

Restart and Recovery Plan to Reopen Schools



Fall 2020

MTBOE Approved: July 21, 2020
Executive Summary for Release - July 24, 2020

From Dr. Salvatore Constantino, Superintendent of Schools

Dear Mendham Township SD Families,

Thank you for your guidance and feedback as we prepare for a return to school. I am grateful for the outpouring of questions, perspectives, and ideas that have been shared in the last several weeks and months.

We have heard you through participation in web meetings, board of education meetings, emails, and phone calls, and our survey of more than 400 families. Our board meetings over the last few months have seen record-breaking participation.

On Tuesday, July 21, the Mendham Township Board of Education approved our Return to School Plan that we believe provides the best balance of safety and academic success for our students. This plan includes three different options that the District may enact, based on the current conditions and governmental directives. Because no plan that includes classroom instruction is completely without health risk, we encourage families for whom in-person instruction does not make sense to explore other options contained in the Return to School Plan.

Our guiding principles for 2020-2021: safety and health, in-person learning, social engagement for students, equity, data-driven decision making, and fiscal responsibility remain at the forefront of our planning process.

For parents and guardians concerned about their family's or their student's health in an in-person school environment, several options are available to you, including a hybrid model at the middle school level and distance learning model at all levels. If you're considering this option, please make sure you complete our District survey which you should receive in your email next week. The details of the plan are being communicated through grade-level specific meetings, the District weekly communication schedule, and supplemental resources like the FAQ on the website.

Throughout both the summer and academic year, we will continue to follow guidance from Governor Murphy, the New Jersey Department of Health, the New Jersey Department of Education, and our local Health Department regarding the overall health and transmission risk within our state and community. We are prepared to transition to a hybrid attendance model or a completely remote environment should that be necessary.

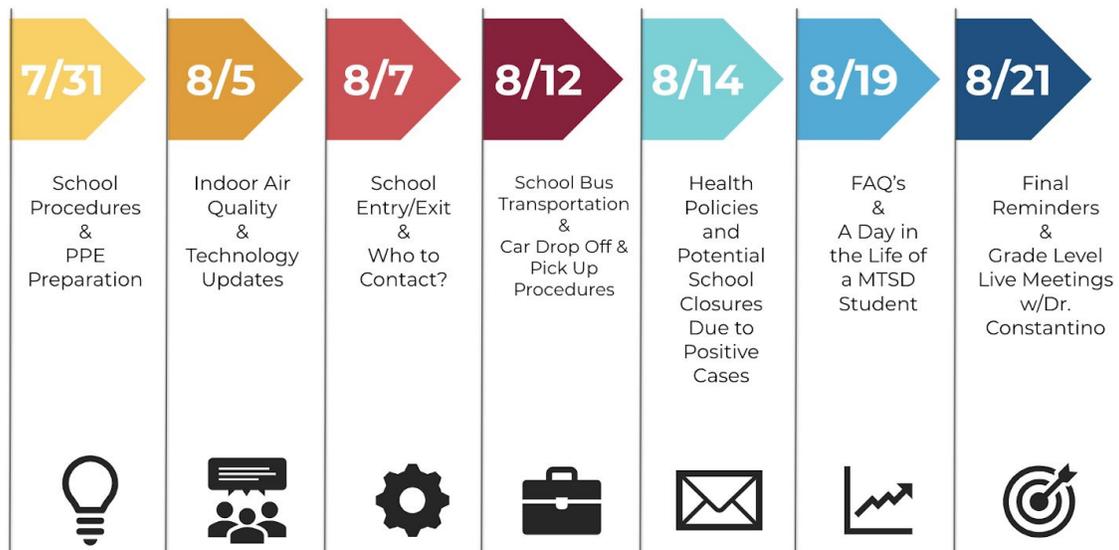
We have worked tirelessly to develop health and safety protocols that help protect our employees, students, and families as much as possible. These processes will be based on guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the NJ Department of Health. It's important to note that current CDC guidance recommends schools close for two to five days for deep cleaning and monitoring of symptoms in the event of

a confirmed case. Should there be additional guidance or protocols put in place, we will be able to share specifics throughout summer. At this time, the protocols include:

- Rigorous prevention techniques, including at-home and in-school health assessments, temperature checks, social distancing protocols, and staff and student mask-wearing.
- Improved cleaning protocols and practices.
- Quick decisions, communication, and, as necessary, isolation protocols in response to confirmed cases of COVID-19.

We realize that communication with our families is vital to our success. Throughout the coming weeks, we will offer frequent and focused communications on topic areas essential to a safe return to school. Below is a schedule of communications, which will be sent via email and archived on our website, www.mendhamtp.org, for your review at any time.

MTSD Communication Schedule - Summer 2020



While the 2020–2021 school year will certainly be different, it creates new opportunities for us to be more innovative and flexible than ever. And through it all, our commitment will remain the same, preparing our students for life through academic achievement, personal well-being and care for others. We will come out of this together stronger and better than ever. Thank you for your support.

Sal Constantino
Superintendent of Schools

Overview

On June 26, 2020, the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) published "The Road Back – Restart and Recovery Plan for Education" (NJDOE Guidance), a Guidance document to assist New Jersey Mendham Township School District in developing a Restart and Recovery Plan (Plan) to reopen schools in the fall of 2020 that best fits the Mendham Township School District's local needs.

The Mendham Township School District's Restart and Recovery Plan has been developed to be consistent with the requirements in the NJDOE Guidance with consideration to the Mendham Township School District's local needs in order to ensure school(s) in the District reopen safely and are prepared to accommodate students' unique needs during this unprecedented time.

To ensure consistency with respect to the health and safety of school communities across the State, the NJDOE guidance speaks specifically to health and safety measures. Through this established set of Statewide standards, the NJDOE had the goal to ensure the State's educational health does not come at the expense of public health. The standards in the NJDOE Guidance have been incorporated into the Mendham Township School District's locally developed Plan. The Board of Education has adopted Board Policy 1648 – Restart and Recovery Plan that includes the policies required in the NJDOE Guidance.

The Mendham Township School District's unique and locally developed protocols are designed to help ensure that our schools reopen safely and are prepared to accommodate staff and students' unique needs during this unprecedented time. The options presented in the Mendham Township School District plan have been carefully considered and will be applied based on current recommendations from the NJDOE, Governor's Office, and local data in cooperation with the Department of Health. The requirements outlined in the NJDOE Guidance and incorporated into this Plan are controlled by Executive Order of the Governor of New Jersey and are subject to change.

Mendham Township School District

Return to School

Virtual Schooling - 14 Days at Home

Week #1 (August 24 - August 28, 2020)

Week #2 (August 31 - September 4, 2020)

In-person attendance during week #1 and #2 will be announced by the building Principals.

September 8, 2020 - Option #1 Begins for Week #3 and Beyond:

Option #1 - Approved by the Board of Education

Traditional programming w/social distancing measures and strict protocols
(Mon, Tues, **Wed - 1/2 Day**, Thurs, Fri)

- *Access to Live Stream for Flexibility*
- *Support for Parent Choice*

Option #2 - Ready to Implement If Necessary

Hybrid Model (M T **W-Virtual for all** TH F)

- *Alternating Groups in Attendance*
- *Access to Live Stream*
- *Support for Parent Choice*

Option #3 - Ready to Implement If Necessary

Virtual Distance Learning

- *Enhanced Live Programming in All Subject Areas*

School Level Meetings will detail parental options for attendance and plan details. All information will be posted on District/School Websites.

Critical Area of Operation #1:

General Health and Safety Guidelines

In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following actions:

- Mendham Township School District Administration will establish and maintain communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in the community.
- Mendham Township School District Administration will ensure staff and students who are at higher risk for severe illness are protected and supported, such as providing options for virtual learning.
- The Mendham Township School District will promote behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 such as encouraging staff and students to stay home when appropriate, encouraging the practice of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, requiring the use of face coverings, and displaying signs and messages in and around school buildings.
- Reasonable accommodations will be provided for individuals that the CDC identifies as having a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including older adults (aged 65 years and older) and individuals with disabilities or serious underlying medical conditions.

Critical Area of Operation #2

Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms

All Schools in the district will allow for social distancing within the classroom to the maximum extent practicable. This will be achieved by ensuring students are seated at least six feet apart.

When social distancing is difficult or impossible, face coverings will be required for students, and face coverings are always required for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual's health.

In a classroom setting where social distancing can take place (e.g., desks are 6 feet apart) **and** physical barriers are in place, face coverings can be removed while students are seated at desks, but will be worn when any student is moving about the classroom.

All instructional and non-instructional rooms in schools and district facilities must comply with social distancing standards to the maximum extent practicable.

All indoor facilities will have adequate ventilation, including operational heating/air conditioning and ventilation systems where appropriate. Recirculated air must have a fresh air component, as CASPR units are installed and operating effectively in support of fresh air exchange.

The Mendham Township School District will prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol). Such stations will be:

- In each classroom (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- At entrances and exits of buildings.
- Near lunchrooms and toilets.
- Children ages five and younger should be supervised when using hand sanitizer.
- For classrooms that have existing handwashing stations, stations should be prepared with soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol).
- Mendham Township School District Administration will develop a school-wide plan where students are required to wash hands for at least twenty seconds at regular intervals during the school day and always before eating, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their nose, coughing, and/or sneezing.
 - If washing with soap and water is not possible, washing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) should be used.

Critical Area of Operation #3

Transportation

Mendham Township School District transportation services will be provided for students that request a seat. School buses will maintain social distancing and a face covering must be worn by all students who are able to do so upon entering the bus and throughout the entire trip to and from school. Every school bus will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each bus route.

Students' temperatures will be taken prior to entry into the school bus. Should the student's temperature exceed the recommended level, the student will not enter the bus. They will be returned to the parent and our health office will follow up on next steps.



Critical Area of Operation #4

Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas

Each school will establish the process and location for student and staff health screenings. All students that are walkers or dropoffs will be temperature screened prior to entry into the school buildings. Should the student's temperature exceed the recommended level, the student will not enter the building. They will be returned to the parent and our health office will follow up on next steps.



Physical distance (six feet apart) will be maintained for individuals in line waiting to enter or exit a building, face coverings shall be worn while in the line.

Each school in the district will provide physical guides, such as signs or tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating "one-way routes" in hallways). Safe pathways to classrooms will be established and students will be supervised whenever moving through the building outside the regular classroom.

Critical Area of Operation #5

Screening, Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms

The Mendham Township School District has adopted Board Policy 1648 regarding the screening procedures for students and employees upon arrival at school or work location for symptoms and history of exposure.

Procedures for screening must include the following:

- Health checks must be conducted safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations. Mendham Township School District Administration will encourage parents to be on alert for signs of the illness in their children and to keep their child home when they are sick.
- Parents must complete a health screening questionnaire each week to ensure that student health conditions have not changed and they are not showing symptoms of concern. Results must be documented when signs/symptoms of COVID-19 are observed.

Procedures for symptomatic staff and students include the following:

- Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Mendham Township School District Administration will follow current Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.
- If the Mendham Township School District becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality. Health officials will help administrators determine a course of action for the School/School District. The affected School will likely dismiss students and staff for 2-5 days to virtual programming. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities. During that time, we will work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

- Information on steps to take if you believe you may have COVID-19 or have a positive test can be found at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
 !

The following section outlines four scenarios regarding quarantine guidelines for those who may have had some exposure.

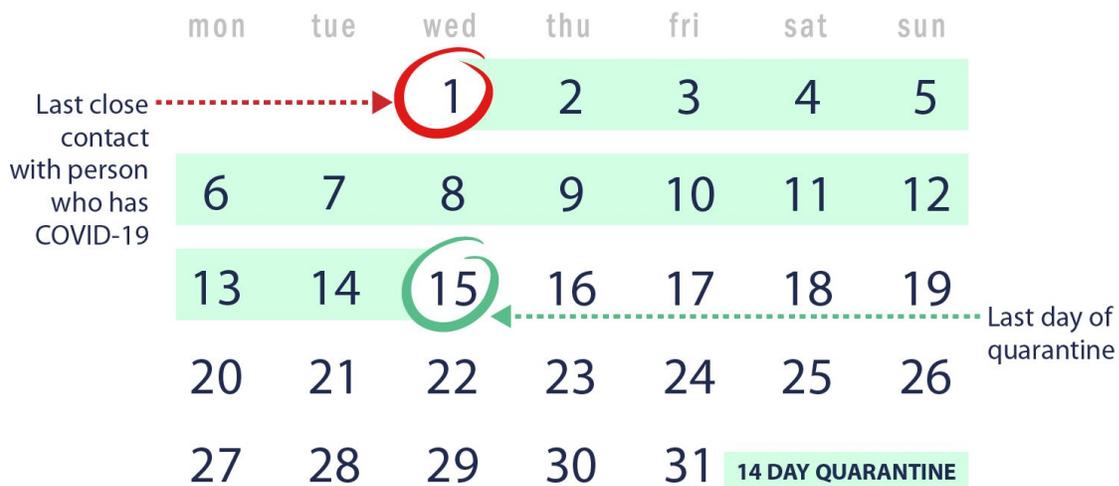
Scenario 1:

Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 **AND** will not have further close contact

I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick.

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact.

Date of last close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 2:

Close contact with someone who has COVID-19; I live with the person **BUT** will have no additional close contact

I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have had no close contact with the person since they isolated.

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation.

Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

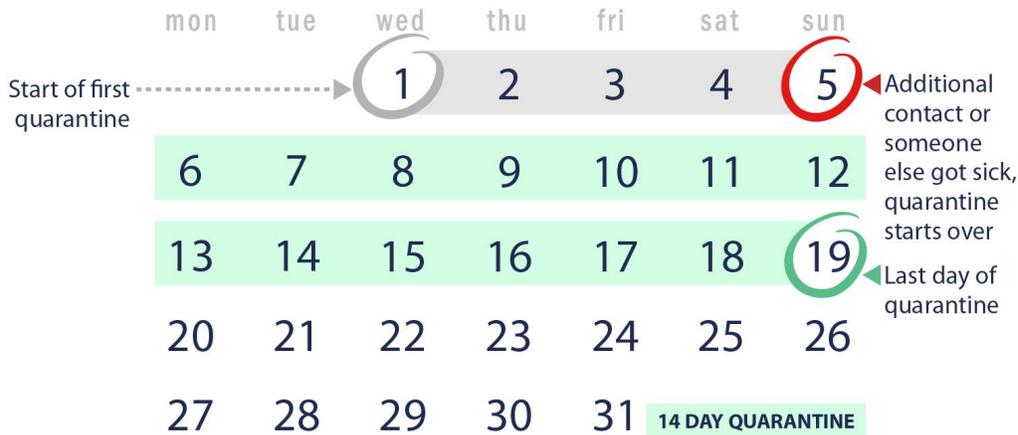
Scenario 3:

Under quarantine **AND** had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19

I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started my 14-day quarantine period because we had close contact. What if I ended up having close contact with the person who is sick during my quarantine? What if another household member gets sick with COVID-19? Do I need to restart my quarantine?

Yes. You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.

Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 4:

I live with someone who has COVID-19 **AND** cannot avoid continued close contact

I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, don't have a separate bedroom to isolate the person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the [criteria to end home isolation](#).

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine



Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Procedures for a return to school for staff and students who had a positive COVID-19 test include the following:

With Symptoms

- 14 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and
- Once 24 hours have passed with no fever and respiratory symptoms have improved, you must return for additional testing
- You must receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart

Without Symptoms

- 14 days have passed since test
- You must receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart
- If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidelines above entitled, "with symptoms" and contact your healthcare provider

Source: CDC.gov – Updated, July 16, 2020

Additional procedures include:

- Establishment of an isolation space in each school building. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. Students will remain in isolation with continued supervision and care until picked up by an authorized adult. We will follow Communicable Disease Service guidance for illness reporting.
- PPE will be available, accessible, and provided for use.
- The District will immediately notify local health officials in the case of a positive test or signs/symptoms. These officials will help administrators determine a course of action for the School/School District. The affected School will likely dismiss students and staff for 2-5 days. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the school and for custodial staff to clean and disinfect the affected facilities. During that time, we will work with the local health officials to determine appropriate next steps, including whether an extended dismissal duration is needed to stop or slow further spread of COVID-19.

- If there is substantial transmission in the local community, local health officials may suggest extended school closures (e.g., closures for longer than two weeks). This longer-term, and likely broader-reaching, dismissal strategy would be intended to slow transmission rates of COVID-19 in the community.
- Our re-admittance policies are consistent with Department of Health guidance and information for schools and Department of Health/Communicable Disease Services Quick Reference Guidance on Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for Persons Diagnosed with COVID-19.
- In the case of any school closure, *Option #3 (Virtual Schooling)* will be activated so that school may continue to operate.

Critical Area of Operation #6

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is the process of identifying, notifying, and monitoring anyone who came in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19 while they were infectious (2 days before onset of symptoms until the end of the person's isolation period). Contact tracing is a key strategy for preventing the further spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Close contacts of a case are considered to have been exposed to COVID-19, and may go on to develop the disease. Identifying and quarantining close contacts limits their ability to spread disease should they become infectious and helps to limit community spread.

Public health case investigators work with MTSD Administration and Health Professionals to identify all individuals who may have been in contact with the person during the timeframe they were contagious. For COVID-19, this is considered the two days prior to symptom onset for symptomatic cases or two days prior to the sample collection date for asymptomatic cases. These people are known as "close contacts."

When possible, the positive case provides the names and contact information (phone numbers, email addresses) for the people that were in close contact with him/her during the infectious period. Case investigators may also have to work with employers if a positive case attended work while infectious but cannot remember who they came into close contact with.

The contact tracer then communicates with the close contacts, letting them know of the potential exposure. This may include all or some of the school population. Close

contacts are not told who the case is, just that they were potentially exposed. Close contacts are asked to quarantine for 14 days since last exposure to the positive case and to look for symptoms of COVID-19 disease during their quarantine period. At this point, decisions will be made regarding school closures.

Contact tracers check-in with identified close contacts to inquire about symptoms and provide support to ensure they have what they need to remain quarantined for 14 days from last exposure.

Contact tracers will also ask people in quarantine if they have left their quarantine location at any point or if they have had any visitors. This information is important because, if the close contact becomes a case, then anyone they might have infected will need to be contacted.

Case investigators and contact tracers are trained in HIPAA regulations and ensure private information of positive cases and close contacts is kept confidential. Mendham Township School District Administration has completed the Johns Hopkins University's COVID-19 Contact Tracing course and we are prepared to execute these procedures if necessary.

Critical Area of Operation #7

Facilities Cleaning Practices

Mendham Township School District Administration must continue to adhere to existing required facilities cleaning practices and procedures, and any new specific requirements of the local health department as they arise. The Board's Plan and Policy will establish cleaning/disinfecting schedules, targeted areas to be cleaned, and methods and materials to be used including:

A schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfection utilizing traditional cleaning methods, Curis Room Disinfecting Units, and Victory Cordless Electrostatic Sprayers.



Routinely cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily. Examples of frequently touched areas in schools are:

- (i) Classroom desks and chairs;
- (ii) Lunchroom tables and chairs;
- (iii) Door handles and push plates;
- (iv) Handrails;
- (v) Bathrooms;
- (vi) Light switches;
- (vii) Handles on equipment;
- (viii) Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
- (ix) Telephones;
- (x) Desktops;
- (xi) Computer keyboards and mice;
- (xii) Drinking fountains; and
- (xiii) School bus seats and windows.

Sanitizing bathrooms and classrooms multiple times per day, using protocols outlined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Critical Area of Operation #8

Meals

School Lunch procedures will be developed by grade level and District school. Some general guidelines apply in all situations:

- Students will not engage in group dining. Lunch will take place with physical distancing during mealtimes, served in students' individual rooms or in outdoor spaces.
- Lunch times will be staggered to limit the number of children requiring lunchtime supervision.
- Children and Staff will wash their hands before and after eating.
- Meals will be available for purchase. This will not be done in "cafeteria style", rather they will be prepared and delivered to the students in their classroom/lunchtime setting.
- Families are encouraged to strongly consider sending lunch with their child until such time as restrictions are eased.

Critical Area of Operation #9

Recess/Physical Education

Each District School will establish procedures and schedules regarding recess and physical education. These specific programs will be discussed during school level web meetings and updated through Principal emails. The MTSD plan regarding recess and physical education includes protocols to address the following:

- Staggering recess times for classes/grade levels.
- If two or more groups are participating in recess at the same time, there will be at least six feet of open space between the two groups.
- The use of cones, flags, tape, or other signs to create boundaries between groups.
- A requirement that all individuals always wash hands immediately after outdoor playtime.
- Locker rooms are closed to mitigate risk and prohibit students and staff from confined spaces with limited ventilation and/or areas with large amounts of high contact surfaces.
- Students are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing and safe footwear to school that allows for safe movement and is appropriate for the weather in order to participate in physical education without the use of a locker room.
- The Mendham Township School District will mitigate risk, eliminate direct contact with equipment (lessons with no equipment), and will not allow sharing of equipment.
- The Mendham Township School District will designate specific areas for each class during recess to avoid cohorts mixing.

Critical Area of Operation #10

Supplemental Materials and Explanations for Academic, Social, and Behavioral Supports Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and School Culture and Climate

Mendham Township School District Administration will:

- Ensure collaboration between guidance staff, CST staff, and instructional staff to support students, families, and colleagues. SEL will be critical in re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning.
- The Mendham Township School District will meet the needs of their special populations in alignment with the New Jersey Specific Guidance for Schools and

Districts regarding student accommodations. The MTSD will continue to ensure students receive individualized supports that meet the requirements of the IEP and 504 Plans.

- For medically fragile staff, virtual instruction is ideal for staff who are at greater risk for the impacts of COVID-19. Accommodations may need to be made for staff with health issues which are exacerbated by viewing content on screens for an extended period. Ensure Mendham Township School District policies are reviewed and confirmed to support in-person and remote instruction.
- Secure a steady supply of PPE resources necessary to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- Schedule a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction which allows for contact time between educators and their students, as well as time for students to engage with their peers.
- When making staffing scheduling and assignments, the Mendham Township School District will comply with all applicable employment laws including, but not limited to, the American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and all applicable State laws. Additionally, prior to finalizing any COVID-19 related changes for the 2020-2021 school year, the Mendham Township School District will also consult with the local bargaining units and legal counsel.
- Consistent with guidance from the United States Department of Education, the Mendham Township School District will continue to meet our obligations under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the New Jersey State special education regulations for students with disabilities to the greatest extent possible.
- IEP teams will review student data/student progress to determine whether critical skills were lost during the period in which remote instruction was being provided to students and determine the need for additional services to address learning loss.

Notes:

1. This document is an executive summary of the *Restart and Recovery Plan* for the Mendham Township School District, that will be presented to the NJDOE for approval during the summer of 2020. At the time of publication, the District has not received an outline or guidance on the specific content required for the plan. The summary, though thought to be comprehensive, and based on current research and publications, can and likely will change prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

2. The summary document outlines District-Level procedures and policies. Each school in the District will develop specific protocols, based on the individual needs of the students, faculty, and the unique nature of the building makeup.
3. At any time, parents and community members should contact District Administration with specific questions and concerns regarding school procedures. You can find contact information through our website at www.mendhamtwp.org.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the following people for their contributions to the health, safety, and well-being of the District through this unprecedented time.

The Faculty and Staff of MTES and MTMS

Dr. Ciccone, Ms. Kotcho, Dr. Koroski, and Mrs. Mosner

All District Support Staff - Specifically, our Custodial and Secretarial Staffs for their amazing work

The Mendham Township Board of Education, President - Gretchen Holquist, Contributors - Rich Gondek and Peter Dumovic

The countless community members who offered feedback and assistance directly and through the community survey

Representatives from Mendham Township, Mayor Sarah Neibart, OEM Director Evan Thomas, and Chief Ross Johnson