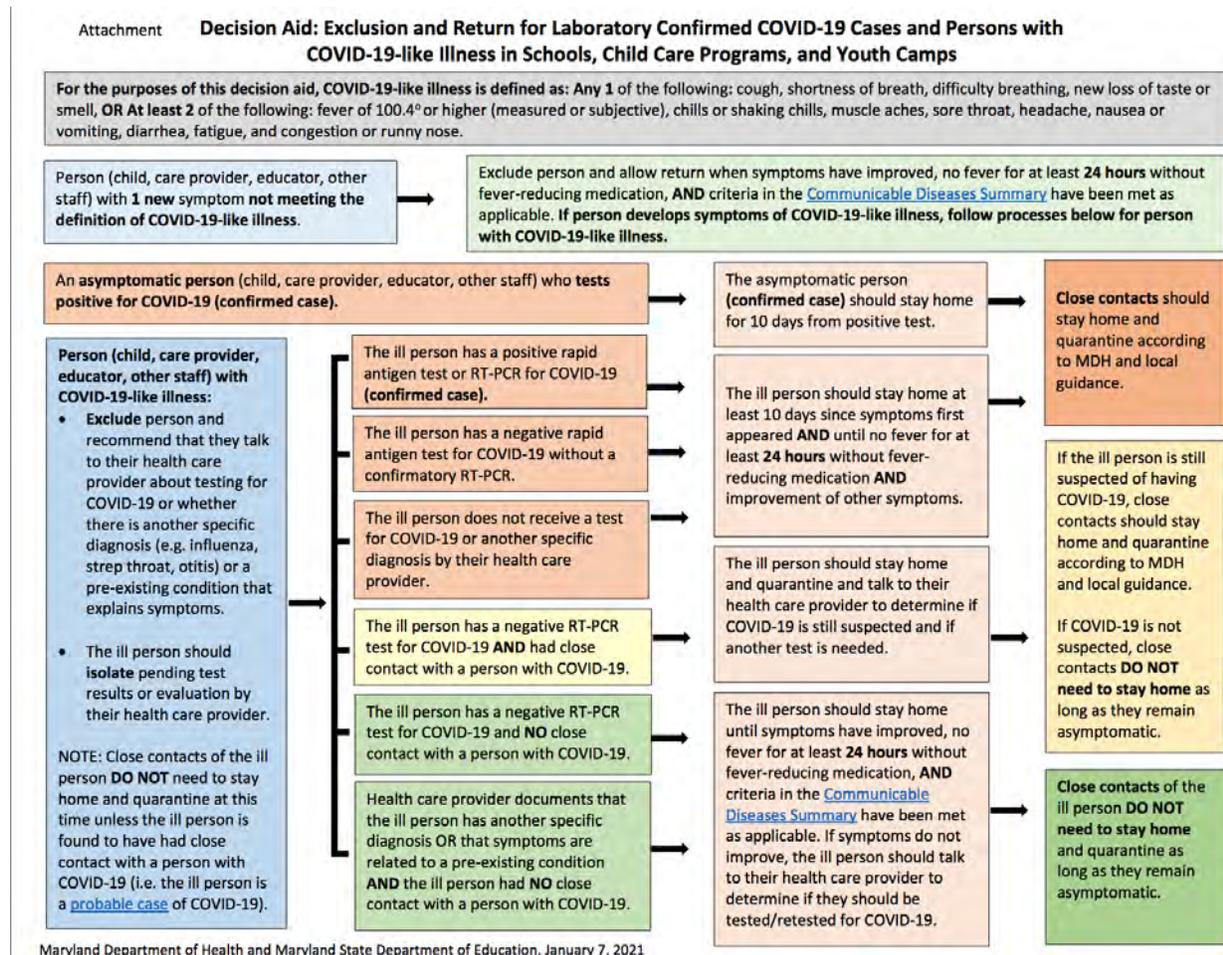
If a student or school staff member develops symptoms of COVID-19-like illness during the school day, the school will:

- Safely isolate the person in the designated isolation area and place a surgical mask on the person if they are not wearing a cloth face covering as appropriate;
- The School Health Services staff member should don the appropriate PPE and conduct the appropriate determination of the student's condition based on presenting symptoms;
- Begin the process for the person to vacate the school as soon as possible;

A student determined to be a close contact with a person with verified COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days per HCHD child care guidelines. A staff member determined to be a close contact with a person with verified COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days, with the possibility of release at 10 days under certain circumstances. Staff in quarantine must be out of school for the 10-day minimum regardless of a negative test result, while students must remain out of school for a full 14 day quarantine.

Students or staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 should isolate and not return to school until they have been out at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms or positive test without symptoms, remain fever-free for 24 hours, and show a consistent improvement of symptoms.

The Decision Aid below, developed by the Maryland Department of Health, will be utilized to determine exclusion and quarantine durations for confirmed COVID-19 cases and persons with COVID-19 like illnesses.



[Full guidance document from Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland State Department of Education](#)

HCPSS will contact all parents of students who will need to be quarantined as a result of exposure/potential exposure. Any individual who may have been exposed is contacted during contact tracing. HCPSS will contact all employees who will need to quarantine as a result of exposure and will enact all protocols with schools as recommended by the Howard County Health Department (HCHD). Any HCPSS communications will protect confidential personal information.

Class or School Outbreak

For schools, the Maryland Department of Health defines a classroom outbreak in any K-12 school, both public and private, regardless of size as two or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases among students/teachers/staff with onset of symptoms (if asymptomatic, use date COVID test obtained) within a 14-day period and who are epidemiologically linked, but not non-household contacts. HCPSS will move

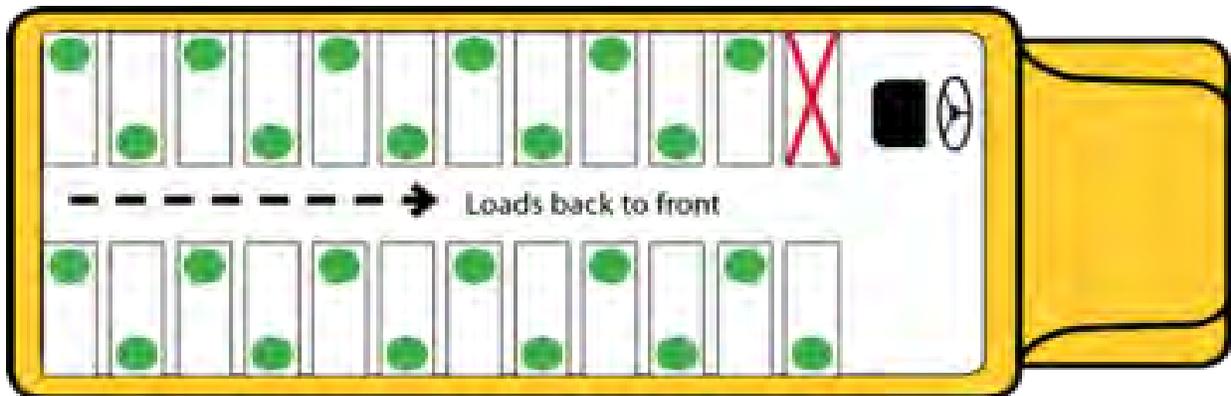
a class to fully virtual instruction if it meets this definition or based on a Howard County Health Department recommendation. In the event that a classroom needs to be closed for an outbreak, the school will communicate with families the details pertaining to the change to virtual instruction.

The Maryland Department of Health defines a school-wide outbreak as three or more classrooms or cohorts with cases from separate households that meet the classroom/cohort outbreak definition that occurs within 14 days or five percent or more unrelated students/teachers/staff have confirmed COVID-19 within a 14-day period (minimum of 10 unrelated students/teachers/staff). HCPSS will move a school to fully virtual instruction if it meets either condition of this definition, if insufficient staff are available for the safe and efficient operation of the school, or based on a Howard County Health Department recommendation. In the event that a school needs to be closed for an outbreak, HCPSS as well as the school will communicate with families the change to virtual instruction.

Transportation Procedures

Loading Buses

Following the Maryland Recovery Plan for Education and the CDC recommendations, HCPSS will limit one student per seat on the bus, while keeping the seat directly behind the driver open. Siblings or students who reside in the same residence may be allowed to sit together. If possible, students will have assigned seats and the seat will be based on the route to minimize contact while entering and exiting the bus. While waiting to exit the bus, students will remain seated and not congregate in the aisle. The adult in charge will dismiss the students one row at a time.



Buses will use a “drop and go” approach to unload students at the school sites rather than waiting for all buses to arrive and offloading simultaneously. This will alleviate any idle time in the bus loop and get the students off the bus quickly and safely in a staggered fashion. This will also assist in getting the buses to their next location sooner to account for the changes in schedule and unloading procedures. Although the ultimate goal is to have no more than one student per seat on the bus, absolutely no students will be denied service and left at a bus stop if the capacity is reached or surpassed.

Bus Air Circulation

Circulation of air through the bus is paramount, therefore all driver and passenger windows and the roof hatches will be fully open, weather permitting, on buses not equipped with air conditioning. On buses

equipped with air conditioning, the driver's window and at least three passenger windows on both sides of the aisle and the roof hatches must be opened slightly. If weather is an issue, the driver's window and at least three windows on each side of the aisle must be opened slightly on all buses. The roof hatches may be opened to the extent possible on all buses. Due to the increased air flow, students should wear clothing that is appropriate for outdoor air temperatures. To reduce cross contamination, students shall not operate the windows. Only the driver or bus attendant shall operate the windows.

Bus Cleaning and Disinfecting

The Maryland Recovery Plan for Education requires increased cleaning and disinfection for buses. For each route bus, the school system will provide one spray bottle of cleaning solution for use on high touch areas. Further description of the cleaning process outlined below:

After each morning, noon, and afternoon route, the driver will clean high touch areas of the bus, following the manufacturer's instructions for the cleaning product being used. These include:

- Bench seats occupied by student
- The backs and tops of seatbacks in front of each occupied seat
- Side walls next to occupied seats
- Handles on all emergency exits and emergency windows where a student was seated adjacently
- Windows, window frames and ledges of occupied seats (again, only driver or bus attendant will open or close)
- Handrails in stepwell

Additional Resources

HCPSS FAQ Site

- [Staff](#)
- [Students/Families](#)

MSDE COVID-19 Resources

- [Maryland School Reopening Guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Maryland Schools](#)

CDC Guidelines

- [Schools and Childcare Programs](#)
- [Cleaning, Disinfecting and Ventilation](#)