

# **HIP-Hackensack, Union Street School for the Deaf**

## **Restart Plan**

**Introduction: Bergen County Special Services School District is committed to the health and safety of our students and staff. This is our number one priority. The HIP- Hackensack, Union Street School for the Deaf Restart Plan aims to define clear guidance for the reopening of our school that aligns with the regulations developed in collaboration with county, state and national health professionals and organizations.**

**The areas outlined in this plan represent major considerations our district is addressing to reopen our schools safely and to sustain its reopening. Based on the guidance here, our school's Pandemic Response Team is customizing this plan to meet the more specific health and safety needs of the students and staff within our very unique educational environment.**

**As with every plan right now, this document is fluid and will change as necessary based on guidance from the state, the Bergen County Health Department, and considerations to our families and our staff.**

**We strongly believe the actions brought forth in this plan are in the best interests of our students, staff, families and community.**

**This plan is being reviewed and updated by the Union Street School Pandemic Response Team, comprised of the following team members:**

**Lisa Stewart, Program Supervisor  
Gina Donatien, Teacher in Charge/ Case Manager  
Ann Schmidt, Administrative Assistant  
Della Kovach, School Nurse  
Lisa Root, Audiologist  
Lisa Murphy, Teacher  
Katelyn Marsden, Teacher Assistant  
Ryan Soule, Interpreter/ Union Representative  
Elizabeth Bellis, Speech Therapist  
Lisa Bingham, Parent Representative**

## Sourcing Best Practices:

- **NJDOE The Road Back, Restart and Recovery Plan for Education**
- **Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education**
- **Strong Schools NC – Public Health Toolkit (K-12)**
- **American Academy of Pediatric Planning Considerations: Return to In-person Education in Schools**
- **Learning Policy Institute's Policy Brief, Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from other Countries**

### I. Conditions for Learning

- **Critical Areas of Operation:**
- **Critical Area of Operation # 1 General Health and Safety**
  - **Communication:**
    - Maintaining communication with local authorities specifically the Bergen County Health Department, local district health departments as well as the BCSS consulting physician to determine current mitigation levels in our community.
    - Utilize these authorities to guide us in terms of levels of PPE needed, identifying testing needs, contact tracing & notification procedures.
  - **Staff at higher risk:**
    - Staff members with a current medical condition should speak to their doctor, and as applicable, provide Human Resources with a note stating that it is not advisable for them to be in a work environment due to the existing condition.
    - Be sensitive to those who do not feel comfortable coming in to work.
    - Have supervisors talk to person.
    - Look at the position and can this work be done remotely.
    - Come to an understanding that we will all have to come into work eventually if there is no medically documented condition.
    - If a staff member has a childcare issue he/she will need to provide documentation that pre-existing childcare is not yet available.
    - We may need to make accommodations for a short time.
  - **Students at higher risk:**
    - Students who cannot come to school due to a medical condition, will be provided remote instruction.
      - Assure the parent/caregiver that high quality instruction will continue.
      - Program administrators/case managers reach out to parents to assure them that we will work with the student until they can transition from home to school.
    - Where possible bring the student into the classroom remotely.
      - Use Zoom live stream.
      - Enable student at home to view other students, if possible.
      - Google Classroom.

- Determine how each program will handle behavioral issues.
    - Need to have a protocol to ensure staff safety.
    - Look at case by case.
    - If PPE isn't enough protection for staff, may not be able to maintain student in school.
    - Discuss & plan for this at the building level specific to the student population being served.
  - **Following CDC**
    - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
  - **Promoting behaviors that reduce spread:**
    - Stay home when appropriate.
    - Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette .
    - Face coverings.
      - Access to visual cues.
    - Signs and messages.
- **Critical Area of Operation #2: Classrooms, Instruction, Testing, and Therapy Rooms**
  - **Instruction:**
    - Union Street School will follow the BCSS school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year
      - School hours
        - 9 am to 2:45 pm- students
        - 8:45 to 3:00- staff
        - Team meetings- Wednesdays 2:55 to 3:55 pm
      - Sept. 8 to Oct. 16, 2020- remote instruction for all students
      - Sept. 1 to Oct.16, 2020- staff to prepare/ provide remote instruction
        - Sept. 1 to 4, 2020- Professional Development Days
      - Oct. 5 to 9, 2020- 50% of staff to report to program to provide remote instruction
        - schedule for attendance at program will be provided to staff
      - Oct. 12 to 16, 2020- all staff to report to program to provide remote instruction
      - Oct. 19, 2020- staff and students report to program for full day, 5 day a week instruction
    - Union Street will plan to open for the full school week and the normally scheduled length of school day.
      - Plan to be revisited and revised if staffing changes occur.
      - Remote instruction from classrooms, with Zoom in the classroom for students who are remote learners. Students could attend each day, and

the rest view the classroom instruction from home. If a child is at home on an iPad or Chrome Book, they can see the same as a student in the classroom.

- Teachers may divide the day to do direct teaching of students in building, then schedule specific times during the day for remote learners.
  - Could either teach all of the students the same lesson at once, or could record the lesson and show it later to the remote students.
  - Students in attendance for in person instruction will bring their Chrome Book or iPad back and forth to school each day.
    - additional charges will be provided in school, as needed.
  - At this time, mainstreaming for two of our Union Street School students with the Jackson Avenue School, Hackensack will be put on hold.
- **Classrooms:**
- For social distancing, space students.
  - Students enter/exit one at a time.
  - Utilize barriers (sneeze guards, plastic trifolds) for use in classrooms on desks/tables and at individual play stations when possible.
  - Use larger areas, like cafeteria or large common areas, STEM room, art/ music, gym for scheduled instruction times.
    - For time being, lunch will be in classrooms. (Consideration- assign one class per day in a common area to allow for proper cleaning afterwards.)
  - No gatherings of more than one class in common areas.
  - Furniture and certain equipment can be removed/ added from classrooms and other areas to allow more room for social distancing.
  - Depending on the size of classrooms and the number of students and staff projected to be in that room, staggered scheduling may be required. Our team will determine if this is necessary and how it will work.
  - All instructional and non-instructional rooms in school must comply with social distancing to the maximum extent possible.
  - When students and staff are in the building, face coverings are required. If a student is unable to wear a mask, the student may be able to wear a face shield for some protection. All staff are required to wear masks unless it will compromise the individual's health.
    - There should be no sharing of objects or materials.
      - If sharing is necessary the objects must be cleaned and disinfected in between uses.
  - Ensure that our indoor facility has adequate ventilation, including operational heating, and ventilation systems where appropriate.
  - Recirculated air must have a fresh air component.
    - Replace/ clean filter per unit guidelines.

- Filter(s) for A/C units must be maintained and changed according to manufacturer recommendations.
  - Prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
    - In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
    - At entrances and exits of buildings.
    - Near lunchrooms and toilets.
    - Children ages 5 and younger should be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
    - For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, prepare stations with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
  - Students should wash hands for at least 20 seconds at regular intervals, including before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose/coughing/sneezing.
    - Hand washing should be scheduled throughout the day.
    - Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) if washing with soap and water is not possible.
- **For Pre-School Classrooms when possible:**
  - Keep children six feet apart during nap time (can have cots oriented head to foot), when eating, and doing other activities.
  - Avoid close group learning activities like reading circles.
  - Designate times on the schedule to take students out of the classroom to wash hands with soap and water, including, at a minimum:
    - at the start of the day when children enter the classroom.
    - before snacks and lunch .
    - after using the toilet or helping a child use a toilet.
    - after sneezing, wiping, and blowing noses.
    - after snacks and lunch, particularly if hands are sticky, greasy or soiled.
    - when students come in from outdoor play or recess.
  - In limited cases, hand hygiene with an alcohol-based sanitizer or alcohol-based wipes, when there is no visible soiling of hands, are alternatives to hand washing with soap and water by children under the supervision of the teacher.
- **Since our schools may provide services to medically fragile students and students with complex disabilities, our school will implement the following:**
  - Obtain PPE prior to opening and maintain ongoing supplies, in order to remain open.
  - Ensure there will be continuous disinfecting of classrooms and therapy rooms that service students with complex disabilities where multiple tools are used for communication, mobility, and instruction.
  - Ensure heightened monitoring and frequent handwashing which will often require hand-over-hand assistance.
  - Limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.

- When possible, ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible.
    - Each student has their own “bin” of supplies/materials/toys, etc.
    - No sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids, or thoroughly clean and disinfect between use.
    - Keep each child’s belongings separated from others and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
  - Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors.
    - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms) to students using the facility.
  - Larger rooms (cafeteria, gym) can be used as alternate learning areas to allow for change of environment.
    - Time must be scheduled in advance
    - Must be properly cleaned and disinfected afterwards
  - Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) or have students sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart.
  - For furniture that is intended to accommodate more than one student, replace the multi-student furniture or consider some type of partitioning system (sneeze guards, temporary or movable dividers).
  - Keep class together to include the same group of children each day (cohorts).
    - Do not allow mixing between groups/cohorts.
  - Allow outdoor classrooms/activities where possible and when seasonally appropriate.
  - Add time to lunch and recess periods to ensure students have time to wash their hands.
  - Build in the practice of handwashing throughout the day, especially during transition times.
  - Our staff and students will follow the host site’s calendar, but we will implement our own plan. Until further notice, we will not participate in mainstreaming opportunities.
- **Entrances to Buildings**
    - Most reception areas can maintain social distancing with natural barriers already in place. Pandemic Response Teams will determine if additional barriers are needed.
    - Visitors to the building will be severely limited.
      - If possible, limit visitors to the reception area.
  - **Bathrooms**
    - Stagger the use of bathrooms and only one student a time.
  - **Therapy – OT, PT, ST**
    - Severely limit the sharing of equipment.
    - Provide cleaning and disinfecting protocol for shared equipment.
      - Place used items in tote bins and once cleaned, can be used again.

- Include time in schedules as needed to clean/disinfect materials/equipment in between students.
  - EP should indicate location where service should be provided.
    - Do sessions back to back within a classroom or instructional area when possible to limit the movement of students within cohorts to other areas.
      - This applies mainly to OT & ST.
  - Each Pandemic Response Team will explore possible options within the building.
- **Critical Area of Operation #3: Transportation**
  - **When BCSS buses are being utilized to transport adults or students the following protocols will be implemented:**
    - Students/adults must wear a mask to enter the bus.
    - Staff and bus drivers wear masks on the bus.
    - Students/adults enter the bus, one at a time, and fill up the back seats first.
    - Have one student in each row on each side of the bus.
      - Would allow more students on the bus, but would still not be 6 ft. apart.
      - This is why mask s for all are required.
    - Have bus windows open for air circulation weather permitting.
    - CDC is not recommending field trips or other outside activities and we should consider safety by implementing:
      - remote field trips.
  - **BCSS a Receiving School District**
    - As a receiving school district BCSS does not transport students from home to school and back.
    - Local districts contract for or utilize their own buses to transport their students to our programs.
    - BCSS will review the transportation protocols we receive from local districts and/or various bus companies.
    - BCSS will monitor buses upon arrival at school to ensure and/or report breeches in protocols to the bus companies and the districts contracting for those buses.
    - Implementing social distancing on buses may increase the number of buses coming to our schools. In addition, parent transport may become more prevalent as parents may not wish to have their child on a bus; therefore we may need to develop different procedures for student arrival and departure.
    - Pandemic Response Team will need to assess and determine if new arrival and departure procedures are warranted.
- **Critical Area of Operation #4: Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas:**
  - When physical distance (six feet) is not maintained for individuals entering or exiting a building, face coverings/masks must be utilized.
  - Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and/or signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.

- Minimize interaction of students between drop-off and entrance to school facilities.
  - Arrival
    - Bus will pull up to student entrance. Staff assigned to bus duty will have students exit bus one at a time, allowing students to social distance.
      - students will be checked prior to exiting to ensure mask is on correctly.
      - students will be escorted into building where they will have their temperature checked (staff member TBD) prior to proceeding to classroom.
      - If student has temperature, student will be in isolation area until family member arrives to bring student home.
  - Departure
    - Students will remain in classroom until bus arrives at student exit.
      - Bus duty staff will communicate with teachers which students should be dismissed.
      - Staff presence in hallway to ensure social distancing
- The Pandemic Response Team will determine when there is a need to stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by cohort or put in place other protocols to limit contact
- Maintain social distancing in hallways.
- Create student cohorts as an effective strategy to limit exposure and contact.
- No large group gatherings.
- Continue to have signage around school buildings to provide hygiene advice and reminders (CDC offers [printable resources](#) and [handwashing posters](#)).
- Increase frequency of cleaning all surfaces, including walls (to the appropriate height based on age of students).
- If feasible, install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
- Limit access, if at all, to lockers/cubbies to keep students from congregating in one area either in the hallway or classrooms.
  - Assign lockers/ cubbies to students.
  - Staff member supervises student at locker/ cubby.
- **Critical Area of Operation #5: Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms**
  - **Policy for Screening Students and Employees**
    - BCSS has revised a policy to include screening students and employees for symptoms, including temperature checks and history of exposure.
      - Policy # 5310M Health Services
    - Employees will utilize a health check questionnaire each day one hour before arrival at school
      - The questionnaire will require the employee to check their temperature and to answer basic health questions such as any symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, etc.).



- If no symptoms are noted, then the employee receives a green check to come to work.
  - If symptoms noted receive a red notification, the employee must stay at home and contact their immediate supervisor.
  - Employee will need to contact their health care provider and obtain documentation regarding their diagnosis and ability to return to in person work and/or provide a negative result for COVID-19 (See Policy #5310M Health Services)
- **Students screened for symptoms daily**
    - Before entering the building temperature and other symptoms checked.
    - If a student exhibits symptoms, identify a separate space/room in order to isolate the student until they are picked up to go home.
    - Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID are observed.
    - Student must show a negative test or obtain information from their health care provider before returning to school (See Policy# 5310M Health Services).
    - Provision of “medical cart” to take to the classroom for regular meds, etc. to limit numbers of students & staff visiting nursing office for routine matters.
    - Collect accurate district Emergency Form for parent/guardian contact.
    - Revise our Emergency Contact Form for more specific emergency contact information.
    - Encourage parent/guardian to keep student at home if student exhibits any symptoms,
    - Create guidelines and disseminate to parents/guardians. This must be signed off that parents/ guardians have read and agree to comply.
    - Develop procedures to inform all who may have been exposed.
  - **Procedures for symptomatic staff and students**
    - Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.
    - If BCSS becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, BCSS must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
    - BCSS will implement a policy to prepare for when someone tests positive for COVID-19 that includes written protocols detailing the district’s COVID-19 related response for symptomatic students and staff. Protocols must be consistent with the district’s contact tracing policy (see “Critical Area of Operation #6: Contact Tracing”) to the maximum extent practicable. Protocols will include:
      - School must establish an isolation space. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students should remain in isolation with

continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult.

- BCSS will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.
- BCSS will ensure an adequate amount of personal protective equipment (PPE) will be available, accessible, and provided for use in our school.
- BCSS will establish methods to assist in contact tracing including records of groups/cohorts, assigned staff, and daily attendance as well as the continuous monitoring of symptoms.
- BCSS will establish readmittance policies consistent with Department of Health guidance and information for schools and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Service's Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19 and written protocols to address a positive case.
- Provide training for families to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and to keep them home when they are sick.
- School staff are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- A student's documented medical condition, or disability as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP), may preclude the use of face covering.
- Visitors to our schools will be severely limited; however if a necessary visitor refuses to wear a face covering for non-medical reasons and if such covering cannot be provided to the individual the point of entry, entry to the school/district facility may be denied.
- Provide training for staff to include the following:
- Teach and reinforce use of face coverings among all staff (excluding health exceptions).
- Hygiene protocols for staff regarding washing of hands, face coverings, the appropriate use of gloves, etc.

- **Critical Area of Operation #6: Contact Tracing**

- Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who come into contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19.
- BCSS will provide school and district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school and district, information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease.
- BCSS will engage the expertise of their school nurses to educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.
- BCSS has revised Policy #8441M Care of Injured and Ill Persons to include contact tracing procedures and protocols.

- **Critical Area of Operation #7: Facilities Cleaning Practices**

- BCSS building supervisors/custodial will continue to adhere to CDC guidelines to building when cleaning our facilities as well as any additional procedures required by our district
- Cleaning will include but not be limited to daily wiping, spraying and the use of available disinfecting machines.
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched.
- The Pandemic Response Team (PRT) will determine any additional cleaning protocols that need to be implemented in the building based on the special student populations served.
- The school administrator in conjunction with the PRT will provide staff with information regarding the specific cleaning protocols in their building.
- Ensure that common areas are cleaned/sanitized before next class use. Alert staff via use of “red/green” sign.
- Require posters in bathrooms with hand washing practices described.
- Install or create occupied/ vacant signs.

- **Critical Area of Operation #8 Meals**

- Cafeteria will be used for social distance learning, not as a lunchroom
  - Use of the cafeteria, on a rotating basis, for lunch can be scheduled in advance, allowing students a different environment during their day.
- Lunch will be eaten in classrooms or other designated area, and when possible, outside.
- Meals will be picked up by staff and delivered to the designated area.
- The PRT will determine the most efficient and safe protocols for meal service in their schools.
- Hand washing will be required before and after eating.
- Our food service vendor, Chartwells, will follow all CDC protocols for the cleaning and disinfecting of their food prep areas.

- **Critical Area of Operation #9 Recess/Physical Education**

- The number of groups that will participate in recess will depend upon the size of the space.
- Designate specific areas for each class during recess to avoid cohort mixing.
  - Scheduled use of gym.
- Students should have at least 6 feet of open space between them during recess or Physical Education.
- Students and staff will always wash hands immediately after outdoor playtime or after Physical Education class.
- Staggered schedules for the use of playground equipment and frequent disinfecting protocols will be developed by the PRT.
- Schools will complete an inventory of outdoor spaces (playgrounds, green spaces, open space, and local parks) and designate zones, use stations, mark off areas, floor markers, floor tape, poly spots, etc., to ensure separation among students (six feet for social distancing)
- BCSS schools do not utilize locker rooms.

- To mitigate risk, limit and/or eliminate direct contact with equipment (lessons with no equipment) and do not allow sharing of equipment. If equipment must be shared, clean and disinfect between each use.
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- **Critical Area of Operation #10 Field Trips, Extra-curricular Activities, and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**
  - **Field Trips**
    - There will be no field trips for students at least through December.
  - **Extra-curricular Activities**
    - BCSS does not provide extra-curricular activities. Our students are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities within their home district.
    - BCSS does run some after school programs that are funded through DCF.
  - **Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours**
    - BCSS will severely limit or eliminate the use of our facilities after school hours.
    - In rental buildings that are used by other entities after school hours, BCSS will require those organizations to follow district guidance on health and safety protocols.
    - We will supplement the cleaning wherever necessary to ensure our cleaning protocols are completed.
- **Staff/ Student/Parent Training**
  - **Medical & Protocols**
    - District nurses are developing a training that will address all aspects of COVID-19 from a medical perspective. This comprehensive training will include guidance & protocols regarding the following:
      - symptoms
      - spread
      - treatment
      - testing
      - district and building level policies, procedures and protocols (Health Checks)
      - importance of and proper hand washing and social distancing when possible
      - appropriate use of PPE, masks gloves, face shields, gowns, etc.
      - use of hand sanitizer.
    - A general training will be developed for the district & then shared with building nurses who will customize the training to meet the needs of the staff depending on how they are required to interact with students based on the level & type of disability
  - **Social Emotional Well-Being**
    - District SAC, School Psychologist, and Physical Therapist are developing a training that will address social emotional learning and school culture and climate. This comprehensive training will include:
      - Grief, loss, trauma

- Mental health and supportive behaviors
- Fear and anxiety
- Preparedness, hope, and resilience
- Coping strategies.
- **Schools will utilize CST & district SAC to address ongoing mental health issues**
  - Assess students and staff regarding mental health concerns.
  - Provide resources as needed.
  - Work with students on an ongoing basis as needed
  - Engage families and provide resources as needed

**Reviewed plan. Revised to add items specific to USS operations and school climate. This plan may be revised at any point in time, contingent to needs.**

**9/18/2020**