



FAQ: OPENING OF SCHOOL 2020-2021

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

SCHOOL OPENING

What is the Plan for School to Open in the 2020-2021 School Year?

Students and families will have two options to choose from to return to school in the 2020–2021 school year. Parents and guardians will need to identify via an upcoming survey which option they would like for each of their children:

Option 1 - Return to School with Social Distancing Measures

Return to our regular school setting with social distancing measures in place, as outlined in the school district's forthcoming Health and Safety Plan. Per state directives, masks will be mandatory in all buildings, with exceptions for documented medical conditions.

Option 2 - Attend our new Virtual Academy

The second option is our online learning platform, the Virtual Academy, which will combine synchronous, direct instruction with asynchronous learning opportunities.

Each family will need to select one of the two options for the return to school and will remain in that option through the first marking period. **After the first marking period, students will be able to change their selection.**

VIRTUAL ACADEMY EDUCATION PLAN

What is New Hope-Solebury's Virtual Academy Plan?

- The school district will provide instruction through Canvas, a learning platform previously utilized at the high school and now expanded to all grade levels for consistency between buildings.
 - Teachers will design learning programs for their students in the Canvas system. Learning materials will be refreshed daily and students will remain in contact with their teachers through this platform.
 - The daily learning platform will be both synchronous and asynchronous with opportunities for both direct instruction and independent practice.
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- To the extent possible, it is our intention to live stream instruction in our classrooms so that our students in the virtual learning platform can be kept on par with our students in classroom instruction.
- We anticipate that students will be actively engaged in their coursework for approximately 4-7 hours per day (depending on the grade level), five days a week.
- A “cyber mentor” will be assigned to facilitate online instruction.
- Additional information about the specific program at each grade level will be communicated through the building principal and classroom teachers.
- Students will receive information about how to access their specific Canvas learning portal. More information for parents will be available at our [COVID-19 Site](#).

What is synchronous and asynchronous learning?

In *synchronous learning*, teachers and students meet at an identified time and learn together through platforms such as Zoom or Google Chat. In *asynchronous learning*, materials are posted online so that students can learn at their own pace and at their own time and submit their completed materials for grading. In our Virtual Academy, instruction will be a combination of both methods.

What resources and supports are available for students who are receiving special education, gifted supports, or 504 Plan supports?

Our case managers will be in contact with all families of students receiving these services to explain the plans which will be put in place to support student learning and their Individualized Education Plans, whether they return to school or opt for the Virtual Academy. If you have questions, please contact your child’s case manager.

What if my child’s technology is not working and needs to be exchanged?

We have established an opportunity on Tuesdays for students to come to the administration building to have their device reviewed and/or replaced. Information about this process can be found at our [IT Help Desk](#).

PARENT INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRICULUM PLAN

How can I learn more about the Continuity of Learning Plan and instructional platforms and resources my child will be using?

Our COVID-19 website provides parents with information about our Continuity of Learning Plan and additional educational resources. We also recorded two Zoom sessions to teach parents how to access the digital learning platforms that your children will be using. These sessions are available here: [Parent Information Sessions](#).

SCHOOL CALENDAR

How will the school district calendar be affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic?

We are required by state law to complete our prescribed school calendar for this school year, and therefore we have no plans to modify our instructional calendar for the 2020-2021 school year at this time. We do have five “Flexible Instructional Days” granted by the state to use for weather or pandemic-related closures. When these days are used, instruction will be virtual for all students.

ATTENDANCE

Are students required to be in attendance each day?

Yes, regardless of which program a student selects, they will be required to be in attendance for daily instruction.

- For in-school instruction, attendance procedures will continue in the traditional format, and students will be expected to be in attendance daily or produce documentation for their absence.
- In the Virtual Academy, students will be expected to fully participate in their virtual courses daily by checking into the program. Daily attendance will be required and will be monitored. It will be essential for students in the virtual program to inform their teachers and cyber mentor of any absence and will be required to make up any missed work.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

Will my child be required to complete the annual state assessments, the Keystones and the PSSA missed in the 2019-2020 school year?

Act 13 canceled these assessments for the 2019-2020 year. Students were not required to complete these assessments last year. However, the state is requiring that the school districts in the state provide an opportunity for students to make up the Keystone examinations in the 2020-2021 school year. This opportunity will be provided in the fall. More information will be provided in the near future about this process.

GRADING

How will students be graded in the 2020-2021 school year?

As we transition back to school we will be moving from the pass/fail option for grading to our normal grading system. This will help with ensuring student accountability and will also allow us to effectively monitor student progress on the curriculum and provide supports and interventions as needed.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROVISIONS FOR IN-SCHOOL INSTRUCTION

CLEANING PROTOCOLS

What cleaning protocols have been done and will be done when schools open in the fall?

Our custodial team has been working throughout the summer and since our closure to engage in a very thorough deep cleaning of all our schools and buildings.

- Our custodial team will clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces at least twice a day, including bottle filling stations, door handles, light switches and playground equipment, following EPA/CDC/manufacturer guidelines.
- Classrooms and desks will be cleaned daily. Students will be permitted to bring their own disinfecting wipes and at the secondary level will be prompted to wipe down shared learning spaces at the start of each class period.
- Each school will be deep cleaned daily.

What cleaning protocols will be put in place for school buses?

Cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch surfaces on buses will occur at the beginning of the day and the end of the day and between bus runs.

What cleaning protocols will students be expected to follow?

- Signage for health protocols will be posted in highly visible locations detailing how to stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Students will be required and reminded to sanitize and wash their hands on a frequent basis.
- As part of the daily schedule, “handwashing recesses” will be mandated. Hand sanitizer will be available in common areas, hallways, by doorways leading to and from playgrounds and/or in classrooms where sinks for handwashing are not available.

Individual students will be expected to clean any common materials after using them, such as equipment in the Fitness Center, to mitigate the spread of the virus. Common use classroom materials will be minimized, however items which must be shared will be cleaned after each use.

How will schools increase ventilation of classrooms and common spaces?

All classrooms and common areas will be ventilated when possible using windows. Modifications will be made to the school HVAC systems to assist in ensuring proper ventilation and increased outside air entering the schools.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Will students be required to wear masks upon return to school?

Yes. Governor Wolf recently issued an executive order requiring masks for all Pennsylvania residents when they leave their homes, and further guidance from the Pennsylvania Department of Education has clarified that students are required to wear masks when they return to school until this order is lifted. Masks will be mandatory as a part of our Health and Safety Plan.

What steps will the school district take to enhance social distancing between students in classrooms?

- Classrooms will be rearranged and configured so that all students are placed in rows and facing in the same direction.
- Seating configurations will have students staggered or diagonal at shared tables to maximize space between students.
- Classroom furnishings will be reduced to maximize social distancing spacing between students.
- A minimum of three feet of distance between students will be utilized in classrooms to comply with Bucks County Department of Health/World Health Organization guidelines.
- All students will be required to wear masks throughout the school day in compliance with the Governor's order.

What steps will be implemented in common spaces such as hallways and large group areas?

- Physical guides such as tape on floors and signs on walls will remind students and staff to remain socially distanced.
- One-way routes will be implemented in hallways, stairwells, and other transition locations.
- Movement between classrooms and locations will be minimized wherever possible.
- Schools will limit high traffic, high-volume hallway use when feasible, to increase social distancing.
- Schools will stagger arrival and dismissal times for class or locations where possible.

Will large group areas be utilized when schools reopen?

- The use of large group areas such as auditoriums and gyms will be minimized.
 - Cafeterias will be at reduced capacity due to scheduling changes, and students will be socially distanced through alternating and staggered seating. In the yellow zone, alternative lunch locations will be utilized to minimize large group congregant opportunities.
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CAFETERIAS

How will cafeterias be structured under the new reopening plans?

- Students will be seated in alternating or staggered fashion.
- Procedures will be put in place to minimize contact between cafeteria workers and students, including the use of face shields and plexiglass.
- Cashiers will enter student identification information into the computer to minimize student contact.
- The cafeteria will eliminate common-use equipment and materials such as microwaves and make greater use of disposable materials.

How will students pay for lunch in the cafeteria?

In order to limit cash exchanged at our school registers, families are encouraged to prefund their child's meal account either through their account at <http://www.myschoolbucks.com> or by mailing a check to the following address:

New Hope-Solebury School District
Attn: Food Services
182 West Bridge Street
New Hope, PA 18938

MONITORING STUDENT AND STAFF HEALTH

How will students and staff be monitored for symptoms and history of exposure?

All stakeholders (students, staff, parents/guardians) will be educated on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and **parents will be asked to monitor their children for symptoms before sending them to school and/or reporting to work.** Any child kept home for symptoms should contact the school and self-report this to the school district. Each morning each homeroom teacher will remind students of the symptoms and have any student reporting symptoms report to the nurse.

What are the typical symptoms of COVID-19 that parents/guardians should be screening for BEFORE sending their child to school?

The most recent information from the Bucks County Department of Health lists the most common signs and symptoms as follows: fever, cough, shortness of breath, headaches, body aches, fatigue, loss/altered sense of taste or smell, diarrhea, and runny nose/congestion. Students will be reminded of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, with a prompt to go to the nurse immediately if feeling symptomatic.

Please find the link to the CDC's website with more information and a "symptom checker" tool that may be helpful below:

[Symptoms of COVID-19](#)

What will be done with any student or staff member who reports symptoms?

Any individual who reports symptoms will be required to secure a mask and report immediately to the nurse's suite or designated area in each school. The individual will be separated from other students and staff and will remain isolated until they can be dismissed from school. Any individual identified with symptoms will need to secure a COVID-19 test or medical clearance before returning to school. The Superintendent and Director of Student Services will be notified of any suspected COVID-19 cases. The Bucks County Department of Health will be notified.

What interventions will be put in place to protect other students when a student/staff member presents with symptoms of COVID-19?

As noted above, the student/staff member will be immediately isolated, and the Bucks County Department of Health will be notified and consulted for further direction. Any areas used by the individual will be closed off and not used again until they have been cleaned. Contact tracing will take place in cooperation with the Bucks County Department of Health, and under their direction, parents and staff who have come in contact with confirmed cases will be notified.

Under what conditions can an individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19 return to school?

Medical clearance from the Bucks County Department of Health will be required for any individual returning to school following isolation quarantine or a positive COVID-19 test result. The Bucks County Department of Health will support the school district by determining the length of time an individual should be removed from school, and when clearance should be provided for a full or modified return.

Will the school district close if a student or staff members has a positive COVID-19 diagnosis?

It is not likely that the school or district will close with one positive diagnosis. The school district will work in collaboration with the Bucks County Department of Health to determine the steps to take with each situation. Contact tracing will take place in conjunction with the Department of Health and upon their direction those individuals in direct close contact with the individual will be notified so we can be in compliance with guidelines for FERPA and HIPPA. We will monitor all cases in tandem with the Bucks County Department of Health and make a determination with them when and if the district needs to close related to the level of infection in our community or school district community.

VOLUNTEERS

Will the school district be utilizing volunteers?

No. There will be no volunteers or nonessential visitors permitted in any of the school buildings during any phase of the Pandemic.

What protocols will be put in place for essential visitors?

Essential visitors will be allowed only after scheduling a designated time. At that point, all visitors that enter District buildings will be required to wear face coverings while on school district property and complete a health screening process.

Will outside groups be permitted on school district property?

Outside groups will be significantly restricted and discouraged wherever possible. When a determination is made to allow permit holders and groups to the school, the group members will be expected to follow the district Health and Safety Plan. Extensive cleaning protocols will be put in place after the use of school district facilities by outside groups.

RECESS

Will the elementary students continue to have recess?

Yes, but modified. Schools will provide students with physical education activities that limit physical contact and touching where feasible, and encourage parallel play.

- Playground equipment will be closed.
- Students will be taught guidelines for acceptable activities and proper hygiene.

How will playground equipment be cleaned?

Materials and equipment used in recess and physical education classes will be sanitized after each recess and physical education activity.

STUDENT MATERIALS

How will student materials be separated?

- Each child's belongings will be separated and individually labeled in containers or totes at the elementary level. Other systems will be developed for students at the secondary level.
- No cubbies will be used.
- Lockers will be used at the Middle School and spaced by homeroom, every fourth locker, only to be used at the start and end of the day.
- Lockers will not be used at the High School.
- Student belongings should be taken home each day and cleaned.

Will classroom materials be shared?

- Students should not share electronic devices, toys, books, other games, and learning aids.
 - The school district will ensure adequate supplies to minimize the sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible and/or clean and disinfect them between use.
 - Secondary students will be expected to charge their computers overnight so they are ready for daily instruction.
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TRANSPORTATION

How will the student's use of buses be altered?

Students will be seated two students to a seat with the understanding that all individuals must wear face coverings while on the bus. Wherever possible distance will be created between children in school buses.

What steps will be taken to ensure the safety of students and drivers on buses?

- All students will be seated two to a seat and required to use masks.
- All drivers will wear a mask and goggles when loading and unloading the bus.
- Students of the same family will be seated together. We also encourage families to find a buddy for their elementary students to sit with on the bus so that we can mitigate the number of students they are in contact with on the bus on a daily basis.
- Ventilation on vehicles will be enhanced by opening windows where feasible.
- Buses will be cleaned at the end of each shift, at the end of the day, and high touch surfaces will be wiped down between bus runs.

LARGE DISTRICT EVENTS

Will the school district continue to host traditional school district events such as concerts, parent nights, and other programs?

No. At this time, due to the restrictions for large group programs of more than 250 individuals, it will not be possible to hold these events. These events will be virtual until further notice.

FIELD TRIPS

Will the school district continue field trips?

All field trips and inter-group activities will be significantly limited to only essential and programmatic requirements. Each proposal for field trips will be thoroughly analyzed for need and in the context of ensuring student and staff safety.

BEFORE AND AFTERCARE

Will the school district continue to permit before and aftercare programs through the YMCA/Clubhouse for Kids?

Yes, we will be continuing this program with the YMCA. The YMCA staff will be required to follow the school district's Health and Safety Plan.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

What supports are available for my child if they are struggling and need to talk to someone at their school?

We recognize that some of our students and families are struggling with anxiety and social isolation, as well as a variety of other issues resulting from this Pandemic. **We have integrated into our Health and Safety Plan a component for Social-Emotional Learning to ensure that this was an active part of our return to school planning process.** Our school counselors, social workers and psychologists remain available to talk to our students at each school. Please contact them via email and they will be able to provide support and services to you and your family during our return to school process. Their contact information is listed below.

LES -	Ms. Pam Lang	plang@nhsd.org
UES -	Ms. Kate McGinniss	kmcginniss@nhsd.org
MS -	Ms. Heather Robtison	hrobtison@nhsd.org
HS -	Ms. Hebat El-Turky	helturky@nhsd.org
HS -	Ms. Sarah Reeder	sreeder@nhsd.org

What supports are available to my family?

As a result of the Pandemic and the economic concerns which have resulted from it, many of our families are struggling and in need of support. Our school district social workers are also available to help and to connect our families with resources available in our community. Please feel free to contact them at the email addresses below:

Ms. Christyn Golden	cgolden@nhsd.org
Mr. Doug Olszewski	dolszewski@nhsd.org

Additional family [resources](#) are listed on our website. Our school district has been working in collaboration with our broader school district community, and we have been posting resources as they become available.

Counselors will also be arranging for a soft opening for those students and families who require this process. Surveys will be sent out by counselors to coordinate a time for these preliminary visits before the school year opens.

HEALTH RESOURCES

What are the health resources available to our students and families at this time?

Health resources for families can be found on our COVID-19 website at this [link](#).

Our school nurses are also available and they can be reached through their emails below:

Ms. Alane Hemberger	ahemberger@nhsd.org
Ms. Beth Simon	esimon@nhsd.org

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

What will happen for school sports in the fall?

In order for our school district to host student sports programs in the fall, we needed to develop an [Athletic Health and Safety Plan](#) and have the plan approved by the Board of School Directors. This plan provides for the safe return of our student-athletes by outlining clear protocols for our coaches, students, and families to follow to ensure that we maximize our ability to allow our students to return to sporting activities while providing safe protocols to protect them. At the time of the writing of this, PIAA has not canceled fall sports and is working with school districts to safety continue their sports programs. This is a situation we will continue to monitor through the fall.

Will extra-curricular programs continue in the fall?

Yes. The guidelines established through the Athletic Health and Safety Plan will extend to the extra-curricular programming.

SCHOOL PROPERTY AND FACILITIES

Can we use the school grounds and facilities during the closure period?

No. On March 12, 2020, when the school closure announcement was made, all schools, grounds, and facilities were closed. By reopening our facilities, we would potentially pose a risk to the safety and well-being of our students and staff and our broader school district community. We will continue to evaluate this situation as the pandemic evolves and in compliance with state and local directives.

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document was intended to give a general overview of the procedures and practices which will be implemented for the start of the school year. More detailed information can be found in the District's Athletic Safety Plan and the District's Health and Safety Plan. We look forward to having our students return in the fall and are doing our best to ensure that our schools are safe and secure. **We hope you will attend the upcoming Town Hall meeting: July 21, 5:00 PM. Zoom link will be available at nhsd.org 15 minutes prior to the meeting.**
