

Stanhope School District

Health & Safety Guidelines
School Year 2021/22



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1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the State of New Jersey has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, school districts will be required to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction and operations for the 2021-22 school year. The guidelines outlined in this document have been developed following the guidance of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), specifically from the guidance document titled, "[The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance for the 2021-2022 School Year](#)."

While the State and our District is committed to a resumption of normalcy for the upcoming school year, current data will be continuously monitored and decisions will be guided by science to ensure that we maintain safe and healthy school communities. Parents, staff and community members should anticipate potential updates to this guidance throughout the school year, as additional federal recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) become available.

2. COMMUNICATION

District and school administration will maintain close communication with local health departments and the Department of Education (DOE) regarding information and resources on COVID-19 transmission, prevention, and control measures and to establish procedures for local health department notification and response to COVID-19 illness in school settings.

School officials will maintain frequent communication with parents and community members on the local impact of COVID-19 and school-related updates and changes to protocol. These communications will come via emails from the school and emergency alerts.

3. CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT & PHYSICAL DISTANCING

The Stanhope School District will encourage social distancing to the greatest extent possible in classrooms, however, an inability to maintain 3 feet of social distance between students will not preclude the full-time opening of the school. Student desks will be arranged in classrooms to avoid face-to-face interactions in close proximity. Grouped seating arrangements will be avoided when group collaboration is not intended or required.

Standard criteria has been set for classroom setup to maximize the amount of space in each classroom to maintain the greatest opportunity for social distancing and to assist with efficiency in daily cleaning and disinfection. Shared resources and student manipulatives will be permitted in the classroom setting, however students will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after using such resources.

4. MASKING

As outlined in the Governor's Executive Order 251, issued on August 6, 2021, all students, educators, staff and visitors will be required to wear face masks indoors for the start of the 2021-22 school year. This is the case for all public, private, and parochial preschool, elementary, and secondary school buildings, with limited exceptions:

- When doing so would inhibit the individual's health, such as when the individual is exposed to extreme heat indoors;
- When the individual has trouble breathing, is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face covering without assistance;
- When a student's documented medical condition or disability, as reflected in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Educational Plan pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, precludes use of a face covering;
- When the individual is under two (2) years of age;
- When an individual is engaged in an activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, such as eating and drinking or playing an instrument that would be obstructed by the face covering;
- When the individual is engaged in high-intensity aerobic or anaerobic activity;
- When a student is participating in high-intensity physical activities during a physical education class in a well-ventilated location and able to maintain a physical distance of six feet from all other individuals; or
- When wearing a face covering creates an unsafe condition in which to operate equipment or execute a task.

Opportunities will be provided throughout the day for students to briefly remove masks, in addition to snack time, lunch, physical education and outdoor recess. Students that arrive at school without a mask will be provided with a disposable mask by the school nurse. A student refusing to properly wear a mask while in the school, with the exception of reasons outlined above, will be considered in violation of this Policy and the State mandate. Teaching staff will refer students to building administration for such situations and the student will be removed from class. Parents will be contacted and will be required to remove their child from school without receiving attendance credit for the day. Continued non-compliance with the mask mandate may result in code of conduct violations and continued absences due to non-compliance will result in truancy charges being filed with the municipal court.

5. PROVISION OF LUNCHES

Students will eat lunch in the school cafeteria each day with reduced capacity at each lunch table. Students will be seated at lunch tables three feet from other students, and arranged to avoid direct face-to-face interaction. While the current mask mandate is in place, masks will be required at all times students are not seated at a designated cafeteria table. This includes entering and exiting the cafeteria, waiting on line for lunch/snack, and when disposing of items in the garbage. The daily bell schedule has been modified to provide students with additional time to eat their lunch and to assist in the safe distribution of purchased lunches. The new schedule also allows for additional time for facilities staff to clean and disinfect eating areas between lunch groups.

The Stanhope School District will participate in the Seamless Summer Lunch Program for the 2021-22 school year, which will provide a FREE school lunch for any interested student. Additional information on this program will be forthcoming.

6. HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and make use of hand sanitizer whenever possible. Hand sanitizing stations have been placed in every classroom, the cafeteria, and at the main entrance of the building. Hand hygiene should take place:

- Upon arrival to school
- Before and after meals and snacks
- After using the restroom
- Before leaving for the day
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing
- Before and after using shared resources/materials
- When hands are visibly soiled

Upon the reopening of the school for students in September, the school nurse will provide a handwashing and general hygiene demonstration for all students. In addition, students will be reminded and encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or into their elbow.

7. CLEANING, DISINFECTION & AIRFLOW

The Valley Road School facilities team will continue to utilize a schedule for increased cleaning and disinfection. This will include routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched with an EPA-registered product for use against SARS-CoV-2. If a person exhibits COVID-19 compatible symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 within 24 hours of being in the school building, facilities staff will use an electrostatic sprayer to apply disinfectant to all surfaces in rooms occupied by the symptomatic individual, in addition to their daily cleaning and disinfection procedures.

All indoor facilities have adequate ventilation systems that have been checked by qualified professionals. Filters have been cleaned and replaced, where needed, and air flow will be monitored throughout the school year. Teachers and school staff will be encouraged to open windows when safe to do so, and when the weather is appropriate.

8. SCREENING, RESPONSE TO SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS & STAFF, CONTACT TRACING, EXCLUSION

Parents and Guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their children for signs of illness everyday as they are the front line for assessing illness in their children. Staff are also expected to monitor themselves for symptoms and consult with the school nurse or other medical professional to determine if they should be excluded from campus. School staff will not screen students and staff before entering the building, rather, it is the expectation symptomatic individuals will not attend school. Students and staff who are sick should not attend school. Consistent procedures are in place to identify and respond to students or staff who become ill with or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. If a student is identified as exhibiting symptoms associated with COVID-19, they will be directed to a designated space in the health office to isolate them from other individuals, where they can be examined by the school nurse. If the school nurse finds that the symptoms may be indicative of COVID-19, the student will remain in the health office isolated from others until they are picked up from school by a parent or guardian.

The Valley Road School will continue to implement exclusion protocols as recommended by the NJDOH. Students and staff with the following symptoms will be promptly isolated from others and excluded from school:

- At least **two** of the following symptoms: fever, chills, rigors (shivers), myalgia (muscle aches), headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose; **OR**
- At least **one** of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, new olfactory disorder, or new taste disorder.

In the event that a student, staff member, or school guest tests positive for COVID-19, the school's nurse will notify the Sussex County Department of Health who will then engage in, with the help and support of the school nurse, contact tracing at the Valley Road School and any other area deemed appropriate. If the Department of Health is not available, the contact tracing will be performed by the school nurse. If as a result of contact tracing, VRS students are required to quarantine, accommodations will be provided to support the student academically during their quarantine period. Further details are outlined in section 9 (Remote Learning Necessitated by Exclusion).

In the event that contact tracing must be completed, all stakeholders (including parents and staff) will be contacted and supplied with any pertinent information while maintaining complete confidentiality for the persons infected and exposed.

9. REMOTE LEARNING NECESSITATED BY EXCLUSION

Although remote learning is not an option for the 2021/22 school year, it may become necessary for individual students, groups of students, or even the entire school to pivot to a virtual learning platform. The Valley Road School will do everything possible to be prepared for such a pivot.

If individual students are forced to quarantine for any reason, parents must notify the school nurse as soon as possible. If it is determined that a student must quarantine due to a legitimate COVID-19 related illness or exposure, accommodations will be determined to provide virtual instruction to the student within 24 hours. With this timeline, the student may be considered "absent" for the first day of their quarantine, with accommodations being provided after this time period. The purpose of this 24 hour period is to provide time for teachers to best prepare to support the student virtually. If a large group or classroom is forced to quarantine, every attempt will be made to provide virtual instruction as soon as possible.

10. INTERNET ACCESS AND DEVICES FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING

Surveys will be used by the school to assist in the identification of students and families in need of consistent internet access and devices to engage in virtual learning, in the event that a pivot to remote instruction becomes necessary. Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate directly with the school if technology related support is needed at home. Students/families identified as needing a Chromebook will have the opportunity to 'sign out' a school issued device at the beginning of the school year, and throughout, as needed. However, any device at home that has the ability to connect to the internet can be used for virtual

instruction, if it becomes necessary. Examples include PCs, Chromebooks, iPads, etc. Additional information will be provided by administration at the start of the school year.

11. VACCINATION

Effective October 18, 2021, all school staff must be vaccinated or they will be subject to weekly COVID-19 testing. Weekly testing may need to be completed outside of the school. The Stanhope School District does not currently require the COVID-19 vaccination for any students. Vaccinated individuals are encouraged to provide proof of vaccination to the school's health office, however this is not required. Any individual that does not provide proof of vaccination will be considered 'unvaccinated' for the purposes of contact tracing and exclusion.

The school will host a 'Vaccination Clinic' on October 5, 2021, in which eligible individuals can receive a flu or COVID-19 vaccine. Questions about the vaccine clinic, or any other general questions, should be directed to the school's health office

12. ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

The Stanhope School District recognizes the importance of addressing both our student and staff members' social emotional needs, mental health and well-being, both short term and long term as the current Covid- 19 pandemic continues to unfold. Addressing social and emotional learning (SEL) effectively is proven to support the whole child, increasing student achievement and personal growth as well as improving the culture and climate of the workplace environment for staff members.

Many agencies, both locally and at the state level have been and continue to be consulted and committed to working collaboratively to provide research based best practice, resources and programming that support all members of our educational community. Current programs and community resources put into place that support both our student and staff social emotional wellness, mental health and well-being are listed below:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Training; Health and Administration Department
- Child Assault Prevention Project; New Jersey Child Abuse Prevention (CAP)
- County Wide Anti-Bullying Summit; The Center for Prevention
- Culture and Climate Committee; Guidance Department
- Digital Age and Healthy Relationships; Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Intervention Services (DASI)
- Footprints Character Education Curriculum; Grant via The Center for Prevention
- G.R.E.A.T Program; Stanhope Police Department
- Handle with Care; Stanhope Police Department
- Lion's Quest Character Education Curriculum; Grant via The Center for Prevention
- Mental Health and Suicide Training; Morris/Essex Mental Health Association
- Middle School Summit; Guidance Department
- New Jersey State Bar Foundation
- New Jersey School Boards Association
- Prevention, Behavior and Intervention Services; Guidance Department
- Rutgers Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
- Saint Clare's Behavioral Health Wellness Recovery Center
- VRS Leaders; Guidance Department

- Wellness Committee; Health Department

Additional programming and resources are being researched daily, to continually assess and address the needs of our student and staff population for intervention, support, prevention and recovery services. Stanhope School District strives to support all of the members of our educational community through fostering continued personal growth. If you have any questions, the administration, guidance, health and wellness and child study team departments are available to assist you.

13. CONCLUSION

The Stanhope School District is committed to providing a safe and engaging learning environment for our students, staff and visitors. Building and District leadership will continue to monitor current trends related to COVID-19 and support school staff in the growth and development of teaching strategies and practices.