



Re-Opening Plan

Update

Hillside Residential and Day Treatment Schools

Spring 2021

Introduction

Hillside is committed to the health, safety and wellness of our students and staff. As such, Hillside has engaged administrators, executive directors, and agency staff in developing our re-opening plan that adheres to the guidelines and mandates from the Department of Health (DOH), New York State Education Department (NYSED), and Center for Disease Control (CDC). We worked together to address safety and health concerns as well as academic learning and the social emotional well-being of students and staff.

The 2020-21 school year will look remarkably different from previous years. Nevertheless, Hillside maintains a commitment to learning in a welcoming and safe environment. As such, the plan outlines three learning options for Day Treatment and two learning options for Residential Schools.

Hillside has developed this Spring School Reopening Plan as an update to our Fall 2020 plan. With the advisory of staff and administrators from across the agency, we have agreed upon the continued provision of both in-person and remote learning experiences (upon parent request), while increasing in-person days for students with maximizing the health and safety of all.

We have utilized the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to update our plan. We have evaluated and reviewed our current health and safety plans and modified our instructional models accordingly.

Fourth Quarter Instructional Models:

Hillside Day Treatment

- In-person learning for all students 5 days per week, grades K-12 is highly encouraged
- Fully remote instruction for grades K-12 by parental request (special circumstances)

Hillside Residential Schools

- In-person learning for all students five days per week, grades K-12
- Some offline learning (no Internet) for students, grades K-12

This plan is fluid. The Administrative team will continue to update the plan as new guidelines are provided by DOH, NYSED and CDC.

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Goal

The goal of Hillside is to develop an operational plan that achieves a safe re-opening for students and staff to a high-quality learning environment that includes an instructional and therapeutic approach, with family and community collaboration.

Reopening Guidance with Threshold

On Monday, July 13, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that school districts in New York should develop plans to reopen schools and provide in-person instruction with appropriate social distancing and face coverings. The threshold for reopening school in September was based upon the regional COVID-19 infection rate:

- If a region is in Phase 4 and has a daily infection rate of 5% or lower over a 14-day average, schools in that region could hold in-person instruction.
- If daily infection rates exceed 9% over a seven-day average; however, schools in that region would not reopen.

While schools have been instructed to prioritize efforts to return all students to in-person instruction, Hillside is also planning for a full remote learning option. Upon request, parents will have the choice to select an in-person (5 days/week) model or fully remote.

The Reopening plan is for the 2020-2021 school year and is subject to change should the COVID-19 community spread exceed the threshold outlined by the governor and/or the guidance provided by the NYS Department of Health. This plan includes procedures that will be followed in both residential and day treatment schools.

- Andres Trahey Residential-Middle and High School
- Crestwood Residential/Day Treatment-Elementary and Middle School
- Halpern Day Treatment-Middle and High School
- Finger Lakes Residential-Middle and High School
- Snell Farms Residential-Middle and High School

The top priority in all decisions made by Hillside schools is the health, safety and well-being of our students, employees and school communities as well as maximizing in-person learning. This document is subject to change as conditions evolve in our community. If and when the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic change, the guidance we receive from state and local agencies may also change and cause adjustments to our plans.

Guiding Principles

As Hillside schools plan to reopen, the guidance and considerations outlined in this framework are grounded in six guiding principles:

1. Safeguarding the health and safety of students and staff;
2. Provide students the opportunity to fully engage in either (1) **in-person instruction** starting in the spring or (2) fully **remote instruction** (upon request).
3. Monitoring the school populations and, when necessary, potentially cancelling classes in the future to appropriately contain COVID-19 spread;
4. Emphasizing equity, access, and support to the students and communities who are emerging from this historic disruption;
5. Fostering strong two-way communication with partners such as families, educators and clinicians; and
6. Taking into account any potential challenges to the physical safety and social/emotional well-being of our students when they are not in school.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our school community members is our primary focus as we re-open to in-person learning. Hillside will ensure that the reopening of school delivers safety measures that allow for high-quality instruction and student learning. A healthy and safe return to school will include aligning our protocols with guidance from the state, federal, and local levels.

- Screenings
- Social Distancing
- Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment:
- Healthy Hygiene Practices
- Trainings
- Protocols for a Positive Case of COVID-19
- Management of Ill Persons

COVID-19 Screenings

Screening for Students

All students will be screened prior to entering the school building. If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees or greater, or is experiencing symptoms as defined by CDC and DOH, parents will be immediately notified and guided to follow up with their health care professional. For Day Treatment students, parents will be asked to pick up their child.

Screening for Staff

Staff will be strongly encouraged to stay home when sick and to report COVID-19 concerns or risks prior to coming to work. Daily, mandatory health screenings will be conducted before employees begin work. Visitors will also be required to complete a health screening prior to entrance to the building. Health screens will include confirmation of mask to be worn at all times, temperature more than 100 degrees and a series of questions relating to CDC and DOH areas of concern (positive exposure, travel to restricted state, symptoms, etc.) Staff or visitors who do not successfully complete the screening process will be denied access to the building and campus and guided to contact their health care professional. The staff will also contact their immediate supervisor and Employee Health will assess prior to providing clearance to return to work.

Social Distancing

- Six feet of distance will be maintained in classrooms, throughout the building, hallways, bathrooms, and office space.
- Three feet of distance will be maintained in classrooms in grades K-6 as per guidance of CDC and DOH.
- Spaces that do not allow for social distancing will be occupied by only one individual at a time.
- Student personal belongings will be separated. All classrooms will have individual work areas and personal bins to keep their personal items. No communal materials and items
- Social distancing markers using tape/signs will denote six-foot spacing in building/classrooms and traffic flow patterns.
- Students will be placed in a cohort model to reduce rotation.
- Special area teachers will deliver instruction in the classroom to individual cohorts.
- Large gatherings and field trips will be allowed following all CDC/DOH guidelines.
- Parent meetings, CSE meetings, and clinical family treatment will occur virtually.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment

Face Coverings. Schools will maintain protocols and procedures for students, staff, and other individuals to ensure appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is used to protect against transmission of COVID-19 virus when on school grounds and in school facilities. Face coverings or masks will be worn properly by all individuals at all times. Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth-based face coverings and disposable masks that cover both the mouth and nose. The agency will provide masks to all staff and to students, as needed.

- Staff and students should arrive at school with masks on each day.
 - Face coverings will be properly worn throughout the day except during meal times where social distancing will take place.
- Additional PPE, such as gloves, face shields and gowns, will be provided to staff as needed.

Healthy Hygiene Practices

- Signage regarding hygiene practices per New York State Education Department guidelines will be prominently posted to ensure there is consistent messaging to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Proper hand-washing techniques will be reviewed with staff and students at the beginning of the school year and periodically throughout the school year.
- Schools will develop a schedule to practice hand-washing.
- Hand sanitization stations will be located throughout all buildings.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided to all classrooms and common areas.
- Students will be educated regarding the practices of covering their mouth and noses with a tissue when coughing or sneezing as well as proper disposal of tissue.

Trainings

Hillside will provide training to staff, students, and families to promote healthy hygiene practices. Trainings will include:

- Proper hand-washing techniques and use of hand sanitizer
- Respiratory etiquette
- Proper use of face coverings and PPE
- Strong encouragement of staff and students to stay home when sick
- Education of staff, families, and students to recognize signs of illness or exposure

Adhere to the Following Protocols if a Positive Case of COVID-19 is Suspected

- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the sick person as guided by NYSED, CDC and DOH
- Open doors and windows to increase circulation in the area

Management of Ill Persons | Contact Tracing and Testing

Hillside will notify the state and local health department immediately upon being informed of any positive COVID-19 diagnostic test result by any individual within school facilities or on school grounds.

Hillside will assist the local health department with tracing the transmission of COVID-19 **by:**

- Ensuring all staff or visitors and students use the screening stations before entering the building or campus
- Keeping accurate attendance records of students, staff members
- Ensuring student schedules are up to date;
- Keeping a log of any visitor which includes date and time, and where in the building they visited; and
- Confidentiality must be maintained as required by federal and state laws and regulations. School staff should not try to determine who is to be excluded from school based on contact without guidance and direction from the local health department.

Student COVID-19 Testing

- If a student becomes ill during the school day, we will seek guidance from the nurse, the student will be placed in an isolation room with supervision and the parents will be contacted to come pick up their child.
- The decision of whether a COVID -19 test needs to be administered to the student will be determined by the student's parent, health care provider or at the direction of the local health department.
- Testing will occur at a designated COVID-19 testing site at the direction of the student's health care provider and/or the local health department
- If a student is diagnosed with a positive case of COVID-19, per Education Law 906, the school district will report it to the local health department.

Staff COVID-19 Testing

- Staff with COVID-19 symptoms will leave the building immediately, inform their immediate supervisor and go home. The staff member will be directed to seek medical follow-up.
- Staff may not return to work until they are cleared by Employee Health.

Facilities/Buildings and Grounds

- Administrative Controls – In-Person and/or Remote
- Cleaning and Disinfection
- Engineering Controls
- Safety Drills

The Facilities department will maintain a safe and clean environment to support the learning process for students and employees and will meet NYSED, CDC and DOH guidelines by complying with New York State Uniform Fire and Prevention and Building Codes and the state Emergency Conservation codes:

- Ensuring all classrooms are prepared to meet social distancing requirements;
- Installing hand sanitizer stations in required locations in accordance with state guidelines;
- Maintaining required ventilation to monitor fresh air flow in all occupied spaces; and
- Training all custodial staff in proper cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting of surfaces as required.

Administrative Controls – In-Person and Remote (upon request)

- Hillside Schools will have controlled points of entry at each building where a screening station and hand-sanitizing stations will be located. Signs will inform staff and visitors they are required to use those stations upon entering the building. Additionally, signs will be posted throughout the buildings as well as on the visual displays to encourage frequent hand-washing throughout the day.
- Posters provided by the Centers for Disease Control have been posted in the common areas of Hillside School buildings. Signage includes information pertaining to COVID-19 symptoms as well as handwashing, hand-sanitizing protocols and mask requirement and the use of wearing a mask properly

Hillside Schools have increased the frequency for disinfecting each building, with an emphasis on frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, keyboards, light switches, countertops, handles, faucets, sinks, etc.

Classroom and Hallway Spaces

- Teachers/staff will arrange all instructional and non-instructional spaces, including materials and supplies, to comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.
- Each classroom will have soap or hand sanitizer and tissues readily available, along with cleaning supplies and gloves.
- Classroom and hallway water fountains may be used to fill a cup or water bottle but not for direct consumption.
- Staff members are encouraged to open windows when possible, to allow for more air circulation Communal use of shared items will be limited with all shared items cleaned

and disinfected after each use or hand washing protocol before and after use of any shared materials or equipment

- Teachers will have access to cleaning supplies to clean or disinfect between classes or desk coverings may be used
- Optional: physical barriers may be used between desks to reduce aerosolization when appropriate
- Visual graphics and signage will be used in classroom and public spaces to educate and reinforce the need for personal protection, healthy hygiene practices, and social distancing expectations.
- Hallways may have floor directional marking and signage promoting socially distancing and mask wearing.
- All PPE equipment and/or cleaning products will be ordered and distributed by the school principal. Electively purchased cleaning products must be approved by the district to ensure compliance with fire code and other NYSED standards.

Public Spaces

- Cafeteria - seating configurations in cafeterias will be socially distanced in compliance with the DOH guidance. (Most schools will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms)
- Library - All seating arrangements will be socially distanced. Library books will have a sitting period before distribution.
- Student access to reference materials (books, paper) will be supervised by Librarian/Teaching Staff
- Shared materials should be disinfected between use or hand washing protocols should be followed.
- Playgrounds will be used for physical education and recess adhering to handwashing protocols and group size limitations. Whenever possible, PE classes will be held outside. Teachers will encourage students to wash hands before and after touching play structures and maximize social distancing from other children as much as possible. Masking will be required when social distancing is not maintained.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from CDC and DOH.
- Developed a schedule for daily cleaning of the building.
- Supply hand sanitizer throughout the building.
- Supply cleaning wipes for common touch areas.
- Close drinking fountains and encourage students to bring individual water bottles.
- Increase cleaning routines; commonly touched surfaces will be disinfected twice daily.
- Provide disinfectant based on the approved Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) list.

Environmental Controls – In-Person and Remote (upon request)

All Hillside School Administrators have conducted walk-throughs at each building and evaluated reception areas and other high-traffic areas. Proper signage will illustrate safe distancing in high-need areas.

- Ventilation in all Hillside school buildings meets the Mechanical and Energy Code ventilation requirements

Safety Drills

- Fire drills will be conducted on a staggered schedule.
- Education related to drills, emergencies, and lock-downs during COVID-19 will be taught to and practiced by staff and students.

Food Services – In-Person and Remote (upon request)

- All students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms. To reduce the risk of cross-contamination among different groups of students, cafeterias will not be used.
- Meals will be provided while maintaining appropriate social distancing between students.
- Students do not need to wear face coverings when seated and eating, so long as they are appropriately socially distanced. Students will be expected to use hand sanitizers prior to eating.

Teaching and Learning

1. Hillside is committed to ensuring a high-quality, safe, equitable and engaging learning and therapeutic environment for all students. Our reopening plan addresses all aspects of teaching and learning for all students in grades K-12. Although our modes of instruction may vary from one location to another, curricular resources and continuity of learning will be fully aligned with learning standards established by the New York State Education Department (NYSED).
 2. Based on guidance released by the New York State Department of Health on Friday, April 9, 2021, we have developed a plan to bring students back to school 5 days a week. If circumstances related to COVID-19 worsen, Hillside is prepared to return to a hybrid model or transition all students into a fully remote learning model to ensure the health and well-being of students, staff and families. Hillside is also offering a fully remote learning option to give families with unique circumstances an alternative.
- Instructional Models and Schedules
 - Model Definitions
 - Cohorts
 - Hybrid of In-Person and Remote Instruction
 - In-Person Instruction
 - Remote Instruction
 - Considerations for Each Model in Each Location
 - Physical Education
 - Ensuring Equity and Access to education
 - Assessment and Grading
 - Attendance

Instructional Models and Schedules

The instructional models in this plan have been designed utilizing best practices in instruction, input from all stakeholders, and in consultation with Hillside's Executive teams and Pandemic Steering Committee while following NYS guidelines.

Considerations

- Leveraging in-person instruction as much as possible following social distancing and safety guidelines;
- Providing flexibility to meet the needs of individual students and families; and
- Addressing students' academic, social/emotional, and therapeutic needs while delivering high-quality instruction.

Models of Instruction (*Hybrid is included in these sections in the event that COVID metrics require Hillside to impose further restrictions*)

Definitions

Cohorts – Self-contained, pre-assigned groups of students with group size limits established by the size of the room and number of desks that can be placed in the space while maintaining social distancing. Cohorts are established to reduce intermingling of students as much as possible.

Hybrid of In-Person and Remote Instruction – Students attend a combination of in-person and remote learning.

- Students will attend two or three days a week, following an A/B or A/B C/D model.
- Independent learning activities will be provided on remote learning days.
- Student attendance will be collected each day and support sessions will be available on remote days for Day Treatment students.
- Students who require additional services (OT, Speech) will be scheduled into this model.
- Clinical services will be provided both in-person and remotely.

In-Person Instruction – Students will attend daily for face-to-face instruction and clinical services with teachers and clinicians.

- Teachers will use a blended model of instruction to prepare for a potential move to hybrid/remote learning.
- Class sizes may be reduced and staffing will be assigned to cover all classes.
- Non-traditional spaces may be used to maximize social distancing.
- A cohort model will be used in all classes to minimize mass movement and interaction.
- Staggered start and end times may be necessary for transportation (Day Treatment) and social distancing purposes.

Remote Instruction – Remote instruction is available to students who attend Hillside Day Treatment programs. Offline instruction (no internet) is available to students who reside at a Hillside Residential campus.

- Hillside Day Treatment schools will offer In-Person, Hybrid and Remote Instruction options. Day Treatment students who participate in remote instruction will use electronic devices to access learning management systems (Hillside Google Classroom, iXL Learning Platform, and Zoom TeleCare sessions). Each location will use a variation of A/B or A/B C/D scheduling. Specific schedules will be required for each school that uses Zoom Telecare.
- Hillside Residential schools will offer In-Person and Offline instruction. Residential students will use non-electronic learning systems for PE, Art, and Reading. Each location will use a variation of A/B or A/B C/D scheduling. Hillside Residential students will receive electronic online instruction in-person within the school building/classrooms and offline instruction within the residential units.
- All students will be taught in a combination of live and independent learning tasks that align with in-person curriculum assessment, assignments and grading.
- All Clinical services and related services will be provided using Hillside TeleCare.

• **Considerations for Each Model in Each Location**

Cohorts – In-Person

- Schools will emphasize grouping students by the same class/group of students and teacher (into a cohort) so each team functions independently as much as possible. Students in cohort groups will wear face coverings and maintain social distancing.
- Placing students in cohorts will occur for grades K-12.
- Specials/elective classes at the K-12 level will occur within the cohort rather than in a separate space. Teachers of specials/elective classes will move into the classrooms of students in cohorts, rather than having students move to the classrooms of specials/elective teachers (i.e., library, art, music, physical education, etc.)
- All students and teachers (grades K-12) will utilize Hillside Google Classroom and iXL Learning Platform learning management systems with standards-based instruction.

Cohorts – Remote

- Hillside Day Treatment students who request remote learning will engage with the teacher/teacher assistant through both synchronous and asynchronous instructions.
 - Synchronous instruction means that all students are engaging with the teacher at the same time, following the same schedule. This will occur in-person or with Zoom TeleCare following a specific school schedule.
 - Asynchronous instruction means learning will occur in different times and spaces particular to each learner where teachers will set up a learning path, which students engage with at their own pace. This will occur over Hillside Google Classroom, and iXL Learning Platform.
- Hillside Day Treatment School building may conduct limited Zoom TeleCare sessions concurrently. A specific schedule at each school will align with the Education Technology Usage Guidelines for Reopening. Students may join class using Zoom TeleCare with students who are in the classroom. Through the camera, students at home and in the classroom will be able to see each other.
- Hillside Day Treatment students who require full-time remote synchronous learning will receive instruction from teachers who are not at a Hillside school location but are working remotely.
- When necessary, Hillside Residential students will receive electronic online instruction in-person within the school building/classrooms. Residential students may receive some instruction in the residential units using offline instruction without Internet access. Offline instruction may include books, e-readers, art, physical education, etc.

Cohorts – Hybrid (If the need arises)

- Schools will emphasize grouping students by the same class/group of students and teacher (into a cohort) so each team functions independently as much as possible. Students in cohort groups will wear face coverings and maintain social distancing.
- Placing students in cohorts will occur for grades K-12.
- Specials/electives classes K-12 will occur within the cohort rather than in a separate space. Teachers of specials/elective classes will move into the classrooms of students in cohorts, rather than having students move to the classrooms of specials/elective teachers (i.e., library, art, music, physical education, etc.)
- An A/B C/D schedule for students in grades K-12 Residential and Day Treatment (some locations may vary)
 - All students will follow their school schedules (synchronous learning)
 - A/B Group: In school Monday/Wednesday/Friday 1; synchronous remote learning for Day Treatment Students and Offline Learning for Residential students on Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 2
 - C/D Group: In school Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 2; synchronous remote learning for Day Treatment Students and Offline Learning for Residential students on Monday/Wednesday/Friday 1
 - Teachers will be in their classrooms every day, following their regular schedule
 - Zoom TeleCare will be used to support Day Treatment students who are participating in remote learning based on the specific school schedule that aligns with the Education Technology Usage Guidelines, enabling students in the classroom to see and hear students who are at home, and students at home to see and hear students in the classrooms
- Staggered release for transition time and two-way flow of students in marked lanes in the hallway will occur 7-12.

Physical Education

- **In-Person Learning Model:** PE instruction will focus on individual recreational sports or skills rather than traditional team sports or activities. There should be a distance of 12 feet in all directions maintained between individuals while participating in activities that require aerobic activity and result in heavy breathing. Outdoor activities will be emphasized.
- **Hybrid Learning Model:** PE instruction (in-person) will be scheduled on the A/B schedule when students are in the school.
- **Remote Learning Model:** Students will be provided an individualized tracking tool so physical activities can be documented. The PE teacher will review the tracking tool with students each week.

Ensuring Equity and Access – In-Person, Hybrid, and Remote Instruction

- Equitable access to education is a top priority for In-person, Hybrid, and Remote instruction by mitigating any barriers to education or opportunity gaps that increased during the pandemic.
- Schools will identify gaps and develop action plans that specifically address inclusion, equity, and access for all learners with strategies and clearly defined action steps.

Assessment and Grading

Given the flexible instructional models, assessments and grading policies will be determined and communicated to families and caregivers. All policies will align to NYSED Learning Standards.

Attendance

Students have to be present and engaged in order to learn. NYSED attendance guidelines allow schools to provide 180 days of instruction and account for student attendance in any model of instruction. Attendance will be collected and recorded.

Technology Services

- The Technology department will partner with the Education department to ensure students have tools to support learning for modes of instruction as identified within the Education Technology Usage Guidelines for Reopening.
- School environments have been surveyed to determine the level of connectivity available and needed.
- If any Hillside Residential School is mandated to close completely, the Technology Department will remove school-based technology resources and relocate them to the residential units on that campus as connectivity permits.
- Families have been surveyed for level of access to devices and high-speed internet. When a local school district assigns a device to a Hillside Day Treatment student, the Hillside Technology department will work with local district to enable the device to be used for remote learning at Hillside Day Treatment.

Transportation – In-Person and Hybrid

- Hillside Day Treatment schools will adhere to and enforce busing requirements put forth from our partnering school districts.
- Halpern Day Treatment Center and Crestwood Day Treatment Program will follow guidelines put forth by partnering school districts

Mental Health, Behavioral, and Emotional Support Services – In-Person, Hybrid, and Remote Instruction

- Resources will be provided to address mental health, behavioral, and emotional needs of students, faculty, and staff when school reopens.
- Information will be provided on developing coping and resilience skills for students, faculty and staff.
- Training will be provided for faculty and staff on how to talk with, and support, students during and after the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency

Teacher/Clinician/Parent Communication

- All teachers and clinicians will have weekly scheduled phone or video contact with families
- Teachers will use consistent means and times when communicating instructional requirements to families.
- Clinicians will use consistent means and times to conduct family services.
- Administrators will have regular phone or video contact with families regarding updates and changes to scheduling
- Any updates and changes to the reopening plans will be communicated quickly and clearly

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