



# Hastings-on-Hudson Public Schools

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## COVID-19 Management Document – 2022-23

**Updated – August 1, 2022**

### Overview

This document is our “one-stop resource” for how we will manage COVID-19 during the 2021-22 school year. It will be updated regularly and date stamped.

Please note that the **COVID-19 Management Document – 2022-23** covers our district-wide approaches for managing COVID-19. School-specific requirements and guidelines will be issued by each school, as necessary.

Please understand that COVID-19 and how we manage it requires flexibility and patience with periodic changes in approaches and plans. Our commitment is to promptly communicate any changes to our plans.

As of August 1, 2022, our policies and procedures for managing COVID-19 are the same as those at the end of the 2021-22 School Year. Modifications will be dependent on guidance from public health and medical authorities.

### An Overarching Framework for Decisions

COVID-19 is a public health and medical concern, requiring educators to work within the expertise provided by Federal, national, state and county public health and medical authorities. We are dependent on state and county requirements and guidance, which is tied to requirements and guidance from the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) issued its [Health and Safety Guide for the 2021-22 School Year](#) on August 12, 2021. The NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) are regularly providing updated guidance and requirements, which is layered into our COVID-19 management plan.

Guidance from the state and county for the 2022-23 School Year is expected by late August. At this point, we do not anticipate changes that would alter the procedures listed in this management document. Please understand that media reports of guidance and requirements will not be the basis of our decision-making.

Hastings works closely with Westchester County school districts and especially with the Quad Village School Districts to coordinate our plans for addressing COVID-19. We will align with the state and

county guidance. In turn, the District’s Leadership Team works within the state, county and regional frameworks to develop final plans. We are careful to confer with teacher and staff leaders.

## **Current Procedures**

### 1. Hastings is Fully In-Person

We will be fully in-person for all students, grades K-12, all day, every day. (8.6.21, 8.1.22)

### 2. No Remote Option

We will not provide a Hybrid or Remote Learning option.

**We are currently reviewing plans regarding a Live Stream solution in 2022-23. A final decision will be made and announced ahead of school starting on September 6, 2022.**

In 2021-22, Live Stream was offered for students in one of the following three situations:

- They have a confirmed case of COVID-19 and are out of school due to the required isolation period.
- They have a family member with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- They require a medical exemption, due to extreme medical needs, as verified by a medical specialist and the District’s medical director.

Please see the section at the end of this document for details on the Live Stream solution and eligibility for the medical exemption. (8.6.21, 8.27.21, 12.9.21, 1.28.22, 3.15.22, 8.1.22)

### 3. Masks

Effective March 2, 2022, mask-use became optional for all staff and students K-12.<sup>1</sup>

However, individuals who have tested positive COVID-19 will have a required period of mask-use as follows:

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for a period of five (5) days, with day “0” being the first day of symptoms or the positive test. Individuals may return to school/work following the five-day isolation if their symptoms have lessened and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours. Upon returning to school, individuals must wear masks during Days 6 – 10 of their isolation period.<sup>2</sup> This will be an honor system; we will not track the individual mask-use.

(8.13.21, 8.29.21, 1.28.22 & 3.15.22 )

### 4. Vaccinations for Students

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<sup>1</sup> “[New Masking Guidance Update](#),” pp. 2-3, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> “[New Masking Guidance Update](#),” p. 1, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

We strongly encourage vaccinations for all eligible students. Vaccinations are a game-changer for ensuring sustained, in-person schooling. We know that a very high percentage of age-eligible students are fully vaccinated. Similarly, we encourage boosters for age-eligible students.

To confirm, “fully vaccinated” is defined as having the full COVID-19 vaccine regime (either one or two doses, based on the type of vaccine) and, if age-eligible, having received a booster. “Unvaccinated” is defined as either (1) not receiving the full COVID-19 vaccine regime (either one or two doses, based on the type of vaccine); or, (2) having received the full vaccine regimen, but not yet boosted if age-eligible. (8.13.21, 8.20.21, 9.3.21, 1.28.22, 2.7.22 & 3.15.22)

#### 5. Vaccinations or Mandated Testing for Employees

On September 2, 2021, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) mandated weekly testing of all teachers, staff and administrators for COVID-19. Employees who provide documentation that they are fully vaccinated may opt-out of the weekly testing requirement. Through state records, we now know that over 86 percent of all Hastings employees are fully vaccinated, with the vaccination percentage among staff working directly with students over 95 percent. These percentages will increase as we continue to review records of those not listed as vaccinated, and the new mandate encourages unvaccinated employees to obtain a vaccination. Unvaccinated employees were notified individually on September 22, 2021 how to comply with mandated testing if they remain unvaccinated. The NYSDOH requirement that employees be fully vaccinated or tested weekly will provide all employees and students essential protections. (8.13.21, 8.20.21, 9.3.21 & 9.22.21)

#### 6. Physical Distancing & Contact Tracing

Formerly known as social distancing, physical distancing within classrooms, lunchrooms and other internal spaces will be three feet, when possible.<sup>3</sup>

Per the NYSDOH, due to masks being optional, the parameters for identifying close contacts will be broader. For example, due to masks not being worn by some school community members, those who have 15 minutes or longer of contact within a six (6) foot radius of an individual will be considered close contacts. This is an increase from the three (3) foot radius which was applied when masks were required. However, per the NYSDOH, schools are not required to “rearrange the physical footprint or space students six feet apart.”<sup>4</sup>

For the immediate future, the District will continue to perform contact tracing for each positive case of COVID-19. To the greatest degree possible, we will be informing close contacts who are unvaccinated. (8.13.21, 9.22.21 & 3.15.22)

#### 7. COVID-19 Optional Surveillance Testing

In 2021-22, we partnered with the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDOH) on a regional, district-based approach to surveillance testing. Details on the year-long optional program may be found [HERE](#).

For 2022-23, we are awaiting an update from the WCDOH as to plans for Optional Surveillance Testing. (8.20.21, 9.3.21, 9.22.21, 8.1.22)

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<sup>3</sup> [“New Masking Guidance Update,”](#) p. 3, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> [“New Masking Guidance Update,”](#) p. 3, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

## 8. Hastings Test-to-Stay Program

With quarantines no longer required, the District no longer operates a Test-to-Stay (TTS) program. Rather, the District provides home COVID-19 test kits to unvaccinated individuals determined to be close contacts for recommended daily testing for a period of five (5) days after the last exposure. Please note: the daily testing will be only for unvaccinated individuals. Test kits will be available in each school's health office.

- Farragut Complex Health Office to [cipollinaj@hohschools.org](mailto:cipollinaj@hohschools.org)
- Hillside's Health Office to either [kowalskig@hohschools.org](mailto:kowalskig@hohschools.org) or [feeneyp@hohschools.org](mailto:feeneyp@hohschools.org)

*(1.18.22, 2.7.22 & 3.15.22)*

## 9. Quarantine & Isolation Requirements

Quarantine – Per the NYSDOH, we are no longer quarantining exposed students or staff. Exposed, asymptomatic individuals, regardless of vaccination status, may remain in school. It is recommended that such individuals appropriately wear a well-fitted mask and undergo recommended testing. These individuals may participate in school-based extracurricular activities and may also continue to ride the school bus.<sup>5</sup>

Isolation – Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for a period of five (5) days, with day “0” being the first day of symptoms or the positive test. Individuals may return to school/work following the five-day isolation if their symptoms have lessened and they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours. Upon returning to school, individuals must wear masks during Days 6 – 10 of their isolation period.<sup>6</sup> This will be an honor system; we will not track the individual mask-use.

*(8.13.21, 9.10.21 1.18.22, 1.28.22, 2.7.22 & 3.15.22)*

## 10. Testing Requirements If Out With COVID-19 Symptoms

Individuals who are ill should always stay home. Home testing is encouraged at the onset of symptoms and the individual should remain home when symptomatic. They may return to school the following day if their symptoms have improved and the parent/guardian has communicated with the school nurse about negative home COVID-19 test results. Home antigen COVID-19 tests are now acceptable to document a negative result. Free test kits are available in each school's health offices. *(8.13.21, 9.10.21 & 3.15.22)*

## 11. Lunchroom & Meal Times

As of March 7, 2021, schools resumed traditional lunch experiences with fewer restrictions on physical distancing. At Farragut Middle School and Hillside, table barriers will no longer be used. At Hillside, classes will eat snacks together in classrooms or outdoors, as has been traditionally done. *(8.20.21, 8.27.21, 9.3.21, 9.10.21, 3.15.22)*

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<sup>5</sup> “[New Masking Guidance Update](#),” p. 3, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

<sup>6</sup> “[New Masking Guidance Update](#),” p. 1, NYSDOH, March 1, 2022.

12. Barriers

We will not have barriers on desks or in classrooms other than when requested by individual students or staff. The requests may only apply to the individual's desk. We will maintain barriers in public facing spaces, such as at the security desks and in building and central offices. (8.13.21)

13. Annual Honor Commitment to Healthy Practices

In 2021-22, we instituted an "Honor System Agreement," through which staff and families committed at the start of the school year to daily home health checks before coming to school and to stay home if not well. Staff and families did not submit a daily record of their home health checks. It was an Honor System. The Honor System Agreement was sent to all families and staff on August 27, 2021 as part of the Superintendent's Weekly Community Update. A link to the document is [HERE](#).

For 2022-23, we are reviewing whether to continue the "Honor System Agreement." We will provide a formal announcement on the plan prior to school opening on September 6, 2022.

(8.27.21, 9.23.21 & 8.1.22)

14. Busing Procedures

Mask-use is optional on all school buses. Assigned seating will continue for Hillside and 5th grade students. (8.13.21 & 3.15.22)

15. Ventilation and Facility Cleaning/Disinfection

We will continue to ensure air quality through the ongoing use of the upgraded ventilation systems. We will continue the additional cleaning and disinfection practices instituted last year throughout each building several times per day. (8.6.21)

16. Parent/Family Visitors and Meetings

Family and visitors are allowed in the schools during the formal day. In keeping with best practices for security and safety, family and visitors must schedule an appointment ahead of time with specific teachers or administrators. When in the building, visitors will need to go to the specific classroom or office solely. We are not able to have parents and other visitors in the schools unannounced and unescorted. Procedure details include:

- a. Family/visitor schedules a visit with the specific teacher or administrator;
- b. Family/visitor checks in at the school's security desk for the scheduled visit;
- c. If unscheduled, an administrator will be called by the security guard, and the parent/visitor waits at the security desk until greeted;
- d. Family/Visitor is met by the teacher/administrator at the security desk and escorted to the meeting/gathering location;
- e. When done, the family/visitor is escorted back to the main entrance to the school.

Group events and activities for families during the school day will be announced by each principal. (3.25.22, 8.1.22)

After-School – Full access is provided for audiences and spectators to after-school extracurricular events and programs. As always, we will attempt physical distancing at events as much as possible and masks may be worn by any individual. (8.27.21, 9.3.21, 11.19.21, 3.15.22, 8.1.22)

17. Spectators/Audiences

Spectators and audiences are allowed at athletic, musical and theater events (indoor and outdoor). (8.27.21, 9.10.21, 11.19.21, 3.15.22, 8.1.22 )

## **Live Stream Solution**

**We are currently reviewing plans regarding a Live Stream solution in 2022-23. A final decision will be made and announced ahead of school starting on September 6, 2022.**

**The Live Stream solution operated as follows for 2021-22.**

### **Eligibility for Classroom Livestream**

The Hastings Public Schools are operating with full (in-person) instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Live streaming of instruction from the classroom will only be available to students in three situations:

- They have a confirmed case of COVID-19 and are out of school due to the required isolation period.
- They have a family member with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- They require a medical exemption, due to extreme medical needs, as verified by a medical specialist and the district's medical director.

Students who are absent from school will not have the ability to attend classes remotely.

Please send the NYS-mandated quarantine orders or doctor's note confirming quarantine to the respective school health office. If neither of these are available, a letter with signature from parent or guardian stating the date of exposure and quarantine dates is required.

- Farragut Complex Health Office at [cipollinaj@hohschools.org](mailto:cipollinaj@hohschools.org)
- Hillside's Health Office at [kowalskig@hohschools.org](mailto:kowalskig@hohschools.org) or [feeney@hohschools.org](mailto:feeney@hohschools.org)

### **When Is A Student *NOT* Eligible for Live Stream Learning?**

Students will not be able to have classes live streamed when they are:

1. Home due to illness other than COVID-19.
2. Self-imposed quarantine or isolation.
3. Students absent from school for none illness or none COVID-19 reasons.

### **How To Request Live Stream Learning when Deemed Eligible**

1. Call/email the respective school health office to notify the school of the situation and request live stream learning.
2. Health Office nurses will follow up, confirm, and notify administration.
3. All requests will be received on school days, Monday-Friday by 1:00 PM. Live stream learning will be set up for eligible students on the subsequent school day, not the day of notification.
4. Attendance will be adjusted accordingly.
5. While in live stream learning, teachers are not expected to interact with students who are at home. Instructional materials will be shared via Google Classroom. Special arrangements can be made for pick up, if necessary.

### **Medical Exemption for Live Stream Learning**

Effective January 10, 2022, the administration implemented a procedure for reviewing requests for limited Remote Learning (live stream only) for extreme medical reasons. The procedure was developed in consultation with the district's Medical Directors, who consider it a rare necessity, but one that is important to consider on a limited basis.

Procedure elements are as follows:

1. In general, very few students would qualify based on medical reasons to not be in school in-person during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the Medical Directors stated that the following conditions are not likely to be approved as medical reasons to be on live stream: Asthma, Diabetes and Stress. However, each request would need to be reviewed, given that individual cases may vary.
2. To qualify, a family must submit a letter from a medical doctor who is a specialist in the area of concern (it cannot be a letter from a GP or pediatrician).
3. The letter would have to list the specific reasons for why the particular student, and their particular medical condition, would require live streaming.
4. The letter would be reviewed by our nursing staff, our medical director(s) and ultimately approved by the superintendent. This process may take up to one week.
5. If approved for /live stream, the student and family would coordinate with the relevant principal on the timing. In limited cases, a student may qualify for supplemental tutoring, either based on an IEP or a particular medical concern.

*(8.18.21, 12.9.21, 1.28.22 & 3.15.22)*