

2021-2022

BACK
TO HIGHLAND
COMMUNITY SCHOOL



2021-2022
HEALTH & SAFETY
OPERATIONAL
STRATEGY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary/back-to-school plan 5 days/week	2
Operations	3
Calendar and School Schedule (incl. BSP/ASP)	3
Arrivals	4
Dismissals/ Pick up	6
Moving through the Building	7
Visitors	8
School Meals	9
Large Gathering Policy	10
Health& Safety Plan	11
Community Coordination	11
Criteria for School Closure if Someone is Symptomatic	12
Contact Tracing	13
COVID-19 Communications	13
Maintaining Healthy Environments	14
Health Screenings	15
When to Quarantine	15
When to Stay Home	16
When You Can Return	17
Hygiene: Hand Washing & Hand Sanitizer	18
Personal Protection Equipment	19
Daily Cleaning	20
System Modification/HVAC Improvements	21

Appendix A: Highland Community School's 2021/2022 School Calendar

Appendix B: COVID-19 Response Protocol for Staff or Student Exposure & Return to Work

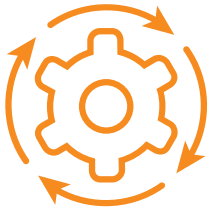
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I would like to welcome you to the 2021-2022 school year. I hope you and your families have had the opportunity to take advantage of this beautiful weather and are enjoying the last few weeks of summer. I am so delighted that everyone will return to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year. All of us at Highland look forward to seeing our students on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, for our first day of school. I believe students benefit most when they are working together in the classroom using the beautiful Montessori materials while being guided by their teachers. I don't think any of us will ever take these in-person learning experiences for granted again. Highland is a nurturing learning community, powered by an amazing team of staff who really care about children. Our teachers, assistants, and staff are welcoming and dedicated to ensuring that your child receives the best Montessori education possible. In this letter you'll find information on staffing changes and updated health and safety guidelines for the upcoming school year.

This document details the many policies and procedures in place this fall to help keep our community safe, including:

- Everyone entering the building will be required to wear masks. We will keep extra masks on hand for students and adults who may forget or have a soiled mask.
- Whenever possible, children will be spaced three feet apart, paying particular attention to the spacing of children during lunch.
- Continued ventilation improvements and enhancements continue to be made to our HVAC system.
- Visitors will remain limited.
- Pick-up and drop-off will continue at the 17th street entrance to cut down on traffic of adults/parents in and around the building.
- Handwashing or the use of hand sanitizer will be done upon entering the classroom, before and after eating and after toileting (reminders given).
- We ask that parents continue to monitor their children for symptoms at home, keeping sick children at home, and getting them tested when applicable.
- Highland staff will be asked to stay home if exhibiting symptoms consistent with respiratory illness.
- Shared spaces, classrooms, bathrooms, and hallways will be disinfected regularly throughout the day and each evening.
- Contact tracing will continue upon entering the building and classrooms.
- We encourage anyone eligible to get vaccinated. Vaccination remains our best strategy to protecting our students from COVID-19.

Highland's foundation has always been our strong sense of community and a partnership with parents to provide our students with an environment where children can grow and learn to be confident, kind, and well-rounded human beings. Although, we can't have everyone in our school community together for all school gatherings, or parents supporting in the building, we will strive to find ways to engage our families so this long tradition of parents and educators working together can continue.



OPERATIONS

This section outlines aspects of the operating of the school, and includes school schedule, school meals, technology, and communication plans. The Health and Safety Plan covers other operating aspects that will help keep our community safe during this health crisis.



CALENDAR & SCHOOL SCHEDULE

School Day: *

K3: 8:30 - 11:30

K4/K5: 8:30 AM - 3:15 PM

Elementary: 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Adolescent Program: 8:10 AM - 3:30 PM

Wraparound Programs:

Before School Care: 7 AM - 8 AM

K3 CHECK: 11:30 - 3:30 PM

Early After School Care: 3:30 PM - 4:15 PM

After School Care: 3:30 PM - 6 PM

***Please see the staggered drop-off and pick-up schedules for times specific to your student's grade/level**



MOVING TO & THROUGH THE SCHOOL

SCHOOL DROP OFF

Parents will not be permitted inside the building during drop-off and pick-up times. Times will be staggered by grade level to limit traffic. Classroom days will be extended slightly in the morning and afternoon to allow for staggered arrival/dismissal while also limiting the impact on families with siblings across grades. Siblings may arrive together.

Car line will wrap around from Juneau Avenue to 17th street. If proceeding through the car line, please stay in your vehicle. Staff will guide children to their class line on the playground.

Children's House families who prefer to walk their child(ren) to the playground, please park your car on 18th street or along Highland, west of 18th street. Please **do not** park on Juneau, 17th or in front of the building on Highland, as these areas are reserved for the car drop-off line, and toddler arrivals. While construction continues, the only playground access point is on 17th street.



STAGGERED ARRIVAL TIMES

8:00 AM – Upper Elementary / Adolescent Program

8:10 AM – Lower Elementary

8:20 AM – Children's House

Classroom assistants will station on the playground at their arrival time to collect their students. Students will go up their designated stairwell to class as a group with their classroom adult. Upper Elementary & Adolescent Program students can go directly to class upon arrival. Classroom assistants at these levels will support drop off by monitoring halls and stairwells.

Toddler Classrooms will drop-off at the classroom doors on Highland Avenue.

Before School Drop Off

For students participating in the Before School Program (BSP), Parents should proceed to the loading dock and call the main number so that an HCS staff can meet you at your car. Please make sure that your student is prepared and ready to exit the car at time of call.

SCHOOL DISMISSAL

Afternoon pickup will take place outdoors on 17th street. Families with multiple children should arrive at the latest pick-up time in their family. Each family will receive a placard with a unique number for their family. Additional support staff, as available, will be present at exits to help facilitate. Toddler families will dismiss from their classroom doors on Highland Avenue. **Students must be picked up by an authorized adult.**

Staggered dismissal times

11:30 AM - K3 students

3:15 PM - Children's House (K4 & K5)

3:25 PM - Lower Elementary

3:35 PM - Adolescent Classroom & Upper Elementary

Please note, the K3 program runs from 8:30 AM - 11:30 AM. K3 students should be picked up by 11:30 AM.

Aftercare Pick Up

When picking up after the end of the school day, parents should proceed to 18th street and call the main number so that an HCS program staff can walk the student to their car. Students must be picked up by an authorized adult.

TRANSPORTATION

Highland does not provide transportation for any of our students.

OUTSIDE OF CLASSROOM (E.G. ALLOWABLE ROUTES IN BUILDING HALLWAYS, BATHROOM PROTOCOLS)

Hallways

All hallway floors will have arrows marking the direction for students and staff to follow. Floor marking will be utilized in waiting areas and at entrances to provide social distancing cues. In the case of emergency, hallway monitors will assist with social distancing.

Water fountains

All drinking fountains will be deactivated, instead students will use water bottles in class, filled using sinks in each classroom. The school will help supply water bottles to families who may not have them.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms will be capped at a maximum capacity of 4 students per bathroom. Classrooms will send only 2 students (1 boy and 1 girl) to the bathroom at the same time. Signage will be posted to inform students and staff of capacity limits. A hallway monitor will be present during the day to monitor usage of the bathroom as needed, especially for younger students.

Other Common Spaces

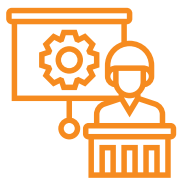
Common spaces (e.g., library, gym, Studio H, etc.) within the school will be limited to children from one classroom at a time and students will adhere to social distancing of 3 feet or more within these spaces when possible.



BUILDING VISITORS

All parents and other visitors will be limited during school operational hours (7 AM - 6 PM), unless approved by the Director in advance. No parents may enter the building for pick-up or drop-off. All visitors to the building should enter through the main entrance (or loading dock during construction), and sign-in. All visitors are required to wear a mask and use hand sanitizer upon arrival. Visitors will be escorted to the appointment.

Staff are encouraged to limit in-person meetings. When possible, teachers and staff will communicate with parents via phone and email, or schedule virtual meetings. We will continue to assess our visitor policy and identify creative ways to safely bring our community together. Once it is safe to do so, we will resume our open door policy.



COMMUNITY TRAINING

Staff have been trained on necessary health and safety protocols. Staff will be trained on COVID-19 signs and symptoms, as well as state and local mitigation efforts at the time of the training. Staff will be given a Staff COVID-19 Guide that will provide instruction on school health and safety policies as well as sick leave policy updates and the importance of not reporting to work when ill.

When students return to school, teachers will go over health and safety rules and we will provide signs, etc per classroom and throughout the building.



SCHOOL MEALS

Lunch: There is a schedule for the kitchen manager to heat the individually packaged lunch provided by MPS. Each classroom will have their packaged lunch delivered on carts by classroom staff and will eat in their classroom by their assigned lunch cohort. Hand washing will happen before lunch is served. Students will remain in their assigned seat during lunch, tables will be arranged to keep students as far apart as possible, when masks will be removed.

As always, students are welcomed to bring their own lunches. We encourage parents who send lunch with their children to only have nutritional food items in their lunch each day. Please refrain from sending foods that are overly sweetened or salted. Soda and candy will not be served.

Morning Snack: Everyone should send a healthy snack to school each day with their child. If you are unable to do so, a snack will be provided.

Before School Breakfast: Cold breakfast will be served in the classroom between 8 AM - 8:30 AM.

After School Snack: In aftercare, children will rotate through snack, only one small group eating at a time.



LARGE GATHERING POLICY

Whenever possible, school gatherings will take place on the playground. If a gathering takes place in the building it will be outside of regular operational hours (evenings or weekends) and all participants will be required to wear a mask upon entering the building, sign-in at the office and maintain social distance from those outside their household. Our events and gathering policy is subject to change, and contingent on most recent guidance around COVID-19 for schools.



HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN

Keeping our community safe during this health crisis is the reason for all this planning. Highland has created this Health and Safety Plan that complies with all the Milwaukee Department of Health's requirements. We understand that requirements are subject to change as more information is provided. CDC guidance will also be utilized when making any modifications to health and safety guidance or school reopening plans.

This plan will be updated as more information becomes available.



COMMUNITY COORDINATION

Highland Community School's **COVID-19 Coordinator is Danny Baxter**. He can be reached at dbaxter@hcsmkc.org. With the help from other staff members, he will compile information on absences, tracking illnesses, and identifying potential COVID-19 clusters.

MONITORING PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDELINES & UPDATES

To confirm that our protocols are in line with state and local health guidelines, the COVID-19 Coordinator, school leadership, and board members will monitor all guidance from Milwaukee Public Schools, the Milwaukee Department of Public Health, and other local government agencies. CDC guidance will also be utilized when making any modifications to health and safety guidance or school reopening plans. The COVID-19 Coordinator will monitor guidance from the above entities for best practice resources for maintaining a safe and healthy environment. School Leadership will review and update our protocols as new state and local health guidance is released.

If a staff/student is diagnosed with COVID-19, we will notify the City Health Department, Milwaukee Public Schools and the Highland Parent Board of Directors immediately. We will notify the staff and families in close contact with a confirmed case via text/email home. All identifying information will be kept confidential.



CRITERIA FOR SCHOOL CLOSURE IF A STAFF OR STUDENT IS SYMPTOMATIC

If a student/staff is **confirmed to have been exposed to COVID-19/confirmed case but has not been in the building** since known exposure.

- No closure required – self-isolation of the exposed individual and family members

If a student/staff is **confirmed to have had exposure to COVID-19/confirmed case and has only been in contact with students in their own classroom.**

- Staff and students who have recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should stay home and monitor their health. Close contact is currently defined by the CDC as within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period, regardless of whether either person was wearing a mask.

Confirmed case within the school (student or staff) with unknown exposure.

Potential exposure to multiple classrooms and students (recess, ASP, Siblings), unable to be measured and contained, or if there are multiple confirmed cases across classrooms.

- Full School shutdown immediately

Who decides? City and other governmental agencies who have authority to close or reopen schools will be a main source in any decision-making process. Outside of any mandates, the Highland Board will be responsible for any reopening decisions and will defer to local and state health authorities on specific criteria related to reopening. School Leadership will keep the Board up to date on relevant COVID-19 exposure/confirmed cases.

RESPONSE PROTOCOL FOR FEVER OR OTHER COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

If a student or staff who presents with a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, we will request that person leaves and gets tested immediately. They should quarantine until results are confirmed. Students will wait in an isolated area, away from other students or staff but in the visual supervision of a staff member until they can be picked up. Staff members needing assistance can also wait in the isolation area until an emergency contact can come to take them home. The isolation area will be sanitized thoroughly after each use.

Emergency services will be utilized in the case of severe or life-threatening symptoms.

CONTACT TRACING

Highland has created a communication system for staff and families to self-report possible COVID-19 symptoms. All staff and families are to inform office staff of any confirmed or possible exposure to COVID-19. Staff and families will be asked to disclose confidentially any possible further exposure to members of the school community.

Highland leadership will confidentially inform any staff/families of a possible exposure or confirmed case as soon as possible. No specific student/staff/family information will be provided during this notification.



COVID-19 COMMUNICATIONS

MODIFICATION TO SCHOOL SCHEDULE & NOTIFICATION OF POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

School schedule communications to staff will be done via email, a Basecamp message, and the staff handbook. **Parents and stakeholder communication** will be done through Facebook, Instagram, our website, emails, Notes Home Newsletter, registration information, and the parent handbook.

Highland leadership will confidentially inform any staff and families of a possible exposure or confirmed case through these above channels as soon as possible. The school community will receive an email and text message to let them know we have a positive COVID-19 and how we are responding to the case. No specific student/staff/family/classroom information will be provided during this notification.

USE OF SIGNAGE

We use signage with simple language and pictures to inform and remind our community about traffic flow allowing for physical distancing, promoting protective measures, how to stop the spread of COVID-19, social distancing rules, hygiene and face covering expectations, and to identify other COVID-19 safety rules.

There are signs and floor markers in hallways, bathrooms, and by any hand washing and sanitizing location. Also, they will remind students and adults to maintain social distancing in hallways, front offices, and other common areas.

LEVERAGING ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Highland has a comprehensive plan using a variety of communication tools to provide our community clear, concise, and transparent communication. We will use this plan to ensure that staff and parents receive important COVID-19 information and messages.

Our primary way of communicating with families is through the weekly Notes Home email. Notes Home emails celebrate our weekly work, updates for the next week, and has a dedicated area for resources to help the whole family like our SEL newsletters and unemployment information. Additionally, monthly emails are sent to our broader community to give updates on our yearly progress.

We utilize our Facebook page and Instagram account to reinforce the messages sent in our emails and to communicate any last minute opportunities from our partners. We will also use social media to send reminders about events.

In case of emergency or the need for urgent communication with our families, we will use the texting tool in Transparent Classroom as well as an email. Highland Room Parents will also post information in the classroom Facebook pages.

We are able to analyze email open rates, engagement rates on Facebook, and Transparent Classroom engagement to ensure that all families and staff are receiving important COVID-19 information.



MAINTAINING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS



HEALTH SCREENINGS

- **For Students**, parents should take student temperatures at home daily and monitor their child for symptoms. All parents will be asked to report any reasons for absences, including possible exposure to COVID19. Staff who call home regarding unreported absences will be asking for reasons, including symptoms. This data will be kept secure and confidential by limited office personnel. Notification will be given to any staff or families of a potential exposure to COVID-19, no individual data will be released as a part of this notification.
- **Staff** will be asked to complete a daily health screening check from home and report any symptoms to office personnel. Staff exhibiting symptoms consistent with respiratory illness will be sent home. Staff will be instructed to report to office personnel any potential symptoms or exposure to COVID-19. All information collected will be kept secure and confidential. Notification will be given to any staff or families of a potential exposure to COVID-19, no individual data will be released as a part of this notification.



WHEN TO QUARANTINE

Students or staff are sent home if they have exhibited any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have had confirmed or possible exposure to someone with COVID-19. On the next page are the requirements to return.

WHEN TO STAY HOME

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

Symptoms are considered consistent with COVID-19 when one of the symptoms from the first group or two of the other symptoms are present above baseline for that individual. Please keep your child home from school if they are experiencing one or more of the first set of symptoms or two or more of the second set of symptoms.

One or more of these symptoms:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fever

two or more of these symptoms:

- Congestion or runny nose
- Fever or chills
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat

A full list of quarantine and isolation in the "**COVID-19 Response Protocol for Staff or Student Exposure & Return to Work, Appendix B**"

STUDENTS AND STAFF CAN RETURN WHEN:

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS	REQUIREMENTS TO RETURN
Positive COVID-19 Case (with symptoms) OR Unconfirmed Case (with symptoms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 24 hours fever free without fever-reducing medication, improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
Positive COVID-19 Case (without symptoms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After 24 hours symptom free, two negative test results in a row, from tests done at least 24 hours apart; OR At least 10 days have passed since the date of the positive test and no subsequent symptoms have developed.
Self-Quarantine due to potential exposure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine for 10 days with no symptoms OR after day 7 with a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later). Continue to monitor for any symptoms until 14 days after exposure. Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine unless they show symptoms. People who have tested positive in the last 3 months do not need to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.

If a student or staff is sick but confirmed COVID-19 negative, they may return to school when they are fever free for 24 hours and are well enough to participate fully in activities.



HYGIENE: HAND WASHING & HAND SANITIZER

Hand sanitizer will be provided for students as needed. Each classroom has at least one sink within the room for hand washing throughout the day. Students will be instructed to wash their hands as they enter the classroom in the morning and will wash frequently throughout the school day, including before and after bathroom breaks, lunch and recess.



PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer does not know they are infected. On students first day of attendance, teachers will give students a training on COVID-19 symptoms, how to properly wash their hands or use hand sanitizer, what symptoms they should be aware of and report to teachers, and how and when to properly wear a mask.

Surgical quality masks will not be required, however a cloth/disposable face covering will be required for all staff and students (over the age of 3) in the building. Throughout the school day, staff will reinforce the use of face coverings. If a student arrives at school without a mask, HCS will provide a disposable mask.

Allowable face covering should be:

- Two or more layers of breathable fabric/material
- Completely cover the nose and mouth
- Fit snugly against the sides of the face
- Have a nose wire to prevent leakage

Please see the CDC Guide to Face Masks for more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

Accommodations will be provided on a case by case basis if staff or students have a documented medical condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a mask.

Face coverings are required in the following situations:

- In all hallways and stairwells, including entering and exiting the building
- In all common/shared spaces – copier rooms, main office, etc.
- In any spaces where one may encounter students
- In any space within the building that has more than one person



DAILY CLEANING

STANDARD NIGHTLY CLEANING

- Wiping tables, chairs, surfaces
- High touch areas: handles, faucets, etc.
- Floors – sweep & mop
- Trash removal

BETWEEN USES

- Shared materials, toys, games, art supplies
 - Student supplies will be housed individually and materials unable to be duplicated will be cleaned between uses
- Computer keyboards, mouse
- Phones
- Copier/printers

CLEANING PRODUCTS

Classrooms will use bleach water solution for cleaning and may also utilize cleaning wipes at times. All cleaning solutions used by cleaning staff will be cross-checked with the recommended cleaning products provided by the CDC, EPA and other local agencies. Hand sanitizers will contain 60% or greater alcohol content and follow all current regulations.



HVAC IMPROVEMENTS

We have conducted several **HVAC assessments to ensure ventilation systems operate properly, and** to increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible and in accordance with ASHRAE guidance for COVID-19.

- We continue to make improvements to the HVAC in our school. This spring we implemented the following improvements : Quarterly filter changes, using MERV 10 filters that are doubled (recommendation is MERV 7)
- Bi-annual preventative maintenance of entire system with inspections during the other 2 filter changes
- The HVAC System runs before school hours and does not shut off until well after school hours
- The HVAC System has the ability to run 7 times per hour, which is higher than the recommendation, but also not a requirement per CDC guidance. Thus, we will use 1-2 fans with open windows and doors to ensure proper air flow
- Bathrooms and kitchen have exhaust fans running continuously
- Beyond the windows with fans, windows will be opened for outside air to come in and out of the classrooms
- An Ionizer has been installed on our HVAC system and covers all areas of the building, does not require filter changes, and is not accessible to children. Third party testing says it kills COVID-19 in 30 minutes.

Additional work over the summer has led to the following:

- Diagnosing problems with motors, fuses, and belts (all defective parts have been replaced)
- The outside air dampers have been adjusted to increase the volume of air moving through the building
- Air balancing has ensured that all parts of the building are getting the most amount of air that is possible for our system.

APPENDIX A

Highland Community School's
2021/2022 School Calendar

APPENDIX B

COVID-19 Response Protocol for Staff or Student Exposure & Return to School