

HCNS Reopening Guidelines 2020-21

Harpwell Community Nursery School is committed to implementing best practices in school to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our community and to contribute to the continued public health goal of “flattening the curve.”

There are many aspects of HCNS that make this task easier than it is in much of the country: Maine’s COVID-19 rate is relatively low, we do not have bus and lunch systems to contend with; we have small class sizes, we have access to wonderful outside spaces, and our faculty and parents are thoughtful and flexible.

Nevertheless, this will not be easy, and we will need to work together to pull it off. As more is known about measures that can help mitigate spread, we will adjust our approaches accordingly.

We will be adopting the following guidelines:

The school will:

- Watch the rate of spread in Cumberland County and in Maine closely and use those data and the recommendations of the CDC and healthcare professionals to assess the safety of in-person learning.
 - Use the “cohort” model to limit indoor contacts. We will have two cohorts with 12 students. One cohort will attend school Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The other cohort will attend school Tuesday and Thursday. Indoor contacts will be distanced and/or masked and will include only the student’s classroom cohort and teacher(s).
 - Restrict the use of (formerly) common inside spaces, including bathrooms and hallways, using the outside bathroom and sink whenever outside
- Require health screenings each morning
- Use outside spaces as much as possible
- When inside keep windows open whenever possible and use fans to exchange air. Use Hepa filters when windows can no longer be kept open.
 - Require students and staff to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms

associated with COVID.

- Clean and disinfect the building and high-touch surfaces frequently.
- Aside from dropping off a child in the morning, parents and all visitors need to schedule an appointment to enter the building. When entering, a mask and social distancing will be required.

Because keeping our community safe will require a partnership, we will ask families to do the following (these are best practices recommended by the CDC):

- Practice social distancing and masking with people outside of the household.
 - Avoid high-risk activities. including indoor spaces where people congregate and large gatherings.
- Limit play-dates to those that can be held outside with social distancing and masking.
 - Avoid unnecessary travel and plan to quarantine for 14 days or provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test upon return from travel, in accordance with Maine's requirements.
 - Answer health screening questions accurately.
 - Notify the school right away if anyone in the family has tested positive for COVID-19 or has come into contact with anyone who has tested positive, or if anyone in the family is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. (This will be asked in a daily health screening.)

Reopening Specifics

Classroom Cohorts (12 students per cohort) Students will remain mostly in their outdoor learning spaces throughout the day. If inside, students will need to be distanced and/or masked. Children will have the use of two designated bathrooms upstairs. Because we know it is hard for little ones to wear a mask for any length of time, inside times will be limited to 30 minutes. Teachers will provide students a mask-break with social distancing if a student needs to remove a mask and recenter.

Health Screenings Each morning, families will be asked to complete an online

health screening questionnaire and a temperature check before bringing their child(ren) to school. At drop off, families will check in with a staff person at the double doors to Fellowship Hall who will make sure the health check has been completed and the child's temperature will be checked again before the child is cleared to begin a day at school.

We know that many, perhaps even most, children with COVID-19 will remain asymptomatic or very mildly symptomatic. Symptoms that are known to be typical of COVID-19 are fitful coughing, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever (body temperature above 100.4F), chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, or has a known or suspected Coronavirus exposure, we ask families to:

(1) call their primary care providers for guidance re: a child's return to school

(2) inform the school immediately. When you speak with your primary care provider, please keep in mind the CDC guidelines (below) about when it is safe to be with others after exhibiting symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19 in the absence of a negative test. ***If the advice you receive from your provider differs significantly from these guidelines, please inform the school.***

CDC Guidance: Those exhibiting symptoms and/or with a positive test can be with others after:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared
and
- At least 24 hours with no fever/no symptoms without fever-reducing medication
or
- A negative test AND physician approval

As always, please also keep your child home for vomiting or diarrhea, or if you

feel they would not be able to fully participate in the school day activities for health reasons.

In order to limit possible exposure, parents need to make arrangements to have sick children picked up from the office within 30 minutes of the school's call.

Drop off

Wearing a mask, a parent will accompany his/her/their masked child(ren) to the area at the bottom of the ramp to Fellowship Hall each day. They will wait at a distance of six feet from other families to check in with a staff person. After check-in, the parent will go with their child(ren) to pick up the child(ren)'s clipboard from the outside rack, continuing along, the child(ren) will select a picnic table to leave his/her backpack and other belongings. Only one child can be at each picnic table. Once a table has been selected, the child(ren) will sign-in on the clipboard. On the clipboard, there is a place for the parent to sign in next to the child's name and to leave any notes about end of day pick up. Then the parent will go with the child to use the outdoor bathroom and the outdoor sink to wash hands. The child(ren) can go play and the parent can exit through the path leading to the parking lot.

Pick Up:

12:25 to 12:35 Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and

2:55 to 3:05 on Monday and Wednesday

Parents/caregivers will arrive for pick up at the same location as drop off for that day. Teachers will help children collect their belongings and send them out to you when you arrive.

Mask Wearing Teachers and students will be masked when indoors unless eating or napping (at a distance of 6 feet). If a child needs comfort or first aid,

Staff members will wear a mask, even when outdoors, since 6 feet of separation is not practical. A child in a heightened emotional state due to incident or injury will likely be unable to wear their mask in that moment, and that's okay. We are putting in place many layers of safety. We recognize that overall vigilance will allow for the occasional occurrence when a tender moment to support the acute emotional needs of a child is the best course of action.

Masks should be double-ply cloth or disposable and should cover both mouth and nose. They should loop over the ears or behind the head. Please do not send masks that must be tied to stay in place. Please make sure to mark masks with student names, and make sure they have a lanyard or tie around the neck (allowing students to remove the mask without losing it). ([Amazon has some child friendly comfortable lanyards.](#))

Part of providing the best level of safety that we can requires this specificity about the type of mask you supply for your child. Further, we must ask that face shields, neck gaiters, or other coverings not be sent with your child. There is science-based evidence showing that these alternatives are not as effective as double-ply cloth face masks.

Outside: Children do not need to be masked outside when they are playing freely. Children at this age are often self-directed in their play and only come into the bubble of others in a passing way. If children want to engage with each other in an activity in close proximity for a sustained period of time, teachers will ask the children to pull on their masks.

If a student is ill at school The teacher will notify the office. An administrator, masked and gloved, will bring the child to the Fellowship Hall. Parents will be called and the child will be picked up within 30 minutes. Parents will consult with the child's physician and with the school before the child can return to school.

Green, Yellow, and Red Every two weeks, the Maine Department of Education (DOE) and CDC will update Maine's county-by-county status, delineated by color. Green indicates a recommendation for full-time in-person schooling, if mitigation measures can be implemented. Yellow indicates a recommendation for a hybrid model, and red indicates that schools should be closed. Currently, Cumberland

County is “green.” Because of our small size, outdoor space, and flexibility, HCNS will be able to continue to be open full-time for in-person learning even if Cumberland County is designated yellow. If Cumberland County is determined to be “red,” we will close and move to at-home learning. In the event of an extended closure, we will provide weekly learning crates that can be picked up each Monday morning and the previous week’s learning crate can be left to be readied for the following week if needed.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the HCNS school community anyone who has had close contact (sustained, indoor) within the prior 14 days will be notified immediately and asked to remain at home, contact their physicians, and keep in close communication with the school. HCNS will contact the CDC for further guidance and will notify the full community that there was a positive case.

Lunch/Snack/Food Students and staff will wash hands before and after eating. When possible, we will be eating outside. Students must eat at a distance of 6’ from one another. The tables will be wiped down before and after eating. Students must bring and eat only their own food.

Belongings Throughout the fall children will leave backpacks, lunches, and belongings on a picnic table chosen when they arrive in the morning.

Carpooling If families must rely on carpooling, we ask that they plan to wear masks. In addition, we ask that families who carpool consider that they will become a “bubble,” which will mean limiting contact with other families/individuals outside of that bubble.

Travel Families are asked to avoid unnecessary travel and plan to quarantine for 14 days or provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test upon return from travel, in accordance with Maine’s requirements.