

Harford Christian School
Re-Opening Plan
for the
2020-2021 School Year

Updated 8/21/2020 and replaces July 17, 2020 version



This plan is subject to change at the direction of Harford Christian School leadership.

Introduction

As September 8, 2020 draws closer I sense a growing energy and excitement for a return to on-campus and in-person Christian education. This is the time of year when teachers come back from a much-needed and well-deserved summer break and begin a conspicuous progression of preparation leading up to the first day of school. We are all excited to greet nearly 300 students and will be working enthusiastically to insure quality instruction in a safe and clean environment.

The 1st Harford Christian School Re-Opening Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year was communicated on July 17, 2020. The purpose of this updated plan is to provide revisions and details regarding various aspects of our anticipated school re-opening on September 8th. Any questions not addressed in this document should be directed to Bryan Wilson at bwilson@harfordchristian.org.

It must be stated that the reality of students returning to school for in-person and in-classroom instruction is not without risks of COVID-19 transmission. While we are implementing responsible and reasonable mitigation efforts, it is likely that HCS will have students and staff members who will contract COVID-19. No level of mitigation will insure a COVID-free campus. We recognize that individuals who are elderly or who have compromised health, face greater risks from COVID-19 than do school-aged children. For that reason, we **do not recommend** that students return to campus from homes where there are elderly or health-compromised family members. Any families deciding to send their children onto the campus of HCS need to know and understand the assumption of risk for COVID-19 transmission on a school campus where hundreds of students and 50+ school personnel will assemble to educate students.

At-home family responsibility cannot be overemphasized. While sickness within our school community is inevitable, each school family can significantly reduce that probability by **DAILY** screening your children before sending them to school. Our motto to begin the school year is ***“when in doubt, keep them out.”*** Students demonstrating any signs of illness (symptoms explained later in this document) should be kept home for the sake of everyone desiring to have their children in an optimally healthy school environment. At-home daily temperature-taking and screening for symptoms of illness is imperative. If everyone does their part, the probability of the HCS campus remaining open for in-person instruction remains favorable.

Mitigation Efforts

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- HCS is in the process of installing touchless sinks, and paper towel dispensers in various locations where it is possible for installation without major renovation.
- Water fountains with touchless water bottle fillers are in each building. Paper cup dispensers in the kindergarten and elementary buildings will allow students to drink without bringing their faces to the water flow.
- HCS has contracted a professional cleaning service (company is currently contracted to clean regional *Urgent Care* facilities) who will daily clean and disinfect our buildings.
- HCS is in the process of hiring additional daytime custodial staff who will be attending to high traffic and heavy touch areas in all three of our buildings. Their duties will also encompass playground equipment between uses.
- HCS has been deep-cleaned this summer (as happens every summer).
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located in high visibility entry areas and in classrooms across campus. Students may bring their own supply of hand sanitizer.
- Students will be reminded and encouraged to wash their hands before and after lunch and frequently through the school day.
- School families are encouraged to send personal supplies with their children, rather than depending on a classroom community supply that typically is available in the upper grades.
 - Various grade level examples include tissues (small packs), scissors, staplers, hole punches, mechanical pencils as opposed to pencils that need to be sharpened, etc.

Temperature-Taking and Symptom Screening

The CDC (Center for Disease Control) does not recommend universal symptom screening to be conducted by schools at this time. Parents or care-givers are strongly urged to monitor their children for signs of infectious illness every day prior to sending their children to school.

Students that are sick should absolutely not attend school in-person. When in doubt - - keep them out - - of school. Below are guidelines for parents to conduct at-home symptom screening along with information regarding how we will conduct at-school symptom screening. Parents, please check your children each morning for the following signs of illness:

- Fever – temperature greater than 100 without fever-reducing medication
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue

- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Recent loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Runny nose
- Nausea/vomiting/or diarrhea

We are not asking that your symptom screening be reported to the school daily, but rather trusting that you as parent/guardian will keep your child home if they have developed these symptoms overnight and that those symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition such as allergies, asthma, IBS, menstruation, etc. **Remember, if you have any doubt - - please keep your child at home.**

If your child develops any of these symptoms during the school day, the child will be sent to the nurse for evaluation. The following guidelines will be used by the school nurse as recommended by the CDC:

Individuals are considered **COVID-19 symptomatic** if he/she has:

- At least one symptom from Group A
OR
- Two or more symptoms from Group B

Group A Symptoms	Group B Symptoms
Fever (oral temp. greater than 100) Cough Shortness of breath Difficulty breathing	Lack of smell or taste (without congestion) Sore throat Chills Muscle pain Fatigue Headache Congestion or runny nose (unrelated to allergies) Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea

Please Note:

- Individuals with a known chronic condition that presents symptoms like those in either Group A or B may be exempt, but documentation from a physician may be required.
- Please understand that your child will be sent home immediately if he or she is considered **COVID-19 symptomatic** based on these CDC guidelines. Students that are **COVID-19 symptomatic** will be quarantined at school and will need to be picked up no later than 60 minutes from the communication from the school nurse.

- In the case that a student has a positive test for COVID-19 or has been exposed to a person who is confirmed to have COVID-19, the parents should immediately report the information to the HCS nurse. Internal policies have been established to govern our school's response to such a scenario.

Return-to-School Criteria

- In order for a student to return from school after non-COVID-19 illness, they need to be free of symptoms and fever for at least 48 hours without medication.
- Any confirmed COVID-19 student or staff member may only return to school with medical release documentation (after a 10-day quarantine), as well as being symptom-free and fever-free for at least 48 hours without medication.

Distancing

- HCS has limited the number of students per classroom so that reasonable distancing may occur. Desks will be spread as far apart as reasonably possible.
- HCS has purchased additional cafeteria tables so that students in grades 7th-12th may be able to enjoy socializing at lunch while being distanced and not sitting directly across from one another. We intend to eat outside as much as possible.
- For chapel seating, students will be distanced from one another and we will NOT engage in group singing, at least to begin the school year. There will be separate chapels for grades 1 through 3 and 4 through 6 on Wednesday, and 7 through 12 on Thursday.
- For school transportation, when possible we will implement a one student per seat policy or in the case of school vans, we will seat students to optimize distancing.
- Physical education activities will frequently utilize stations to facilitate smaller groups that are reasonably distanced. Outdoor activities will be preferred as weather permits.
- Concert band instruction will be located in the kindergarten basement where musicians will be able to maintain reasonable distance from one another.
- There will be no choral/singing activities to begin the year.

Face Coverings/Masks

The matter of face coverings has been one of the most agonizing areas of scrutiny. Despite a recent paradigm shift regarding face coverings, the leadership team at HCS still believes that students wearing face coverings all day is not reasonable. That being said, we want to protect our ministry's ability to remain open in a culture that has embraced face coverings as an expected mitigation to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The information below presents a Plan A and Plan B regarding face covering policies at HCS. As of 8/21/20 we plan to open with Plan A in effect with the hope that we will be able to avoid the need to toggle to Plan B. Please note early childhood exceptions regarding face coverings.

- Teaching faculty members are not required to wear face coverings when actively instructing students while being appropriately distanced.
- When working with students in close proximity, teachers should wear face coverings (exception for kindergarten teachers).
- Any student needing exemption from wearing a face covering must present medical documentation to that effect to the school nurse.
- All face coverings/masks . . .
 - Must cover the nose and mouth.
 - Fit snugly around the face.
 - Must not contain written messages or symbols conveying message.
 - Must not be gaudy or attention-getting.
 - May be a gaiter-style or transparent face shield type.
- Gaiter-style face coverings (the ones that hang around the neck and are able to be quickly pulled up over the nose) allow for easier management, especially for young students. If the face covering remains with the student, the complex logistics of storing and tracking face coverings is greatly reduced.
- HCS will have Plan A and Plan B face covering procedures. To date, we plan to open with Plan A in effect. It must be understood by everyone that, if HCS leadership evaluates that Plan B should be implemented, we will toggle to Plan B criteria.
- **Plan A Face Coverings**
 - Face coverings/masks must be worn . . .
 - When entering or exiting any school building until outside and appropriately distanced from others.
 - When one is not able to maintain social distancing (exception kindergarten).
 - Group travel (class changes, going out to recess).
 - Entering and exiting classrooms.
 - When in hallways, at lockers, or restrooms.
 - Face coverings/masks are not required . . .
 - When outside and distanced.
 - When seated and distanced in the classroom.
 - Kindergarten-aged students will only be required to wear face coverings when moving outside of their classroom.
 - Arrival and dismissal.
 - Movement to specials, recess, special events, etc.
- **Plan B Face Coverings** (kindergarten through 1st grade would still follow Plan A face covering policies).
 - Face coverings/masks must be worn . . .
 - At all times when inside of school buildings with the exception of students seated and distanced while eating.

- Face coverings/masks are not required . . .
 - When outside and distanced (not in close proximity groups).
 - When distanced and eating.
- If Plan B is in effect, multiple outdoor breaks will be placed on the daily schedule for students in grades 2nd-12th.

Visitors in Buildings

- As we begin the year, we will be limiting people traffic in our buildings before and during the school day.
 - Authorized staff and students may enter the school building before and during school.
 - Only office-approved parents/visitors are permitted to enter the school buildings before or during the school day.
 - Office staff will meet parent/family members at the door for any school-related needs (student drop-off or pick-up).
 - For any student medication drop-offs, please call the school number when you arrive at the elementary building and the nurse will meet you at your car to receive the medication and completed doctor's order form.
 - Office staff will meet all mail/package deliveries at the doors.

At-Home Learning vs. Distance Learning

- **At-Home Learning** is the HCS educational program that will be extended to administratively-approved students who are required to remain home for a long-term absence. HCS **At-Home Learning** will not be to the level of HCS distance learning. HCS **At-Home Learning** is defined in greater detail later in this document.
- Distance learning is the HCS educational program that will be extended to HCS students if school-wide on-campus and in-person instruction is suspended for two or more weeks.

Implementation of Distance Learning

- The decision to transition from on-campus/in-person instruction to distance learning will be determined by the following:
 - A government-ordered shut down of all schools.
 - An HCS leadership decision based upon absenteeism/illness level that indicates the need to transition to distance learning for a period of time of 2 weeks or longer.

At-Home Learning

- Every at-home learner adds additional burden to teachers who are daily teaching on-campus and in-person.

- The HCS **At-Home Learning** program will not be extended to kindergarten students. Kindergarten teachers will work with individually with families whose children experience long-term absence at HCS.
- Will only occur with administrative approval.
 - **Request for At-Home Learning** forms will be made available on the school website under the Forms and Documents tab. Submitted requests will receive an administrative response within 48 hours.
 - If approved, teachers will implement **At-Home Learning** the school day after approval has been granted.
- Eligibility for HCS **At-Home Learning** program.
 - HCS enrolled students who are required to remain at home due to long-term illness/injury/disease (more than 1 week).
 - HCS enrolled students whose parents/guardians determine that the student will remain home for a period of time of not less than 2 weeks.
 - **At-Home Learning** cannot be a revolving door based upon daily or weekly regional or national news cycles.
- When a student enters **At-Home Learning** it is expected that they will remain in that context for no less than two weeks.
- **At-Home Learning** will not be approved for students who are absent for regular illnesses such as colds, flu, or allergies which cause a 1 week or less absence.
- **At-Home Learning** will not be approved for pre-approved family trips.
- **At-Home Learning** components:
 - Recordings of instruction for grades 1st through 12th made available to students up to 2 days delayed from live instruction.
 - The use of *Google Classroom* to exchange homework and assignments.
 - Assessments (tests/quizzes) may be sent via in-person or electronically.
 - Parents/guardians must proctor assessments on a teacher-determined schedule.

School Day Student Examples

Kindergarten Student

- At home
 - Daily temperature and symptom screening should occur by parent/guardian.
- Transportation
 - If riding a school bus/van, the student should wear face covering when boarding, for the duration of the route, and when leaving the school bus or van. Exceptions may be made for kindergarten students.
 - If arriving by non-school transportation, the student should wear a face covering when exiting their vehicle to enter the kindergarten building. They will wear a

face covering as they exit the building each day until outside and with their parent/guardian.

- Entering the School Building
 - Student should enter the school building with face covering until they arrive to their classroom where they will be permitted to appropriately store (or let hang around neck) their face covering until needed.
- Leaving and Returning to the Classroom
 - Kindergarten students may be leaving their classroom during the school day for a variety of reasons:
 - Travelling to physical education, library, and music
 - Travelling to recess outdoor play area
 - Special activity travelling
 - When leaving the classroom and moving around campus with their teacher, students will wear their face covering. Upon arriving at their destination, they will have the opportunity to appropriately store (or let hang around neck) their face covering for the duration of their activity.
 - Student will wear their face covering when travelling back to their classroom and until their return.
- Snack Time
 - In our current context, parents/guardians will need to daily send in a personal snack for their child.
- Hygiene Mitigations
 - As they have always done, teachers will be encouraging good hygiene including hand-washing, sneezing or coughing into elbow, no hands to face or mouth, etc.
 - Where reasonable, teachers will reduce community sharing of instructional materials and other items.
 - The K-5 classroom will receive custodial attention between AM and PM sessions.
- Recess
 - In an effort to practice a reasonable level of cohorting, K-4 and K-5 students will enjoy outdoor recess at separate times. Afternoon care students in K-4 and K-5 will merge into one group for supervision.
- Mid-day dismissal/arrival (students will wear face coverings during this movement time)
 - Students not staying for PM aftercare should be picked-up beginning at 11:45 AM through 12:00 PM and will be supervised in the kindergarten lobby and hallway as parents/guardians arrive.
 - Students staying for PM aftercare will enter the afternoon care classroom at 11:45 AM where they will have their lunch.
 - Morning care PM-K-5 students will leave the morning care classroom at 11:20 AM and have their lunch in the kindergarten basement. This will allow the room to be cleaned before afternoon care students arrive at 11:45 AM.

- PM-K-5 students eating lunch in the kindergarten basement will transition to their PM-K-5 program at 12:00 PM.
- The PM-K-5 kindergarten program will begin at 12:15 PM. PM-K-5 students not in morning care may arrive between 12:05 and 12:15 PM.
- PM dismissal (students will wear face coverings during this movement time)
 - Aftercare and PM-K-5 kindergarten students may be picked up curbside at the kindergarten building between 3:00 and 3:10 PM. After this time window, kindergarten parents/guardians should park in the upper lot and physically come to the kindergarten front doors to receive their students. Students riding school transportation or meeting parents in the north parking lot elementary dismissal area will be supervised by school staff to connect with their bus/van or parent/guardian.
 - Each kindergarten classroom will receive custodial attention between group use.
 - While we enjoy seeing our parents and students fellowship during and after dismissal time, in our current context we are trying to reduce group gatherings on our campus, especially in the playground area. We look forward to a time when the fellowship and play may resume during and after PM dismissal. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

1st through 6th Grade Student

- At home
 - Daily temperature and symptom screening should occur by parent/guardian.
- Transportation
 - If bus/van student, student should wear face covering boarding and leaving the school bus or van. If possible, they should wear the face covering for the duration of their bus/van route.
 - If arriving by non-school transportation, the student should wear a face covering when exiting their vehicle to enter the kindergarten or elementary building. They will wear a face covering as they exit the building each day until outside and with parent/guardian.
- Entering the School Building
 - Arrival time is between 8:10-8:25 AM. Students should not arrive earlier than 8:10 AM. Rather than grouping in the church lobby area, students in 2nd through 6th grades will report immediately to their classrooms where they will meet their teacher.
 - See Plan A and Plan B regarding face covering policies. As of 8/21/20 HCS plans to open with Plan A face covering policies in place.

- Outside activity
 - If under Plan B for face covering policy, teachers will be providing several opportunities through the day for students to experience outside time where they will be able to have a break from their face coverings when properly distanced.
- Chapel
 - Two separate chapel times will occur for students in grades 1-3 and 4-6 on Wednesday morning. As in the classroom under Plan A, when students are seated and distanced, face coverings will not be required.
- Specials
 - PE
 - Mrs. Lefever will guide face covering use in relation to her activities.
 - To begin the year, 4th through 6th grade students will NOT be changing for PE activity. On their PE special day, students in grades 4th-6th will be permitted to dress down for school, allowing for athletic footwear and casual, loose-fitting pants (not shorts), and their PE shirt.
 - Music
 - To begin the year for kindergarten and elementary students, Mrs. Peters will focus on music education instruction without choral singing.
 - Library
 - Will run as normal.
 - Computers
 - The computer teachers and other student computer use areas will be using disposable keyboard clear plastic coverings for student users to address high touch surface area concerns.
 - Foreign Language
 - To begin the year, 3rd and 4th year Spanish and German students will not be entering kindergarten or elementary classrooms for language instruction.
- PM dismissal (students will wear face coverings during this movement time)
 - While we enjoy seeing our parents and students fellowship during and after dismissal time, in our current context we are trying to reduce group gatherings on our campus, especially in the playground area. We look forward to a time when the fellowship and play may resume during and after PM dismissal. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

7th-12th Grade Students

- At home
 - Daily temperature and symptom screening should occur by parent/guardian
 -

- Transportation
 - If riding a school bus/van, the student should wear face covering while boarding and leaving the school bus or van. They should wear the face covering for the duration of their bus/van route.
 - If arriving to school as a car student, students should wear their face covering when exiting their vehicle to enter the high school building. They will wear a face covering as they exit the building each day until outside and with their parent/guardian.
- Entering the School Building
 - Arrival time is between 8:10-8:25 AM. Students should not arrive earlier than 8:10 AM. Rather than grouping in the lobby area, students will immediately have the opportunity to visit their lockers and report to their homerooms.
 - See Plan A and Plan B regarding face covering policies. As of 8/21/20 HCS plans to open with Plan A face covering policies in place.
- Outside activity as related to class change and instruction
 - If under Plan B for face coverings, our 8-period class schedule will provide an AM and PM break (between 2nd and 3rd period and 6th and 7th period) to allow for students to flow outside before reporting to their next class. While outside and distanced, students will be able to remove their face covering for a brief period of time before re-entering the building.
 - If a teacher decides to host instruction outside, students may remove face coverings when appropriately distanced.
- Chapel
 - Assigned chapel seating will reasonably distance students for our chapel service on Thursday mornings and for any assemblies in the sanctuary. As in the classroom under Plan A, when students are seated and distanced, face coverings will not be required.
- Lunch
 - Added tables and outside dining opportunities will allow us to host a distanced lunch period where students will be able to remove face coverings, enjoy their lunch, and experience socialization with their classmates.
 - Students may not remove their face covering until they are distanced and seated. If they need to get up from their table to make a purchase or use the restroom, face coverings must be worn.
- Health and Physical Education
 - Mrs. Lefever will guide students regarding face coverings and physical education activity.
 - Students in 7th and 8th grades will be assigned to either the locker room or restrooms for daily changing into PE uniform and back. This will facilitate distancing while changing for PE.

- Fine Arts
 - Concert band instruction will begin the school year in the kindergarten basement. Musicians will be appropriately distanced and musicians will not be wearing face coverings when rehearsing with their instruments. Face coverings will be worn at all other times while travelling to and from band.
 - To begin the year, there will be no vocal choir activity. Students who have vocal choir on their schedule will be reporting to 8th period study hall on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Athletics
 - HCS Athletic Director, Cheri Lefever, has been closely monitoring the feasibility of athletics participation opportunities for the fall season. Our goal is to return student-athletes to play as safely as possible while following local and national guidance. Athletics is an important extension of the classroom and important for a student's physical, social, mental, and emotional well-being. Protocols for coaches and athletes are available through the HCS athletic office or reach out to Cheri Lefever at clefever@harfordchristian.org.
- Lockers
 - Students in 7th through 12th grades are assigned a locker. Lockers are assigned by grade level cohort (not mixed grades in same locker areas) and are assigned in a manner to maximize distance between users. Students are not required to use school lockers.
- Computer Usage
 - The computer teachers and library services will be using disposable keyboard clear plastic coverings for student users to address high touch surface area concerns.
- First Day of School
 - Administrative staff will be meeting with 7th-12th students in the sanctuary on the first day of school. Students will learn their distanced chapel seating assignment with assistance from their homeroom teacher.

Attendance

- During the span of the COVID-19 impact, HCS will remain very flexible regarding attendance policies. We expect parents to remain very vigilant regarding the health of each family member and we anticipate more absenteeism that what would be normal for both staff members and students.

September Calendar Items

As we look at the month of September, we are anticipating the following revisions to the school calendar:

- **Friday, September 4, 2020** Open House Revisions
 - Consult the school supplies list and bring school supplies to school on this day.
 - To regulate the number of guests in our building at one time on Friday, September 4, 2020, we are dividing the morning time period from 9:00 AM until 12:00 noon into six 30-minute segments assigned to last name alphabetical listing as follows.
 - 9:00-9:30 Students with last names beginning with A through D
 - 9:30-10:00 Students with last names beginning with E through I
 - 10:00-10:30 Students with last names beginning with J through M
 - 10:30-11:00 Students with last names beginning with N through Q
 - 11:00-11:30 Students with last names beginning with R through T
 - 11:30-12:00 Students with last names beginning with U through Z
 - This will not be a normal year Open House where teachers will have activities and learning resources for young students to engage in while parents visit with the teacher.
 - Please do not enter a classroom if you see two families in the room. Please wait until there is one or less family in the room.
 - Students in 7th-12th grades may pick up a copy of their schedule and locker assignment when entering the lobby. Teachers will be available in the classrooms to meet students and parents.
 - Please help us with traffic flow by not lingering for fellowship in our buildings or on the grounds after your assigned visitation window.
- **Friday, September 11, 2020 Back-to-School Night**
 - There will be no Back-to-School Night on Friday, September 11, 2020. Teachers will be sending electronic information out to all of their students' families, communicating what would normally be communicated on a Back-to-School Night event. This electronic communication will be sent out during the first week of school. Parents are encouraged to reach back out to teachers with questions or concerns at the end of our 1st week of school.
- **Sunday, September 13, 2020 New Family Sunday**
 - Due to the limited seating capacity for the Reformation Bible Church family, new families are encouraged to visit after COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. When that time comes, a communication to new families will go out with an explanation of our New Family Sunday at Reformation Bible Church.

- **Wednesday, September 23, 2020 Fall Individual Picture Day**
 - For all students and staff. Dress code for students – school uniform.
- **Thursday and Friday, September 24-25, 2020 Professional Development** (for teachers - no school for students)
 - Harford Christian School is scheduled for re-accreditation on October 14-16, 2020. A team of five school leaders will be evaluating our school during these three days. September 24th and 25th will be important accreditation preparation days for our school team.

Conclusion

As a church-exempt school in the state of Maryland we fervently protect our independence and liberties which our forefathers fought for, and acquired, decades ago in God's good Providence. We are not, and will not be under the oversight of the Maryland State Department of Education. While Reformation Bible Church and our school leadership team have been able to make our own determination of how and when to re-open Harford Christian School, we have read, consulted, and networked so that our decisions have been well-informed. God has placed the responsibility of educating and training children on the shoulders of parents. It is the parent who must ultimately decide how their children will be educated. We are pleased that you have looked to HCS to partner in educating your children in Christian worldview, all to the glory of God. By joining our school family, you join us in adhering to school re-opening policies, even when you may personally disagree with certain aspects of the plan. May our Lord protect our campus from illness while empowering us to educate students for His kingdom.