

# Hancock Central School District

**The Wildcat Pledge:** We nurture and empower each learner's unlimited capacity to become a responsible citizen with a promising future.

**Our Vision:** Striving for excellence as an innovative, advanced and reflective school community.

**Core Beliefs:**

- Our mindset: We do whatever it takes to ensure continuous growth because we believe each of us can learn.
- Collaboration: We work better together, always.
- Innovation: We embrace creativity and advancing technology.
- Integrity: We trust, respect, support and care for one another.
- Learning environment: Our approach is engaging, learner-centered and adaptable to individual needs.
- Student centered: We put students first.

August 17, 2020

Dear Wildcat Parent/Guardian/Caretaker:

The start of the 2020-2021 school year is fast approaching and here at school we have been hard at work preparing to safely welcome our students back. Since mid-March, apart from ensuring a seamless and continuous delivery of our first-rate remote instructional program, the board of education, administrators, faculty, support staff and I have focused our energies and actions toward planning for the first day of school on Thursday, September 10. Among our notable accomplishments to this end, the district is extremely proud to have authored the *Wildcat Reset: Hancock's CSD's Strategic Approach to Reopening School during the COVID-19 Pandemic* as well as Hancock CSD's Plans for Remote Instruction and COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing. These documents, and other important information pertaining to our safe return to school, are posted on the HCS website, <https://www.hancock.stier.org>, under the *school reopening* tab. I urge you to frequently check our website and social media platforms as updates are being added on a daily basis.

Moving forward, we remain deeply committed to actively engaging all of our stakeholders as the school reopening process continues to unfold. During the week of August 17, in your home mailbox, you will be receiving five extremely important letters, each pertaining to a specific aspect of the school reopening process. Topical areas to be discussed include Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs); Health/Safety/Welfare; Instructional Methods; Distribution and Use of Technology; and Food Service and Transportation. It is our hope these letters will inform additional stakeholder confidence and clarity in support of the district's detailed planning process for safely and efficiently returning to school. Moreover, Julie Bergman and Jackie Beamer, district administrators, will be hosting virtual and audio office hours on Wednesday and Thursday, August 19 and 20, in order to answer your school reopening questions and concerns. A press release and supporting global connect phone call will announce the specific times for these meetings.

Your child's health, safety and welfare are our top concerns, and we are extremely confident we will safely and successfully reopen school in September. Your ongoing support is deeply appreciated!

Thank you. Working together, we look forward to taking on this important challenge!

Sincerely,



Terrance P. Dougherty, Ph.D.  
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(607) 637-1301

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## **PROTECT ... RECOVER ... ADVANCE**

### **HCSD School Reopening FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)**

#### **Face Coverings:**

##### **Q: If I have questions/concerns about school reopening, who should I contact?**

A: Start by reviewing this document. Secondarily, the HCSD website, <HTTPS://www.hancock.stier.org>, is a highly informative resource. Please click on the School Reopening tab on the homepage. The PreK-12 principal, Julie Bergman ([jbergman@hancock.stier.org](mailto:jbergman@hancock.stier.org)), and the Director of Pupil Personnel, Jackie Beamer ([jbeamer@hancock.stier.org](mailto:jbeamer@hancock.stier.org)), are excellent resources who are available to answer your questions, on demand. Mrs. Bergman and Ms. Beamer will be hosting virtual (Zoom platform) and audio office hours on Wednesday, August 19 and Thursday, August 20; please consult the District website for a press release clarifying these details. Lastly, the District intends to produce and widely distribute targeted mailings and informational letters to parents and interested stakeholders.

##### **Q: What is surest way to ensure stakeholder health, safety and welfare while on campus?**

A: Compliance to the protocols and procedures listed in the Wildcat Reset School Reopening Plan is the surest way to ensure personal and group safety for all individuals while on school grounds. Maintaining proper social distancing (6 feet or more between individuals), wearing district-approved face coverings when proper social distancing cannot be achieved, and frequent handwashing with soap and warm water (or district-approved hand sanitizer) are especially vital to ensuring a safe teaching and learning environment. Employees, students, and staff are strongly encouraged to stay home if you are physically ill.

##### **Q: Will face coverings be required?**

A: Yes; per the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), face covers are required to be worn any time or place where individuals cannot maintain proper social distancing, meaning 6 feet or more of space between people. At HCSD, we have modified our classes, class sizes, and schedules to ensure all stakeholders will be teaching and learning in spaces that are equipped to ensure proper social distancing such that educators and students may remove their face coverings during regular instruction, except in some rare circumstances where face coverings will be required. Furthermore, breakfast and lunch spaces and times have been arranged so that stakeholders can eat their meals while also maintain proper social distancing. Special accommodations can be made for individuals who have a medically verifiable condition which precludes them from wearing face coverings.

A proper face covering is a fabric material that covers the nose and mouth. It can be secured to the head with ties, straps, ear loops or may simply be wrapped around the lower face. A face covering may be factory-made, or sewn by hand. Face coverings should NOT have ventilation ports. A face shield alone is not a substitute for a mask, but can be worn in addition to an acceptable face covering. Final determinations on the acceptability of face coverings will be made by the PreK-12 principal, Director of Pupil Personnel, or any other designated district supervisor.

**Q: Will the school district be providing face coverings?**

A: Yes; disposable face coverings will be made widely available to all district stakeholders as needed.

**Social Distancing/Safety/Cleaning:**

**Q: What social distancing requirements will be put into place?**

A: The following social distancing accommodations will be made:

- As per the NYSDOH regulations, normal classrooms will have desks spaced so that students can maintain 6 feet of separation from other students and staff members (12 feet for PE, Chorus, and Band);
- All students will face one way in classrooms;
- Social distancing protocols will be put into place to inform student arrival, transition and departure;
- Large and small group will be avoided;
- Protocols and procedures have been written to ensure students presenting COVID-19 symptoms are isolated to a designated holding space in either the elementary or middle/high school buildings;
- Protocols and procedures have been written to ensure proper social distancing on buses;
- Procedures have been written to restrict the use of hall and PE lockers. Instead, students will be required to carry their bookbags and personal belongings with them throughout the day. Moreover, protocols and procedures have been written to limit sharing of personal and school items.

**Q: Will daily temperature checks be required by the District?**

A: As per NYSDOH regulations, each child, staff member, and visitor will be required to complete a simple COIVD-19 questionnaire - inclusive of a question pertaining to an individual's body temperature - each day prior to entering into District facilities. Per NYSDOH regulations, body temperature must not exceed 100.4 degrees, Fahrenheit. In addition, the District retains the right to check the temperature of any student, staff member or visitor who is suspected of being COVID-19 symptomatic. Please contact the school nurse prior to the first day of school if you unable to complete the entry survey.

**Q: How will the buildings be cleaned and sanitized?**

A: The HCSD custodial staff will sanitize high touch areas throughout the school day and building-wide cleaning will take place every evening. Students will work with the instructional staff to ensure desks are cleaned between classes. Deep cleaning will take place each Wednesday and after any confirmed positive COVID-19 test.

**Scheduling:**

**Q: When is the first day of school scheduled for students?**

A: For students in grades PreK-6, the first day of school will be Thursday, September 10. Thursday, September 10 will also be the first day of school for students in grades 7-12 designated to the A Group. 7-12 Students designated to the B Group will start school on Friday, September 11.

**Q: How many days per week will my child attend school through October 9, 2020?**

A: Students in grades PreK-6 are scheduled to attend school, in-person, each day on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Students in grades 7-12, depending upon their group assignment (Group A or Group B), are expected to attend school, in-person, on Monday and Tuesday OR Thursday and Friday. Moreover, students in grades 7-12 will remotely follow their daily class schedule on the off days when they are not attending in-person instruction.

**Q: Why are the buildings closed to students on Wednesdays through October 9, 2020?**

A: Wednesday's have been designated to be remote and/or independent learning days so that our custodial staff will have the opportunity to deep clean and sanitize all District facilities. In addition, all instructional staff members will be engaging in targeted staff development activities intended to build our individual and collective capacities for teaching and learning in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers will also make themselves available for virtual office hours and student check-ins on Wednesdays. Upon request, the Hancock Community Education Foundation (HCEF) will provide childcare services for students in grades K-9.

**Q: Will my child be scheduled to attend CTE classes at DCMO BOCES?**

A: Yes; please consult the DCMO BOCES reopening plan: [HTTPS://www.dcmoboces.com](https://www.dcmoboces.com).

**Special Education:**

**Q: When will I receive information about my child's out-of-district placement?**

A: Families of students with special needs attending out-of-district placements will be contacted directly by the Director of Pupil Personnel Services in order to plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Q: Will special education students in general education programs be following the general education schedule?**

A: Yes; the CSE will be monitoring for individual student needs throughout the school year.

**Questions Pertaining to COVID-19:**

**Q: In the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, will everyone who is in contact with that person be required to quarantine for 14 days?**

A: If a student, staff member or visitor tests positive for COVID-19, our local health department will be notified immediately, per the HCSD COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Plan. The Delaware County Department of Public Health (DCDOPH) will give us guidance on how to move forward in the safest way.

**Q: If I come in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, will I be notified?**

A: HCSD will follow the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which provide confidentiality for our students and staff members. In the event a student, staff member or visitor comes in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, the District will work closely with the DCDOPH in order to implement the HCSD COVID-19 Testing and Contact Tracing Plan.

**Q: Will students, staff members and visitors self-screen? Will temperatures be taken every morning before school?**

A: As per New York State Education Department (NYSED) and NYSDOH guidelines, every student, staff member or visitor must have a temperature check and complete a health screening questionnaire each day prior to being granted access into school district facilities. The guidelines further stipulate that "screening by the parent/guardian prior to the start of the school day is preferred in lieu of temperature checks and symptom screenings being performed after arrival to school." HCSD will be using paper surveys (Entry Tickets) which will be made widely available to all stakeholders prior to the start of the school year. Students will have to submit a completed entry ticket to their bus driver (or building aide if the child is a walker) prior to being allowed to ride on district transportation. Staff members will be required to complete a virtual, QR scan entry ticket survey prior to being granted access into District facilities. Visitors to the District will also be required to complete an entry ticket prior to being granted access into our buildings and grounds. All information collected and reviewed on the entry ticket surveys will be held in strict confidence per FERPA and HIPAA.