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<b>Information pertaining to submission of plan to the CT State Department of Education:</b>	
Date of Submission:	July 22, 2020
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## **COVID-19 Fall Reopening Plan**

For the 2020-21 school year, Hope Academy is prepared for the following educational models:

- All students returning to full-time instruction at school (low risk status).
- A hybrid model of instruction including staggered student schedules and a blended approach of in-person and remote learning and related services (moderate risk status).
- All students participating in full-time remote learning (high risk status).

In the event that full-time remote learning (high risk status) or a hybrid model (moderate risk status) are required, students will have access to continued educational opportunities through the use of virtual (video-based) instruction, teletherapy, and a digital learning platform (Google classroom). Details of each student's educational plan will be documented on an *Individualized Flexible Learning Plan* (see template). Key components of each model are noted in the table below.

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Model	Key Components
<p><b>Low Risk Status</b>                      All students attend school full time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All academic instruction will be delivered in person.</li> <li>● All related services and targeted intervention will be delivered in person. Related services may be limited to individual as opposed to group services to allow for social distancing.</li> <li>● For students in grades 8-12 and students enrolled in young adult transition programming, transition services will be delivered in person in the school building.</li> <li>● Students will have lunch at school in their classrooms. Students will be required to bring a bagged lunch.</li> <li>● Student hours are 8:30-2:00.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moderate Risk Status</b>                      Students attend school part-time on a staggered schedule and have access to remote learning when not attending school in person.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students will receive academic instruction emphasizing core academic classes (English/ language arts, math, science, social studies) in person. For students enrolled in young adult transition services (“Platinum House”), transition services will also be offered in person.</li> <li>● For students in grades 8-12, transition services will be delivered remotely.</li> <li>● Students may receive related services (counseling, speech language, occupational therapy) and targeted intervention (math, literacy) in person or remotely. All services will be delivered individually.</li> <li>● Elective classes will be delivered remotely for all students.</li> <li>● Students will have lunch at home.</li> <li>● Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday hours for students attending school in person in the morning are 8:30-2:30 (8:30-11:00 in person learning, 11:00-12:00 travel time and lunch, 12:00-2:30 remote learning)</li> <li>● Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday hours for students attending school in</li> </ul>

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	<p>person in the afternoon are 8:00-2:00 (8:00-10:30 remote learning, 10:30-11:30 lunch and travel time, 11:30-2:00 in person learning)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students will participate in remote learning on Wednesdays.</li> </ul>
<p><b>High Risk Status</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students will have access to continued educational opportunities through remote learning.</li> <li>• Remote learning opportunities will include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning.</li> <li>• A digital platform (G Suite for Education, including Google classroom and Google Meet) will be used to upload remote learning activities and corresponding instruction and to deliver direct instruction/ services to students (eg via video chat).</li> <li>• All related services, targeted intervention, and transition counseling will be delivered individually.</li> <li>• Direct core academic instruction may be delivered individually or in a group format.</li> <li>• All elective classes (physical education, art, health, social emotional learning, and transition) will be delivered in a group format via video chat.</li> <li>• Direct instruction and student services will be scheduled between the hours of 8:00-2:30.</li> </ul>

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## **Temporarily Choosing Not to Participate**

Parents and guardians will be given the option to forego a return to in-person learning at school and continue with remote learning. Families will be asked to make related decisions for the duration of a marking quarter to allow for careful planning of service delivery and staffing that ensures safety.

A questionnaire was sent to parents/ guardians of all enrolled students on July 2, 2020 to communicate this option and gather data related to each family's decision.

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeJ3cOjuYMoD0rAXPMH70dejUBcHW2hEPadHHA-HMhFoUpjiw/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeJ3cOjuYMoD0rAXPMH70dejUBcHW2hEPadHHA-HMhFoUpjiw/viewform?usp=sf_link)

## **School Liaison, Communication Plans, and Data Collection**

Hope Academy's COVID-19 Health and Safety Compliance Liaison is Sarah Wilcox, Special Education Director.

In the event that there is a change in policies or protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemic and/ or in the event that there is a change in status related to the spread of COVID-19 with regards to school cancellation, remote learning, or reopening, administration will communicate with parents and guardians as well as partnering school districts via email. Examples of related information that may be communicated in this manner include, but are not limited to:

- Transitioning from a **low risk status** learning model to a **moderate risk status** learning model due to Connecticut experiencing a moderate spread of COVID-19.
- Transitioning from a **moderate risk status** learning model to a **high risk status** learning model due to Connecticut or the local community experiencing a significant COVID-19 spread.
- School reopening plans following a period of closure necessitating full-time remote learning.
- A change in policies or protocols related to COVID-19 (eg social distancing, hygiene, or the wearing of masks/ cloth face coverings).

School closures are also posted with the following media outlets:

- WFSB (wfsb.com)
- WTNH (wtnh.com)
- News 12 (news12.com)

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- NBC (nbconnecticut.com)

Additionally, alerts regarding extended school closures will be recorded for callers within the Hope Academy voicemail system.

Information pertaining to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the school's policies, protocols, or learning models will be communicated to all stakeholders as soon as it is feasible and appropriate to do so. It should be noted that at times, circumstances may require administration to collaborate with local health officials or consultants at the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) upon the receipt of information before decisions or outcomes can be communicated to all stakeholders.

Hope Academy's reopening plan will be sent to all stakeholders electronically and posted on the school's website ([www.hopeacademyct.com](http://www.hopeacademyct.com)).

### **Facilities and Training**

Hope Academy will implement and enforce social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Social distancing strategies to be implemented include:

- Maintaining 6 feet of distance between staff and student work stations whenever possible
- Repurposing building spaces to allow for smaller cohorts of students and increased social distancing (eg using the cafeteria as a classroom)
- Creating traffic patterns to promote social distancing (eg one-way hallways wherever feasible)
- Having students eat lunch in their assigned classrooms
- Assigning employees to specific areas of the building (eg staff lounge, kitchen, individual offices) for lunch breaks and establishing a maximum capacity for shared spaces

Hope Academy will maximize outdoor airflow and ventilation to the greatest extent possible by opening classroom windows whenever feasible.

Signs with messaging related to stopping the spread of COVID-19 will be posted throughout the building.

Assuming availability of related materials prior to the start of the school year, Hope Academy will install touchless fixtures (eg sensor operated sinks, toilets, paper towel dispensers, and water stations, touchless garbage cans) whenever feasible to minimize contact with surfaces.

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Hope Academy will provide specific training to address policies and protocols pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic to all staff and students. Staff will receive training during professional development prior to the start of the school year for students. Students will receive training during the first week of school. Topics to be addressed during training include:

- Social distancing
- Traffic patterns within the school building
- Procedures for students needing to access sensory breaks or behavioral support
- Parameters for use of specific spaces within the building
- Arrival and dismissal procedures
- Hygiene practices
- Cleaning protocols
- Protocols for reporting COVID-19 related illnesses or symptoms

### **Daily Operations**

Staff hours for the 2020-21 school year are 7:45-3:15. Student hours for the 2020-21 school year are 8:30-2:00 when operating full time under a **low risk status** model. Student hours for the 2020-21 when operating under a **moderate risk status** are:

- Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday hours for students attending school in person in the morning are 8:30-2:30 (8:30-11:00 in person learning, 11:00-12:00 travel time and lunch, 12:00-2:30 remote learning).
- Monday/ Tuesday/ Thursday/ Friday hours for students attending school in person in the afternoon are 8:00-2:00 (8:00-10:30 remote learning, 10:30-11:30 lunch and travel time, 11:30-2:00 in person learning).
- All students will participate in remote learning on Wednesdays.

On days designated as early dismissal, dismissal time will be 11:30 for students when operating in **low risk status**, **moderate risk status**, or **high risk status**.

All students in grades 1-12 and students in the young adult transition program will be grouped in cohorts of 2-5 students. Students will remain with their cohort for the entire day, including lunch. Staff members will transition between classrooms to provide instruction to assigned cohorts to minimize traffic within the building and promote social distancing. Students will leave their assigned cohorts and classrooms, as needed, for hygiene/ bathroom breaks, to receive related services, and for therapeutic intervention.

Hope Academy does not operate before or after school programs or extracurricular activities outside of the school day. The building will not be used by any groups outside of the school day.

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## **Food and Nutrition**

Hope Academy does not participate in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program, or Special Milk Program.

Parents/ guardians are responsible for sending students to school with a bagged lunch. Refrigerators will not be available for storage of student lunches, and microwaves will not be available for heating food. Administration will work with families experiencing food insecurity on a case by case basis to ensure all students have access to a nutritious lunch during the school day.

## **Transportation**

Hope Academy maintains 3 vehicles (2 passenger vans, 1 compact car) for the purpose of transporting students to school activities and field trips and transporting students to and from school on a limited basis (eg for students enrolled in school engagement services).

In general, community-based activities will be cancelled during the COVID-19 pandemic. A limited number of community-based activities may be offered to support students' individualized needs related to post-secondary education, employment, or independent living.

In the event that a community-based activity is offered, vehicles will be used at full capacity only during **low risk status** and only when absolutely necessary. During **moderate risk status** and as a general rule during **low risk status** given that community-based activities will be limited, transportation will operate at reduced capacity. The following strategies will be implemented when implementing vehicles at reduced capacity:

- Students and staff will be required to wear a mask or cloth face covering while in the school vehicle.
- When entering school vans, students and/ or staff will load the vehicle from back to front. When exiting school vans, students and/ or staff will exit the vehicle from front to back.
- In school vans, students will be seated in separate rows alternating diagonal seating.

When the school's compact car is in use while transporting one student, the student will sit in the back seat on the passenger side of the vehicle. No more than two students should be placed in the back seat of the vehicle, and the middle seat will be left open.

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### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Separate entrances will be used by staff and students upon arrival at school. Staff members will enter through the front entrance. Students will enter through the back entrance, unless being dropped off or picked up in the middle of a school day.

All students and staff will be required to wear masks or cloth face coverings to enter the school building. If a student or staff member arrives at school without a mask or cloth face covering, one will be provided to them. All students and staff will be required to use hand sanitizer upon arrival.

During arrival, staff will unload one vehicle at a time, staggering students who enter the school building to transition to class to allow for social distancing.

Parents and guardians who choose to transport their children will be required to drop students off at the back entrance via the bus loop.

All students will be screened by a school nurse upon arrival (see **Health Practices and Protocols** below).

During dismissal, staff will call transportation cohorts one at a time to allow for social distancing as students leave the building. Vehicles will be loaded one at a time.

Students will be required to use hand sanitizer prior to entering a vehicle. Staff will make sure that students are wearing masks or cloth face coverings prior to loading vehicles.

Hope Academy staff will assist district transportation staff in seating students six feet apart whenever feasible.

### **Visitors**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, visitors will not be allowed in the school building other than for purposes necessitated by a student's Individualized Education Plan (eg district evaluators) or for the purposes of enrolling a new student. Virtual tours will be offered to prospective families. PPT meetings, team meetings, and parent teacher conferences will be conducted virtually whenever feasible.



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## **Health Practices and Protocols**

The school nurse will maintain updated health records to ensure all students are up to date on physical exams and vaccinations.

The following strategies will be implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Requiring staff to conduct a COVID-19 self- assessment prior to reporting to work each day.
- Conducting COVID-19 screenings for all students upon arrival to school. Screening procedures will include taking the student's temperature and asking the student a series of brief questions related to whether the student is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, whether the student has taken any medication, and whether the student has had any known contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Requiring staff and students to wear a mask or cloth face covering at all times, except during designated hygiene breaks, while eating, and during related services that cannot be delivered while wearing a mask (eg speech language therapy focused on fluency, articulation, or feeding). If a service cannot be delivered while wearing a mask, staff and students will be required to wear a transparent face shield.

***Staff or students with a documented medical exemption from a physician will not be required to wear a mask or cloth face covering. In the event that an individual is experiencing difficulty breathing, is incapacitated, or is unable to remove a mask or face covering without assistance, they will not be required.***

If a staff member or student has a documented medical exemption prohibiting him or her from wearing a mask or cloth face covering, alternate preventive strategies will be used (eg wearing a face shield, creating a Plexiglas barrier around an individual workstation).

- Positioning staff and student workstations and creating traffic patterns to promote social distancing.
- Implementing scheduled hygiene breaks for all students in designated spaces within the building. During hygiene breaks students will have the opportunity to use the bathroom, wash their hands, get water, and remove masks or cloth face coverings.
- Including hand sanitizing stations equipped with 60-70% alcohol in all classrooms, offices, and common spaces.
- Providing instruction on respiratory and cough etiquette and effective handwashing.

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- Implementing enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

## **Reporting Illnesses and Addressing Vulnerable Populations**

Staff and students will be instructed to stay home under the following circumstances:

- If they have tested positive for COVID-19.
- If they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and have not yet been tested for the virus or sought medical advice (See [CDC COVID-19 Symptoms](#)).
- If they have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and have not yet been tested for the virus following the contact (See [CDC When to Quarantine](#)).
- If they have travelled internationally (see [Returning from International Travel](#)) or to a state listed under Connecticut's Regional Travel Advisory list (see [Travel In or Out of CT](#)).

Staff members and parents/ guardians of students will be required to provide written documentation noting the reason for a COVID-19 related absence. Written documentation may include:

- Medical note stating the results of a positive COVID-19 test
- Evidence of consultation with a medical professional noting that an individual is undergoing treatment and/ or awaiting testing or test results due to experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19
- Evidence of consultation with a medical professional noting that an individual has been advised to self-quarantine due to coming into close contact with an individual known to have COVID-19
- Evidence of international travel or travel to a location requiring self-quarantine under Connecticut travel advisory plans.

In the event that a staff member begins to experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the school day, he or she should report to the school nurse. The school nurse will contact administration immediately, and the staff member will be excused for the remainder of the day. If the staff member is unable to leave the building immediately (eg waiting for transportation home from a family member), he or she will wait in the identified COVID-19 isolation room and be monitored by the school nurse.

In the event that a staff member is absent from work or needs to leave work due to COVID-19 related illness, he or she will be permitted to return with either:

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- Evidence of consultation with a doctor noting that the employee is safe to return to work; or
- Evidence of a negative COVID-19 test.

In the event that a student reports symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or a staff member suspects a student is experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the school nurse should be contacted immediately. The nurse will contain the student in the COVID-19 isolation room and conduct a screening. The student's parent or guardian will be contacted. If the school nurse suspects that the student may have COVID-19, he or she will need to be picked up from school as soon as possible (within an hour's time). If a parent or guardian cannot be reached, the school nurse or administrative staff will reach out to the emergency contacts provided by the parent or guardian. The student will be permitted to return to school with either:

- Evidence of consultation with a doctor noting that the student is safe to return to school; or
- Evidence of a negative COVID-19 test.

### **Response Team and Containment Plan**

Hope Academy's COVID-19 response team includes the following individuals:

- Contracted school nurse (provided through contract with Nurses for Daycare, LLC, contact: Tina Pascoe)
- Orange Board of Education nurse (contact: Kathleen Malone)
- Sarah Wilcox, Special Education Director
- Laura Carroll, Chief Administrator
- Melissa Boyle, Dean of Students
- Kerri Campbell, Special Education Coordinator

In the event that a student or staff member experiences symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the school day, the school nurse will be notified immediately. The school nurse will also inform administration of the situation. An isolation room will be identified for staff members or students requiring COVID-19 screening or awaiting transportation home.

To minimize traffic throughout the building and promote social distancing, teachers will travel between classrooms to each cohort of students they are responsible for providing instruction to. Each adult entering a classroom with a given cohort will be responsible for signing into the space on a contact tracing log. These will be kept on a clipboard in the classroom. While the majority of staff at Hope Academy have consistent schedules, this will allow for contact tracing when individuals not consistently assigned to a given cohort

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interact with the group (eg substitute teachers, outside evaluators from school districts, etc.). Staff members should carry a writing utensil whenever possible to minimize the use of shared materials. A designated staff member will be responsible for collecting contact tracing logs at the end of the day.

In the event that a member of the school community has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, administration (Special Education Director or Chief Administrator) will contact the local health department and the CT State Department of Education (CSDE).

Based on consultation with the local health department, administration may take one of the following actions:

- Close a portion of the school building for a period of time to allow for cleaning and disinfecting. Advise some members of the school community to remain at home during this time. Provide affected students with access to continued educational opportunities through remote learning until they can return to school.
- Close the entire school building for a period of time to allow for cleaning and disinfecting. Provide all students with access to continued educational opportunities through remote learning.
- Close the entire school building indefinitely to allow for cleaning and disinfecting and as a proactive measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Provide all students with access to continued educational opportunities through remote learning.

Additionally, administration will communicate the confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 to all stakeholders within the school community. Administration will alert staff members and parents/ guardians of students known to have been in close contact with the individual of their potential exposure. Identifying information of the diagnosed individual will not be revealed in order to protect that person's privacy.

### **Special Education**

Hope Academy is a CT approved private special education program. As such, the provision of special education and related services has been considered in the development of all components of this reopening plan. Hope Academy is committed to providing students with special education services to the greatest extent possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Depending on whether the school is operating a **low risk status**, **moderate risk status**, or **high risk status** model, service delivery will include a combination of in person learning and remote learning opportunities (see key components of each model above). Hope Academy recognizes that students served by the program have an array of complex academic and social emotional needs. Team members will be available to collaborate with families and school district personnel to develop

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individualized plans for students as needed. Such collaboration may take place in a virtual team meeting, phone conference, or PPT meeting.

### **English Learners**

As a private program, Hope Academy does not offer bilingual educational services. Students are entitled to bilingual educational services through their home school districts.

Hope Academy will provide communication related to the COVID-19 to parents/guardians of enrolled students in their native language(s) to the greatest extent possible. Translation services or apps may be used to effectively communicate with parents/guardians for whom English is not their primary language.

### **Family Support and Engagement**

As a private program, Hope Academy is not designated as a Title I school. Hope Academy will collaborate with partnering school districts to ensure students and families have access to all services they are entitled to (eg under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act).

As a private CT approved special education program, Hope Academy uses a case management model to oversee students' Individualized Education Plans. Instructional and clinical case managers will maintain regular communication with families for the purposes of obtaining feedback, collaborating, and problem solving to ensure each individual student's needs are met during the COVID-19 pandemic. Families are also encouraged to contact a member of the administrative team to discuss feedback, questions, or concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic or fall reopening plans.

See also **School Liaison, Communication Plans, and Data Collection, Special Education, and English Learners** above.

### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Mental Health**

As a therapeutic, special education program, Hope Academy offers Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and counseling services universally to all students. During the 2020-21 school year, special attention will be given to trauma informed practices as well as diversity and racial equity in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the current climate around systemic racism. Related efforts will include curriculum enhancement for SEL and professional development for staff.

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### **Career and Technical Education**

Hope Academy will continue to provide transition services to address students' needs in the areas of employment, post-secondary education, and independent living. Depending on whether the school is operating a **low risk status**, **moderate risk status**, or **high risk status** model, service delivery will include a combination of in person learning and remote learning opportunities (see key components of each model above). While Hope Academy typically offers an array of community-based transition experiences, these experiences will be limited during the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily living activities such as cooking will also be limited. When feasible to do so, transition teachers and counselors will offer virtual alternatives for activities such as job shadowing and college tours. Hope Academy does not offer technical education in settings such as a shop or lab.

### **Electives**

Hope Academy will continue to provide physical education and instruction in the arts. Depending on whether the school is operating a **low risk status**, **moderate risk status**, or **high risk status** model, service delivery will include a combination of in person learning and remote learning opportunities (see key components of each model above).

While the school is operating at **low risk status**, physical education will be provided through a combination of small group instruction and individualized physical fitness activities. Staff will plan activities that allow for adherence to social distancing guidelines (6 feet of space between students and staff). Activities that are instructor led but that can be performed by students individually will be emphasized, with a focus on lifetime fitness and wellness. Group activities and/ or team sports that may lead to students coming into contact or within 6 feet of one another will be strictly prohibited. Whenever possible, physical education classes will be held outdoors. Staff and students will be required to wear masks or cloth face coverings when participating in physical education activities indoors. Staff and students will be permitted to remove masks or cloth face coverings when participating in physical education activities outdoors, provided at least 6 feet of space is maintained between individuals.