



Hackensack Meridian  
Carrier Clinic

East Mountain School

# **The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education**

**East Mountain School**  
**Hackensack Meridian *Health*,**  
**Carrier Clinic**

**Flexible Learning Plan for 2020-2021 School Year**

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## East Mountain School Education Plan: The Road Back, September 1, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives. As we look to the future and plan for students to return to schools in-person this fall, we must recognize and prepare for the ways the virus and necessary public health response has changed and will change the way students learn.

Aligned to the “Restart and Recovery Plan” provided by the Governor and Department of Education, Hackensack Meridian Health Carrier Clinic, East Mountain School has developed our plan to address concerns and ensure that our school reopens safely for both staff and students. Additionally, as an approved, private special education school, we have taken additional steps to provide for our unique population to accommodate students’ needs during this unprecedented time.

As outlined in the “Restart and Recovery Plan,” the plan is guided within the Educational four priorities:

1. Conditions for Learning
2. Leadership and Planning
3. Policy and Funding
4. Continuity of Learning

Throughout the document, the term “anticipated minimum standards” is used to refer to items that school districts should incorporate into their reopening plans as definite components related to health, safety, and operations. The term “considerations” is used to refer to components that districts and schools should incorporate into their thinking about reopening, but do not represent necessary components of plans.

### Conditions for Learning

Conditions for learning must not only address students’ and educators’ basic physical safety needs, but also the social and emotional and environmental factors that can impact educators’ capacity to teach and students’ capacity to learn.

At a minimum, school districts must adopt a policy for screening students and employees for symptoms of COVID-19 and history of exposure and must strive for social distancing within the classroom and on school buses. If schools are not able to maintain this physical distance, additional modifications should be in place, including physical barriers between desks and turning desks to face the same direction. Each school district must also adopt cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

School staff and visitors are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual’s health or the individual is under two years of age. Students are *required* to wear face coverings and are required to do so when social distancing cannot be maintained, unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health (revised as of 8/3/20). It is also necessary to acknowledge that enforcing the use of face coverings may be impractical for young children or individuals with disabilities.

**In addition to these minimum standards, the NJDOE has identified Ten Critical Areas of Operation that schools must address in their restart plans:**

As outlined in *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan*, HMH Carrier Clinic, East Mountain School has addressed and/or will implement the following actions, where applicable\*, in these critical areas;

1. **General Health and Safety Guidelines** – In all stages and phases of pandemic response and recovery, schools must comply with Center for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local guidelines. Schools must also provide reasonable accommodations for staff and students at higher risk for severe illness and promote behaviors that reduce spread, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing and the use of face coverings.
2. **Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms** – Schools and districts must allow for social distancing to the maximum extent possible. When social distancing is difficult or impossible, face coverings are required, and face coverings are always required for visitors and staff unless it will inhibit the individual’s health. School districts must also minimize use of shared objects, ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and ensure students wash hands frequently.
3. **Transportation** – School districts should maintain social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable and adopt best practices for cleaning and disinfecting all vehicles used for transporting students. If maintaining social distancing is not possible, all students who are able must wear face coverings while on buses.
4. **Student Flow, Entry, Exit, and Common Areas** – School district reopening plans should establish the process and location for student and staff health screenings. This should include providing physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to help ensure that staff and students remain at least six feet apart. When it is not possible to maintain physical distancing, schools must require the use of face coverings.
5. **Screening, PPE, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms** – School districts must adopt a policy for safely and respectfully screening students and employees for symptoms of and history of exposure to COVID-19. Students and staff with symptoms related to COVID-19 must be safely and respectfully isolated from others. If a school district becomes aware that an individual who has spent time in a district facility tests positive for COVID-19, district officials must immediately notify local health officials, staff, and families of a confirmed case while maintaining confidentiality.
6. **Contact Tracing** – Contact tracing is the process used to identify those who have come into contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19. It is a long-standing practice and is an integral function of local health departments. All school district administrators, school safety specialists, counselors, and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school district, should be provided with information regarding the role of contact tracing in keeping school communities safe from the spread of contagious disease. School districts should

collaborate with the local health department and engage their school nurses to develop contact tracing policies and procedures, as well as educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

**7. Facilities Cleaning Practices** – School districts 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. School districts must also develop a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfecting, especially of frequently touched surfaces and objects, and sanitize bathrooms daily and between use as much as possible.

**8. Meals** – If cafeterias or other group dining areas are in use, school districts must stagger eating times to allow for social distancing and disinfecting of the area between groups. Additionally, districts must discontinue family-style, self-service, and buffet-style dining and maintain social distancing. Cafeteria staff must wash their hands immediately after removing gloves and after directly handling used food service items.

**9. Recess/Physical Education** – School districts must complete an inventory of outdoor spaces and mark off areas to ensure separation between students. Recess must be staggered by groups and staff must disinfect playground equipment and other shared equipment between uses. School districts should also consider closing locker rooms and encouraging students to wear comfortable clothing and safe footwear to school so they can participate in physical education classes without needing to change.

**10. Extracurricular Activities and Use of Facilities Outside of School Hours** – All extracurricular activities must comply with applicable social distancing requirements and hygiene protocol. External community organizations that use school facilities must follow district guidance on health and safety protocols.

### **School Background:**

East Mountain School addresses students’ academic, social and behavior challenges. Therefore our “Restart and Recovery Plan” is framed with those considerations throughout.

For the past thirty years, Hackensack Meridian Health, Carrier Clinic, East Mountain School (EMS) has provided educational programming to students requiring alternative opportunities to be successful. Our school, established in 1981, is a private, non-profit, special education receiving school, operated by HMH *Carrier Clinic*, and approved by the New Jersey State Department of Education (NJDOE).

East Mountain School offers a co-educational program for seventh through twelfth - grade students who are also classified with special education needs. Services are available for both day school and residential students. Our program is designed to provide quality educational programming with strong therapeutic services for adolescents affected by behavioral and psychiatric disorders.

Our mission is to provide a safe, challenging, and enriching educational community that is responsive to the individual needs of our students, enabling them to become contributing citizens.

## History and Background from Past School Year, March – September, 2020

“The New Jersey Department of Education (“NJDOE”)’s reopening guidance, *The Road Back: Restart and Recovery Plan for Education*, emphasizes the Administration’s expectation that school buildings will open in some capacity for in-person instruction and operations in Fall 2020. The guidance further acknowledges that the health and safety standards expected to govern school operations might necessitate the establishment of “hybrid” learning models under which schools deliver both in-person and remote learning. To assist schools and districts in developing and implementing such hybrid models, the guidance provides several sample methods and considerations for scheduling in-person, remote, or hybrid learning; prioritizing in-person instruction.”

**Mission:** As a school community we continue to place a high priority on safety as well as promoting good health practices for our students and staff. Hackensack Meridian Health Carrier Clinic, East Mountain School has continued to evolve our plans, working with leaders and team members to take precautions against the Coronavirus, COVID 19. Our planning has continued to evolve in consultation with the local Department of Health and with the Department of Education.

### Leadership and Planning

#### General Opening Plan with Staff and Students on Site:

- **Critical Area One, General Health and Safety Guidelines**

East Mountain School is implementing our opening plan effective September 1, 2020. This is for all community-based and residential treatment center students with the following criteria:

- School will provide on-site instruction five (5) days per week, 8:45 AM to 1:00 PM daily.
- Students will be educated in smaller educational cohorts.
- Community Days students and residential students will be educated in sectioned off learning areas, within two buildings.
- The East Mountain School Learning Plan establishes both in-person and virtual instruction.
- This plan requires the attention and support of our families as well as their home-district child study team members.
- All students and staff will be health screened upon entry to school
- Face masking is required for all students and staff
- Ongoing digital and written communication will be sent to our families and sending districts throughout the implementation process of our school opening.
- All students will be issued an account enabling them to participate in the **Google Classroom** platform. *Google Classroom* and *G Suite* are platforms for in-person or virtual instruction.
- Families may choose an “all remote education” option and would apply in **writing** to the Building Principal **on or before, Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020**. The requests will be approved. This option is flexible and offers support to restart students for in-person instruction at any time.

## Educational Cohort Plan for Mitigating Risk of Spread

East Mountain School's educational plan offers a hybrid option for In-Person & Virtual Instruction. Students and staff will be divided into separate FOUR learning cohorts, within two separate buildings.

### The 2020 Educational Program is as follows:

- Students will report to school, Tuesday, September 8, 2020
- School Staff will report, Tuesday, September 1, 2020, to participate in four days of professional development and training for school opening
- All students will be offered Five (5) days per week in person instruction.
  - School Day Schedule:
    - Commuter Students, 8:45 -1:00 pm daily
    - Residential Students, 8:45 – 2:30 pm daily
- Commuter students will receive four (4) academic classes and two (2) specials daily, a six- period (6) school day.
- Residential students will participate in an eight period (8) day.
- All students and staff will be health screened upon entry.
- Masking is required for students and staff
- Should the Governor or Department of Health close schools, the REMOTE schedule remains the same as our regular “on-site” schedule.
- Boxed lunches will be given to commuters at 1:00 upon exiting the building.
- Residential students are scheduled lunch the last two periods of the day in the Garden Cafe.
- Commuter students who opt for remote-only instruction will connect with school staff from 1:00 – 3:00 daily.
- Commuter students will be housed in Garber Building
- Garber Commuter students will be their own cohort contained in Garber Building.
- Residential students will be their own cohort, located in Main building, lower division, exiting through the rear alternative exit door when needed.
- Main Commuter students will be their own cohort, located in Main Building, Upper Division
- Swan School students will be their own cohort, IRTS and Houses.
- Google Classrooms, IXL and Zoom will be utilized for all academic programs.
- Staff and students will train and prepare to switch to remote instruction at any time, if a closure of the school or learning cohort are required.
- Therapeutic services will be offered to students and families throughout the day whether in-person or through remote platforms, as needed.



**Each Learning Cohort is scheduled as follows:****EMS Garber Program: In-Person – 2020**

- Students will receive 4 academic classes and two specials, in a 6 period school day.
- Should the Governor or Department of Health close schools the REMOTE schedule remains the same, as all students will switch to learning at home.
- Boxed lunches will be given to commuters at 1:00 upon exiting.
- Students may purchase lunches to take with them as well. Free and reduced lunches will be given to designated students.
- For commuter students whose families choose virtual learning only instruction, they will receive remote instruction from 1:00 – 3:00 daily.
- Garber Butterfly students will attend Swan School, Garber's Eagle student to Main.
- Garber Commuter students will be their own cohort contained in Garber.
- Google Classrooms, IXL and Zoom will be utilized for all academic programs.
- Therapeutic services will be offered to students and families throughout the day whether in-person or through remote platforms.

**EMS Main Building Program: In-Person – 2020**

- All Students will receive 4 academic classes and two specials
- All Lodge students will attend an 8 period day.
- Should the Governor or Department of Health close schools, the REMOTE schedule will remain the same.
- Boxed lunches will be given to commuters in upper division at 1:00 upon exiting the building.
- Lodge students will have lunch as the last period of the day.
- Commuter students whose families choose remote instruction only will receive instruction from 1:00 – 3:00 daily.
- Garber Butterfly students will go to Main Building
- Garber's – Eagle students will go to the Main building.
- Main commuter students will be housed in the upper division of the Main building.
- Main residential students will be housed in the lower division.
- Google Classrooms, IXL and Zoom will be utilized for all academic programs.
- Therapeutic services will be offered to students and families throughout the day whether in-person or through remote platforms.

EMS Swan Program: In-Person – 2020

- Students will receive 4 academic classes and two specials.
- All residential students will attend an 8 period day.
- Should the Governor or Department of Health close schools, the REMOTE schedule will remain the same.
- Residential students will have lunch at their regular scheduled time. (Period 6/7)
- Commuter students whose families choose virtual learning only instruction, will receive remote instruction from 1:00 – 3:00 daily.
- Swan/PCH/Lotus students will be housed in the Swan area and mainstreamed, as needed.
- Google Classrooms, IXL and Zoom will be utilized for all academic programs throughout East Mountain School.
- Therapeutic services will be offered to students and families throughout the day whether in-person or through remote platforms.

## Health and Safety in Re-Opening Plan:

### INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR SOMERSET COUNTY SCHOOL REOPENINGS

Endorsed by **Somerset County Health Officers Association** Version 07\_24\_2020

*Reopening school is an enormous and complex task that needs sustained and meaningful partnerships between school districts, their health department, and their families. We affirm that social interaction and in-person instruction is important to our children's emotional well-being and their educational advancement. However, during a pandemic such as COVID-19, remote learning may be preferred or required to mitigate health risks.*

### Health Screening Policy for Re-Opening Plan, with Students on Site

- **Critical Area One, General Health and Safety Guidelines**
- **Critical Area Five, Screening, Personal Protection Equipment, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms**
- **Policy**

**PURPOSE:** The screening of students for Covid-19 on arrival to School Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a smooth process and procedure of screening all East Mountain School students for symptoms of being ill prior to attending school. This will ensure that all students obtain clearance and follow established protocols ensure the protection and safety of all involved. This will be handled confidentially and professionally.

#### **PROCEDURE:**

Parent/Legal Guardian of Community-Based students have been advised to check-in and follow all established protocols and procedures, prior to attending school. The parent/legal guardians of community-based students have been advised to keep students at home who are feeling ill.

Community-based students will have their temperature taken and health checked upon arrival to school and before entering school building, through one designated entrance.

Hackensack Meridian Health, Carrier Clinic East Mountain Youth Lodge housing residential students will be screened at the East Mountain Youth Lodge (EMYL) before arriving to the school buildings and will remain at EMYL if feeling ill.

Hackensack Meridian Health, Carrier Clinic team members/staff will follow procedures for screening and Health Occupations follow-up requirements, if any.

Symptoms of COVID -19 are varied and may be very mild or severe. Many of the symptoms are also subjective/self-report such as fatigue, muscle ache, headache, nausea. Any student with symptoms will be further evaluated by the nurse on a case by case basis.

Community-based students will have their temperature taken and health checked, upon arrival to school before or as entering school building through one designated entrance. Checks may be done by the school nurse or authorized designee.

- ✓ Staff performing temperature checks will use appropriate PPE masks, face shields and a new pair of gloves for each student.
- ✓ Health checks must be conducted safely and **professionally**, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
- ✓ Temperatures will be recorded on the daily roster log for each school day. Any student requiring further evaluation by the school nurse will also be indicated on the record sheet (i.e. specific reason /symptom).
- ✓ Daily logs of temperature checks/surveillance will be kept in health office.
- ✓ Students will be screened for the following possible COVID-19 symptoms, that are not otherwise explained, as per current CDC guidance:
  - A fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Fatigue
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
- ✓ In addition, other screen questions will include the following:
  - Any person sick at home
  - Any contact with a person who has confirmed COVID -19 or is awaiting results of testing
  - Any travel in last few weeks to a state that is on the current list of required quarantine by the state of New Jersey or outside US

## Health Procedures for Potential Positive Case of COVID-19

If a student/staff is found to have symptoms related to COVID-19:

- They must be properly isolated and under supervision in a designated area. A face mask is to be provided to the student/adult.
- Parent (s)/Legal Guardian will be notified, and student must be picked up by an authorized individual.
- Parent (s)/Legal Guardians will be issued *Student Illness/Suspected COVID 19 Form* \* identifying the health concerns.
- Parent (s) /Legal Guardian will be provided with “return to school” document which will contain at **LEAST** the following:
  1. Verifying the student has been evaluated by health care provider with date and diagnosis and a written plan of care
  2. Verifying if a COVID -19 test HAS or HAS NOT been done conducted
  3. If the student was tested for COVID 19, providing the results.
  4. Medical documentation indicating that the student may safely return to school with an effective date, listing any restrictions.

## Health Procedures for Positive Case of COVID-19

Positive COVID results may be reported to Montgomery Department of Health and to the local Department where the child resides, when applicable. School authorities will be notified of testing, when appropriate. Parents/guardians may be requested to grant consent to share results. These circumstances will be determined by the health professionals and families.

- Staff and Families will be notified of a positive individual’s test and maintain confidentiality.
- Student or adult would quarantine 10-14 days and/or follow directives according to the Department of Health.

### Mitigation and Planning:

- If a case of COVID-19 infection occurs in one defined cohort within the school, the ill person should be sent home. Other staff and children in the cohort should be assessed for consideration as close contacts of that case, and if classified as close contacts, quarantined in their homes for 14 days. School nurses and administrators should review the classroom practices, physical layouts, and assess compliance with preventative measures to help inform public health decisions.
  - Other cohorts within the school facility can continue to function, with daily and vigilant screening for illness occurring, and social distancing, personal and environmental hygiene measures strictly adhered to.
  - If cases occur in multiple cohorts within the school, then all school may need to be suspended (see Closure section).

- The ability to keep cohort groups small and static can be helpful in identifying close contacts and may aid in determining if a facility wide closure is necessary.

### **Reporting of confirmed cases/contact tracing/quarantine**

Each school district shall notify the LHD of a designated point of contact with 2 designated back up contacts for the purposed of case investigation. Each LHD shall provide the school district with a designated point of contact for case investigations with 2 designated back up contacts

***NOTE: School Outbreaks: A definition of an outbreak in a school setting is expected to be determined by the NJDOH CDS prior to the start of the school year.***

### **Potential Closure of School**

A facility may need to temporarily dismiss children and staff for 2-5 days, if a child or staff member attended school before being confirmed as having COVID-19. This initial short-term dismissal allows time for the local health officials and school administrations to gain a better understanding of the COVID-19 situation impacting the facility, perform contact tracing and cleaning and disinfecting the facility. Facilities should follow CDC guidance on how to disinfect your building or facility if someone is sick.

**Schools/Facilities should 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.**

Factors for consideration for dismissal include but are not limited to: class size, age of students, ability of class to adhere to social distancing and co-horting, mask compliance, timing of case identification, number of close contacts identified, staffing impacts, and disease burden in the community.

## Student Illness/Suspected COVID 19 Form, excerpt

Infectious Disease Symptoms	Other Conditions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Fever or fever-like symptoms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temperature above 100.0 F or with or without the presentation of fatigue/body aches/chills/rigors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Respiratory symptoms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cough, congestion, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath not appeared to be related to allergies or asthma.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Gastrointestinal symptoms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diarrhea, vomiting, or severe nausea.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>New unexplained loss of taste or smell</u></li> <li>• <u>Student notified or reported they have been in close contact with a confirmed positive COVID-19 case</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Confirmed non-COVID viral infectious disease</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ex: influenza or rhinovirus</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Contagious infections requiring antibiotic treatment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ex: Strep throat or pink eye</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Undiagnosed, new, and/or untreated skin rash or condition</u></li> <li>• <u>Doctor’s note requiring an individualized plan of care to stay home due to medical concerns.</u></li> <li>• <u>Out of state travel in the past 2 weeks</u></li> </ul>

## Procedure for Return to School:

Infectious Disease Symptoms	Other Conditions:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If <u>presenting</u> with symptoms, requesting parents to test student for COVID-19 and/or provide doctor’s note for other treatment-specific guidelines. Families choosing <b>not</b> to test student must continue quarantine for their child for 10 days minimum and return when symptom-free for 24 hours.</li> <li>• If notified to self-quarantine due to a <u>close exposure to a confirmed COVID + case</u>, please stay home and monitor symptoms for 14 days from last known exposure, including a temperature check 2 times a day. A negative test does not end quarantine period early.</li> <li>• If <u>NEGATIVE</u> for COVID-19, please remain home for 24 hours symptom-free without the use of medication. Please reconsider testing if symptoms worsen.</li> <li>• If <u>POSITIVE</u> for COVID-19, student must self-quarantine at home for 10 days minimum and return when symptom-free for 24 hours <b>OR</b> two negative viral test results spaced at least 24 hours apart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If confirmed that student has non-COVID viral illness we are encouraging families to provide a negative COVID test result and/or a doctor’s note to confirm other diagnosis. Student may return once 24 hours symptom-free without the use of medication.</li> <li>• After the first 24 hours of various antibiotic treatments for contagious infections (i.e. strep throat, pink eye, etc.)</li> <li>• Doctor’s note requiring an individualized plan of care to stay home due to medical concerns as specified.</li> <li>• 2-week quarantine ends without illness after out-of-state travel</li> </ul>

SOURCE: CDC guidelines covid sx/tests

## Equitable Access to Instruction Plan for On-Site and Remote Only Students Technology and Access to Instruction

- **Critical Area One, General Health and Safety Guidelines**
- **Supplemental, *Clarifying Expectations Regarding Fulltime Remote Learning Options for Families in 2020-2021***
- **Continuity of Learning: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Technology and Connectivity**

East Mountain School's team has been refining our connectivity for our students. We will continue to utilize Facetime and Zoom. However, we are also adding the Google Classroom and Google Suite of apps to support students and staff.

### Google Classroom Platform Procedures and Expectations

- All live classes will have a corresponding Google classroom for virtual learning.
  - This plan will enable students to switch back and forth between virtual and live instruction as needed.
  - This plan will also make any future transitions to virtual schooling smoother for the students and teachers.
- All students will be issued an @eastmountainschool.org email address which will be restricted to receive and send emails only to EMS staff and will be used to sign into google classroom.
  - Student's will not be permitted to use personal email addresses for google classroom or to communicate with staff.
- For each class teachers will post assignments and material in Google classroom as well as prepare the material for live instructions.
  - This preparation will maintain continuity between live and virtual instruction.
  - The Google classroom feed should mirror what is covered in live classroom instruction.
- Teachers will post an assignment for each class each day to take attendance.
  - This will consist of one question: "Are you present?"
  - This will create the official record of virtual class attendance.
- Students participating virtually will be expected to either complete the activity assigned for that day in Google Classroom during the normal class time, or virtually attend the class via Zoom or Google Meet, AND complete the assignment for the day.
- Classroom aides will manage/facilitate Zoom or Google meets during class using an iPad , or teachers will be available in the afternoon to meet virtually with remote students.
  - Students will be able to chat with the aid in order to ask or answer questions during classes that are live streamed.
  - Students will be able to chat with the aid in order to ask or answer questions.
- **A permission slip is required for using Google's Suite of apps and Zoom will be sent in the new student packet to our parents and guardians. (Inserted document)\***



Description of *Google Classroom* for reference:

<https://www.common sense.org/education/articles/teachers-essential-guide-to-google-classroom>



### Teachers' Essential Guide to Google Classroom | Common Sense Education

Streamline how they manage classes. The platform integrates with Google's other tools like Docs, Drive, and Calendar, so there are lots of built-in "shortcuts" for classroom-management tasks.

[www.common sense.org](http://www.common sense.org)

**If for any reason students and staff are required to start/resume remote instruction, all students at East Mountain School will continue to have equitable access to all remote learning tools.**

#### **Implications for Remote Learning:**

Approximately fifty percent of the students are temporarily residing as patients at Hackensack Meridian Health Carrier Clinic East Mountain Youth Lodge, which is adjacent to East Mountain School. This helps to provide equitable access to technology for those students via Facetime, instructional packets, and viewing instructional materials/videos in our Google Classroom platform.

The other fifty percent of the student population are commuters sent by New Jersey Public School Districts. If needed, community-based students opting for the all remote option will receive instructional packets via the US Post Office. Instructional packets are also emailed. However, we expect students to find greater ease to access content through our *Google Classroom* platform. Our teachers will continue support students in *Google* by posting instructional videos and specific teaching assignments daily.

Chromebooks have also been provided to the students in need of technology tools by their sending districts who are enrolled at East Mountain School. This provides additional support for students at home to complete their required work assignments via computer. We would continue to make these requests of our sending district's child study teams as needed.

Ongoing communication between teachers, parents and students contributes to the success of the remote learning process.

East Mountain School enrolls both residential and commuter students with Individual Education Plans. Our goal is always to provide both populations of students with the same educational and technological opportunities, at all times. This is accomplished when our school is in session, in the building.

However, we continue to improve our effective delivery of virtual educational support for our students

as shifting to remote teaching would occur rapidly. Therefore, our system must be seamless, moving with ease and without delay, between the brick and mortar school or virtual learning.

Students have access to different platforms within the remote learning process. Students have access to the following platforms:

- Apple TV
- Apple IPAD FaceTime
- videos and specific subject related assignments
- Instructional Packets that are emailed to students
- Instructional Packets that are sent via US Post Office
- iPads have been set up for use by students on the residential Units to access website and other digital tools.
- Selected software applications have been approved and installed on student iPad devices that include the following apps:
  - Garageband
  - Keynote
  - Numbers Pages imovie
  - iTunes U
  - Swift Playgrounds
  - Kahn Academy
  - Scholastic Magazine
  - Google Translate
  - Kahoot!
  - PHET Science Simulations
  - Three graphing and calculator apps
  - iBooks
  
  - Google Classroom
  - Google Sheets
  - Google Slides
  - Google Docs
  - All of the iCivics line of Social Studies apps
  - The Elements
  - Atoms In Motion
  - Salts
  - Voice Dream (reads books)
  - Speak and Translate
  - Realize Reader
  - Pearson eText

**Other Technology Considerations:**

East Mountain Schools' plan does account for measuring and addressing any ongoing digital divides that may exist whether it be network access or lack of sufficient access to devices.

- Other, technology equipment will be purchased as the need arises.
- Computers have been ordered to upgrade and enhance our technology equipment in the school.
- Fifty additional iPads have been purchased to address future needs.
- Instructional supplies will be purchased to address the needs of our students and staff
- All teachers, therapists, and support staff with need will be issued iPads to assist with and enable remote services.
- Purchasing the twelve-month subscription to IXL for ELA, Math, SS, Science, and Spanish.

Computer programs for educational use will be purchased as needed to accommodate the subject taught and its alignment to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

## Information and Documentation for Google Classroom and Education Suite

### *G Suite for Education* and Zoom Permission Slip (For Appendix)

Hello Parents and Guardians,

Beginning this year, East Mountain School, will be using *G Suite for Education*. We have chosen this platform to support our students in the event of we are required to institute Virtual Learning, related to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Our research however indicates these learning platforms will effectively support our students both in and outside the classroom. Therefore, we want to launch our program immediately.

For your child to participate in the platform we require your permission to provide and manage a *G Suite for Education* account for your child. *G Suite for Education* is a set of education productivity tools from Google including Gmail, Calendar, Docs, Classroom, and more, and is used by tens of millions of students and teachers around the world.

At East Mountain School, students will use their *G Suite* accounts to complete assignments, communicate with their teachers, and apply the learning standards towards mastery of 21st century digital citizenship skills. Our teachers will employ various platforms, including Zoom or Facetime, instead of Google Meets, for virtual class meetings. Each platform has advantages such as the ability for the teacher to share the screen and demonstrate lessons on a digital white board. Be advised, East Mountain School will not create accounts for students on Zoom.

The notice below provides answers to common questions about what Google and Zoom can and can't do with your child's personal information, including:

- What personal information does Google collect?
- How does Google use this information?
- Will Google disclose my child's personal information?
- Does Google use student personal information for users in K-12 schools to target advertising?
- Can my child share information with others using the *G Suite for Education* account?
- What is Zoom's privacy statement?

Please read these updates carefully, let us know of any questions. Then sign and return Page 2 of this document giving consent. We are encouraging your consent as *G Suite* will be our core teaching platform. We have concluded *G Suite for Education* is the most effective platform to provide continuity between virtual and in-person education at East Mountain School.

Thank you,  
Dr. Stacey Paulis, Ed. D.

**Student *G Suite Education* Permission Slip, Effective for 2020-21 SY**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Date \_\_\_\_\_

As a student of East Mountain School, your child will be participating in ***G Suite Education***.

I give permission for East Mountain School to create/maintain a ***G Suite for Education*** account for my child and for *Google* to collect, use, and disclose information about my child only for the purposes described in the notice below. I also give permission for my child to use Zoom/Facetime for virtual class meetings.

By signing below you are also agreeing to your child participating in ***G Suite Education*** and the creation of school based email account.

Questions/updates contact our Main Office at 908-281-1445

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent/guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### *G Suite for Education Notice to Parents and Guardians*

This notice describes the personal information we provide to Google for these accounts and how Google collects, uses, and discloses personal information from students in connection with these accounts.

Using their G Suite for Education accounts, students may access and use the following “Core Services” offered by Google (described at [https://gsuite.google.com/terms/user\\_features.html](https://gsuite.google.com/terms/user_features.html)):

- Gmail
- Google+
- Calendar
- Chrome Sync
- Classroom
- Cloud Search
- Contacts
- Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms
- Drive
- Groups
- Google Hangouts, Google Chat, Google Meet, Google Talk
- Jamboard
- Keep
- Sites
- Vault

Google provides information about the information it collects, as well as how it uses and discloses the information it collects from G Suite for Education accounts in its G Suite for Education Privacy Notice. You can read that notice online at [https://gsuite.google.com/terms/education\\_privacy.html](https://gsuite.google.com/terms/education_privacy.html) You should review this information in its entirety, but below are answers to some common questions:

What personal information does Google collect?

When creating a student account, East Mountain School may provide Google with certain personal information about the student, including, for example, a name, email address, and password. Google may also collect personal information directly from students, such as telephone number for account recovery or a profile photo added to the G Suite for Education account.

When a student uses Google services, Google also collects information based on the use of those services. This includes:

- device information, such as the hardware model, operating system version, unique device identifiers, and mobile network information including phone number;
- log information, including details of how a user used Google services, device event information, and the user's Internet protocol (IP) address;
- location information, as determined by various technologies including IP address, GPS, and other sensors;
- unique application numbers, such as application version number; and
- cookies or similar technologies which are used to collect and store information about a browser or device, such as preferred language and other settings.

## Facilities Plan: Re-Opening Plan for Students on Site

- **Critical Area One, General Health and Safety Guidelines**
- **Critical Area Seven, Facilities Cleaning Practices**

### Outline for Daily Cleaning Procedures

- East Mountain School will continue to enforce heightened health and sanitation protocols.
- East Mountain School will continue to evaluate its health and safety measures to fit its resources and capabilities across four major categories: physical infrastructure, scheduling and staffing, transportation and food service, and health and behavioral policies.
- When students return to school, building infrastructure will continue to facilitate both physical distancing and hygiene protocols.
- Similarly, more portable hand-sanitizing stations at entrances and common areas can promote regular hygiene.
- A building custodian maintains a regular schedule of cleaning jobs and specific areas each day to ensure that the building is properly cleaned, disinfected and properly maintained.
- East Mountain School continues to provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desktops, chairs, floors, and cabinets are disinfected on a regular schedule throughout the school closure and to continue this process when school reopens.
- **All school staff will be trained in effective cleaning and sanitizing practices at start of school and ongoing throughout the school year.**
- The custodian cleaning crew routinely cleans all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. We will use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- Examples of frequently touched surfaces and objects that will need routine disinfection in the school are:
  - tables
  - doorknobs
  - light switches
  - countertops
  - handles
  - desks
  - phones
  - keyboards
  - toilets
  - faucets and sinks
  - touch screens
- Carpets, rugs and seating areas to be cleaned regularly using COVID19 approved disinfectants.

East Mountain School has been guided by the mandates below in evaluating its decisions to reopen for both staff and students. We will need to continue the following practices:

- social distancing
- small group sizes; smaller class sizes
- frequently washing hands or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available
- wearing cloth face coverings
- avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- staying home when sick
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces

Custodians/Matrons will continue to clean using EPA COVID-19 approved neutral disinfectants with increased focus on high touch areas. When school reopens in September, East Mountain School will follow health protocols to identify for the referral, tracing and isolation of students and staff who are exhibiting COVID-19-related symptoms or with confirmed diagnoses. Screening for symptoms in children and staff, including temperature-taking and an isolation room. This will require efforts to reorganize the school day and school operations to maintain health and safety standards. It is critical to recognize that different schools, different districts and even different rooms will require tailored solutions.

Fortunately, East Mountain School is part of Hackensack Meridian Carrier Clinic Hospital, our cleaning and disinfecting process has and always will continue to follow all hospital-level cleaning procedures and those outlined to combat COVID 19 guidelines and regulations.

### **Social Distancing and Preventing the Spread:**

- East Mountain School will closely monitor access to school facilities and limit the number of visitors accessing school facilities.
- East Mountain School will encourage virtual meetings.
- Sending school districts will be notified of our safety measures and their need to accommodate revised school hours and the screening procedures for students.
- The East Mountain School reopening plan may consider providing workers with the option to deliver instruction remotely while students are in the building and under the supervision of qualified staff.
- Students may have a similar option to learn remotely while their teachers and peers are in school.
- Lunches will be “grab and go” for all commuters.
- Residential students will utilize the Garden Café daily for their meals and not the commuter students.



## Facilities, Continued

### 2020-2021 School Cleaning and Sanitizing Schedule and Procedures 10am-3pm

School will be provided designated personnel for whole environment cleaning, during the day.

- 10:00 am: Entrance doors to all building sanitized with Peroxide wipes
- 10:30 am: Garber & Main restrooms, high touch areas sanitized with peroxide wipes:
  - Door Handles
  - Stall doors
  - Toilet seats and levers
  - Sink area
- 11:30 am: High touch corridor rails and doorknobs cleaned and sanitized with neutral disinfectant
- 12:30 pm: Entrances and exits leading to the Garden Café sanitized with peroxide wipes
- 12:45 pm: Garden Cafe restroom high touch areas sanitized with peroxide wipes:
  - Door Handles
  - Stall doors
  - Toilet seats and levers
  - Sink area
- 1:15 pm: Garber and Main building restroom high touch areas sanitized with peroxide wipes:
  - Door Handles
  - Stall doors
  - Toilet seats and levers
  - Sink area
- 2:15 pm: Refill supplies for classrooms: sanitizer, spray bottles, wipes, paper towels
- 2:30 pm: Sanitize with peroxide wipes Exit/Entrance Doors

### School Daily Cleaning Procedures 2pm-10pm

#### Remove trash from all receptacles

Clean restrooms:

- Scrub and clean
- Toilet bowls
- Exterior of toilet
- Sink area
- Refill soap & paper towels
- Mirrors
- Sweep and mop
- Sanitize door handles and light switches

Classrooms and offices:

- Clean desks, tabletops and chairs with neutral disinfectant
- Sweep and mop floors
- Clean glass
- Sanitize doorknobs and light switches

Corridors and common areas:

- Clean and Sanitize handrails, doors, switches etc.
- Sanitize and Clean Entrance/Exit doors
- Sweep and Mop
- Wipe Amphitheater seat arms when area has been used with peroxide wipes

Cleaning Products and Chemicals

- Oxiver or Clorox Wipes- Hydrogen Peroxide Wipe
- Neutral Disinfectant
- Floor Cleaner
- Toilet Bowl Cleaner
- Lemon Lift
- Acid Bathroom Cleaner
- Glass Cleaner

## School Lunch Procedures in Re-Opening Plan for Students on Site

- **Critical Area Seven, Facilities Cleaning Practices**
- **Critical Area Four, Student Flow, Entry, Exit and Common Areas Guidelines**
- **Critical Area Eight, Meals, NJDOE Recommended Elements, Food Services and Distribution**

### Procedures:

- School lunch will consist of a “grab and go” boxed lunch format.
- Students will have designated mealtimes to be determined by school administration.
- Students will enter the cafeteria (Garden Café) and be seated at assigned tables
- Students will go up to the service area by table, with proper social distancing, receive a pre-packed meal and beverage and return to their seat.
- Students will not be waiting in lines for lunch but called from tables, or served at table.
- Upon entrance/exit to the Café, all students and staff will sanitize/wash hands
- Staff using PPE will wash their hands with soap after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items
- Once a table is seated, the next will be called. Once a meal is finished, any empty bags/boxes should be placed in designated receptacles by the students. Students should remain at their seats to be served.
- Upon dismissal of commuter students to buses, staff will issue their grab and go lunches

### Social Distancing in Café

In order to encourage social distancing in the eating areas, signage will be affixed to the café floors and on the tables as reminders of appropriate spacing. Students should heed the “6 feet” signage while waiting in line and distance at tables. No more than 4 students may be at one table at a time.

### Cleaning Procedures

- Café staff will clean and sanitized tables and chairs between each student group.
- Cleaners that will be utilized for the process include Neutral Disinfectant, Oxivir, and Clorox Wipes. Please refer to the environmental services listing and SDS sheets for detailed cleaning and safety information regarding these products.

**Ongoing Program for Free and Reduced Lunch Access for EMS Students**

As per directives from the NJ Department of Agriculture and the NJ Department of Education, East Mountain School established the following:

- All Students of East Mountain School, who reside temporarily at HMH Carrier Clinic (East Mountain Youth Lodge), will be supplied their school lunches in the Garden Café.
- All Students of East Mountain School, who are eligible community-based day pupils will be provided lunches on site, as a grab and go lunch option, upon school dismissal.
- All lunches are available for purchase by our commuter students.
- Students opting for the remote education only and qualifying for free or reduced lunches will be provided for as well. On a weekly basis lunches will be delivered directly to a pupil's place of residence by school team members to the approved free and or reduced lunch participants of the National School Lunch Program. With the coordination of the Hackensack Meridian Health, Carrier Clinic's Food Services will provide the students with weeklong nutritional meals.
- Families will be prompted with directions to access these services and may also contact our Main Office, at 908-281-1445 or 908-281-1415. Communication with families will be ongoing as student needs and circumstances may change throughout the school year.

**Quality Child Care**

Quality Child Care will be needed and our school team will remain in contact with families as our students re-engage with on-site learning. Social workers will partner with families to create solutions to manage successful returns of our students, especially if child care is a barrier.

## Guiding Practices for Returning Students and Staff on Site to School:

- **Critical Area Two, Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms**
- **Critical Area Five, Screening, Personal Protection Equipment, and Response to Students and Staff Presenting Symptoms**
- **Continuity of Learning, Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities**
- **NJDOE Recommended Elements, Social Emotional Learning, School Climate, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Wrap Around Supports**

As a hospital-linked school, we can provide the appropriate needs in cleaning and protection gear for staff and students. Presently, our staff are screened daily for elevated temperatures and wearing a sticker to denote our passing the temperature screen. All staff wear masks and goggles on site.

Our central goal for students is to work safely and carefully toward becoming more comfortable with returning to on-site schooling. This is essential because of the losses and challenges our at-risk students already experienced before the pandemic. Through our techniques and expertise in the *Nurtured Heart Approach*, conducting *Mindfulness Exercises* and applying the tenants of a *Trauma Sensitive Schools*, we will build students' inner wealth and confidence as they resume full-time, on-site learning. As per the students' IEPs, related services will be ongoing and provided as needed. Our support counseling team consists of Social Workers, School Psychologist and Substance Awareness Coordinator

**Learning loss** will be addressed through the instruction individually provided by our academic teaching staff and support paraprofessional. We will include digital learning platforms to nurture skill re-acquisition and enrichment. Our daily approach in all classes has lessons customized to meet individual student goals and are designed to provide students with academic continuity and reinforcement. Social skills and emotional regression will also be assessed through counseling with school social workers, while related services continue to be re-established.

The students' regressing in behavior support and socialization growth, is a concern as well. Our children are experiencing numerous challenges in their lives throughout the pandemic. The children's not attending schools daily is part of that traumatic loss of structure, therapeutic supports, and socialization all on top of the academic losses. Students will invariably manifest their learning disabilities in their return to on site school.

### Academic Assignments/Materials:

Assignments and academic materials will be delivered in a variety of methods, based on each individual students' abilities and access and re-engage in on-site learning. Individualized lesson plans are also being prepared to help support and organize students as they resume instruction. Modifications and accommodations will be followed when teachers are preparing assignments and lesson plans.

Communication between students and teachers is available via in-person consultation, email, phone, FaceTime, Google Meets and Zoom. Overall weekly progress of students will be recorded via weekly grades that are submitted to administration and then communicated with families and sending school districts.

### **Guiding Practices and Procedures for Returning Students and Staff on Site to School:**

- **Critical Area Two, Classrooms, Testing, and Therapy Rooms**
- **Critical Area Four, Student Flow, Entry, Exit and Common Areas**
- **Continuity of Learning, Ensuring the Delivery of Special Education and Related Services to Students with Disabilities**
- **Critical Area Ten Extra-Curricular Activities and Use of Facilities**
- **NJDOE Recommended Elements, Social Emotional Learning, School Climate, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Wrap Around Supports**

### **IEP Meetings, Eligibility, Re-Evaluation, Manifestation Meetings:**

- The staff at East Mountain School will attempt to schedule meetings remotely.
- Meetings will still be scheduled as during the time of the emergency closing period, through either video (Google Meet or Zoom) or phone conferences.
- PLAAFPs, goals/objectives, BIPs, Counseling Goals/PLAAFP will be emailed to the CST case manager to be included in the IEP.
- East Mountain School will continue to include the appropriate staff for each meeting (School Counselor, Teacher, Related Service Provider). Language line services will be available for parents whose native language is not English.
- All special education evaluations are the responsibility of the sending school districts. East Mountain School will follow the lead of the sending public schools regarding scheduling evaluations, and consult and assist to coordinate with them, if possible. If these can be scheduled remotely, we will explore those options to meet the needs of our students and the sending districts.
- Students have access to the following websites for support and reinforcement:
  - Apple CBees (by BBC)
  - Discovery Kids
  - eastmountainschool.weebly.com (newly created website)
  - Disney
  - How Stuff Works
  - PBS Kids
  - Scholastic.com
  - Smithsonian Institute
  - Time for Kids

- Since transitioning to virtual learning, fifty additional iPads have been purchased to address future needs as they arise. We have also networked with our sending districts to secure Chromebooks to support remote learning, if needed.

### **Classroom Arrangement, Class size, and Physical Education Classes**

East Mountain School is employing all strategies to reduce infection and contain the spread among our population. Materials purchased, but not limited to, in this effort, are as follows:

- Floor stickers and six-foot indicator stickers
- Plexi-glass dividers
- Direction arrows
- Signage for best health practices
- Labeling of floors with distances marked for safe distances

### **HVAC System at East Mountain School**

- East Mountain School has multiple HVAC systems and many include fresh air intakes. We schedule cleaning of the HVAC system and change filters as part of our routine maintenance changing these filters approximately 4x/year. The HVAC system in the school has a supply and return in every classroom. We bring in at least 15% outside air at all times.
- Windows are located in most classrooms and throughout the school buildings. Windows will be opened when appropriate and in safe conditions. Students of East Mountain School may engage in at-risk behaviors and as a result staff will closely monitor windows and other open egress zones, to keep students safe.
- The school community will utilize outside locations as alternate learning and therapy areas to promote social distancing and the capitalize on benefits of fresh air. Our courtyard is gated, therefore securing all students in a safe, enclosed area.

### **Class size and Organizing Student Locations**

- Class size is low in all East Mountain School classes. Rooms have been measured and will reflect revised capacities ranging from 3 individuals to 10 individuals approximately.
- Large gathering areas, ie. amphitheater and Garden Café have been reduced to 25% capacity.
- Use of interior Courtyard will increased as area is secured with gates and there staff will use these alternate seating areas with students as needed.
- With the division of the school into four distinct learning co-horts the class sizes will reduce considerably, ranging from approximately 75-50% capacity

### **Physical Education classes:**

- Students will be encouraged to wear appropriate clothing and shoes.
- Frequently used PE equipment will be cleaned after each class and rotated as needed.
- The sharing of equipment will be minimized

- East Mountain School facilities do not have a locker room for students
- Class sizes have been reduced by 50%
- Cleaning and sanitizing of PE equipment used in classes will be conducted throughout classes
- PE locations include Main Gym, Main Building Class 25, Courts, Campus fields and interior Courtyards
- Require students to sanitize/wash hands with soap before and after PE classes and after outdoor classes
- East Mountain School has supported small class size and social distanced by adding one **FTE Physical Education Teacher**.
  - PE has the highest class-size and this addition will further reduce size and vary locations of learning on campus.

### **Related Services:**

Counseling sessions will be offered in person through multiple designs, including the following: masking in offices, with social distancing in place and/or walking in marked locations on our campus. These will be within our gated areas, in the Courtyard. Staff will be encouraged to walk outside or locate to outdoors for sessions. In addition, counseling worksheets and assignments will be posted in our Google Classroom platform for parents and students to access, whether attending the school on site or remotely.

School social workers will be in communication with their students in school, and remotely, as needed. All correspondence with students, parents, and other service providers will be logged in the individual student logs as usual.

Speech & Language services will be conducted on site or via phone and Zoom, as needed. Speech & Language assignments may be provided electronically. These services had to be scheduled after the East Mountain School launched its virtual learning as the restrictions were lifted in April 2020. As of the drafting of this opening plan, all Speech services have resumed and continued through our Extended School Year program. This continuation of services allowed for sessions to be made up to provide more complete services to our students.

### **Addressing ELL and Bilingual Needs Plan:**

For ELL and Bilingual support will continue through the following: East Mountain School uses video, Apple TV, Apple Ipad Facetime, telephone communication and a specific webpage designed for teachers to post assignments that focus on the individual needs of all ELL and bilingual students while teaching remotely and/or traditional learning environment.

Materials can be translated with the help of professional staff members that speak the language and the language line.



It is important for teachers to engage ELL students and their families during the return to school on site or in remote learning. Regardless of the method families choose, it's most important for teachers to be sensitive to their students' situations and to make sure that they're setting reasonable goals and expectations for learning.

Parents/families will receive telephone calls from teachers regularly. When necessary, in order to communicate with non-English speaking ELL families, the use translation language line helps to facilitate ongoing communication about their child's progress and any specific concerns that arise. When and where possible, a staff member may also be used to facilitate translation.

There are many challenges that ELL students face daily even in a traditional learning environment. Each student at East Mountain School has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which dictates what the student's needs are and lists their specific goals and objectives. Each student plan is different. All students learn differently with the understanding that each student has their own set of strengths, weaknesses and learning styles.

Differentiated instruction is used in all levels of the learning process to address the needs itemized in each student's Individual Education Plan. It is important to plan instruction understanding the differences and similarities among students and use this information to plan instruction effectively. This becomes the individual students' learning prescription.

### **Critical Area Ten Extra-Curricular Activities and Use of Facilities**

- Students will not be scheduled for Field Trips for the first half of the year
- Extra-Curricular activities do not take place on the school campus
- Facilities use and/or rentals by outside agencies are not permitted on HMH, Carrier Clinic at this time

### **Leadership and Planning:**

#### **Scheduling and Staffing Expectations and Considerations**

#### **Teaching Methods/Interventions for Transitions to On-Site Classroom, Lessons**

#### **Learned as a Result of Extended School Year and Past Spring, Remote Learning:**

The team of educators at East Mountain School have nurtured a learning environment to build a distance learning community by being understanding, flexible and kind. Our goals have been to continually maintain relationships with students and their families by allowing them to express their emotional needs, concerns and engage socially with our team. We established flexibility in school time, setting up learning sessions with students throughout the day or in the evening (after school hours).

As we transition back to site, the staff of East Mountain School remain committed to continuing our supports through on site or remote learning. Our families have enthusiastically responded they are looking to send their children to school, on site. Therefore, our caring and creativity will only amplify to support them. Generally, our approach has been to work collaboratively with students to develop assignments of interest and learning level; example of incorporating assignments that students have raised an interest in or requested during distance learning.

Incorporated strategies with alternative, modified teaching techniques, as in the following:

- Small-group instruction 3x weekly and/or/ 1:1 instruction by appointment
- Modify workload/ length of assignments, allow extended time as needed,
- Reword directions in simpler language (e.g. daily assignment briefings),
- Provide notes/ study guides for new concepts (e.g. grammar rules, literary terms),
- Adjust Lexile level of independent reading texts as appropriate, provide audio versions (e.g. YouTube videos) or teacher read-aloud (FaceTime/ Zoom/phone) to supplement longer or more complex texts,
- Highlight/ annotate important words or phrases in reading assignments,
- Use of graphic organizers to scaffold student writing, provide word bank of choices for answers, reduce number of items in multiple-choice questions,
- Provide alternative writing assignments and opportunities for supplemental assignments.
- Mailed high interest projects in Science, Cosmetology and Art for students to complete at home and then record for uploading to website, where the work could be evaluated.

#### **Methods and Supports for Learning:**

- Providing physical and digital copies of assignments,
- use of audio/video chat for live instruction (FaceTime, Zoom),
- use email for academic support, now *Google Education Suite*,
- Staff check-ins with parent/ guardian to assess student progress
- School Paraprofessionals are also available to help students and accommodate their needs.

#### **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

Our central goal for students is to work safely and carefully toward returning to on-site schooling. This is essential because of the losses and challenges our at-risk students already experienced before the pandemic.

The students' regressing in behavior support and socialization growth, is a concern as well. Our children are experiencing numerous challenges in their lives throughout the pandemic. The children's not attending schools daily is part of that traumatic loss of structure, therapeutic supports, and socialization all on top of the academic losses. Students will invariably manifest their learning disabilities in this virtual platform. We need to move forward slowly and with steps to protect workers and students. We also need to plan with our families and our school districts with the help of the Department of Education's mandates about COVID 19, about how to get the students to our site, safely. We see the advantages of employing creative teaching including career exploration and related activities, especially mirroring the workplace.

The New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science provide students with opportunities to engage in learning about fundamental questions about the world and how scientists have investigated and found answers to those questions. At East Mountain School, students will have opportunity to carry out scientific investigations related to their Science, Technology, Engineering and Math studies. Technology and Math (STEM) theme focuses on improving math skills for all participating students.

The main goal is to provide students with access to STEM programs for the purpose of academic improvement, skill building, artistic expression, career exploration, and information empowerment.

In today's global economy, students need to be lifelong learners who have the knowledge and skills to adapt to an evolving workplace and world. To address these demands, Standard 9, 21st Century Life and Careers, which includes the 12 Career Ready Practices, establishes clear guidelines for what students need to know and be able to do in order to be successful in their future careers and to achieve financial independence. These life and career skills enable students to make informed decisions that prepare them to engage as active citizens in a dynamic global society and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century global workplace.

### **Communication from School Team to Assist Families and Students**

Additionally, our team applied a more holistic approach by assessing and then collaborating with teachers/social workers to improve teaching methods and available resources. An example was our collaboration with teachers in same subject matter for support and resources. Through these connections we were able to enhance virtual learning with techniques from different subject matters and devise approaches in working with students based on the success or advice from other teachers and social workers. We will continue these interventions as creative outreach for the students.

### **Re-Organizing Students in Work Production and Completing Assignments on Site:**

- Establishing routines for return to Classroom expectations
- Small class size
- Created digital work folders for students to be assessed at school or home
- Schedule students for tutorials and check-ins with social workers and teachers
- Using the inclusion model by providing the student choices during learning sessions and independent learning
- Provided students with alternative assignments to paper and pen tasks in addition to added enrichment advanced students
- Engage with students in order to modify assignments to meet their individual educational and emotional needs.
- Provide students with additional visual and literary resources to enhance the subject matter.

## Transportation/Bussing

### Critical Area Three, Transportation and Bussing

All buses arriving to East Mountain School have been chartered by the local sending district and must adhere to safety guidelines set by the district and company. All signage and safe operations must be followed especially on HMH Carrier Clinic grounds and lots.

- Companies will follow their policies and procedures of their bussing service. While capacity may be reduced, our sending districts will establish transportation for our students, within the regulations.
- East Mountain School will support masking of students as part of our educational plan.
- Districts may encourage alternative ways of getting to school. East Mountain School supports this initiative however students must be kept safe and behavior expectation plans may need to be revised to support our student's transport.
- No students may be dropped off at East Mountain School. All students must be received by the EMS designated personnel checking them in and then screened.
- East Mountain School supports, our transportation companies being required to disinfect all high-touch surfaces on buses
- If hand sanitizer is located on the bus it should be secured and used only with adult supervision.
- A Disinfection Policy and training would be provided by the contracted bus company for each driver and their team.

### Establishment of a Pandemic Response Team

School districts should establish school-based Pandemic Response Teams in each school to centralize, expedite, and implement COVID-19-related decision-making. Members of the school teams should include a cross section of administrators, teachers and staff, and parents. Decision-making and communication will be more effective if decision-makers reflect the makeup of the community. Pandemic Responses Teams should represent a cross-section of the school and district, including its gender and racial diversity.

If a school has an existing crisis response team, that team could serve as the Pandemic Response Team. If a school or district does not have an existing crisis response team, schools should establish such a Pandemic Response Team to support all planning, management, and decision-making related to the school's COVID-19 response actions. Pandemic Response Team should be comprised of, at a minimum, the following members, if applicable:

- School principal or lead person
- Teachers
- Child Study Team member
- School Counselor or mental health expert
- Subject Area Chairperson/Director
- School Nurse

Teachers representing each grade band served by the district  
 School safety personnel  
 Members of the school safety team  
 Custodian  
 Parents

**The Pandemic Response Team is responsible for:** Overseeing each school’s implementation of the district’s reopening plan, particularly health and safety measures, and providing safety and crisis leadership. The teams will ensure accurate, timely and transparent information is shared within the school community.

The East Mountain School Pandemic Response and School Re-Opening Task Force met through July and August 2020 to discuss and design our plans.

The teams are as follows:

### **Pandemic Response Task Force**

- Dr. Stacey Paulis – Director/Principal
- Dr. Stephen Bender - Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction
- Dr. Angela DiDolce - Supervisor of Special Education
- Yvette Kisling – Administrative Assistant, Confidential
- Bernadette Eagan – School Nurse
- Tracy Hart – Director of Sodexo Services
- Melissa Walker - Clinical Nutrition Manager

### **School Re-Opening Task Force**

- Dr. Stacey Paulis – Director/Principal
- Dr. Stephen Bender - Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction
- Michael Haney – Business Administrator
- Angela DiDolce - Supervisor of Special Education
- Julie Cartusciello - School Counselor/Testing Coordinator/HIB Coordinator
- Kristen Rosati - Coordinator of Special Education
- Eric Olsen - Teacher of Chemistry, Physics and Math
- Bernadette Eagan - School Nurse
- Alyssa Hudgins – Instructional Paraprofessional
- Elyssa Creque- Steele – Instructional Paraprofessional
- Lawrence Booth – Social Studies Teacher
- Yvette Kisling – Administrative Assistant, Confidential

## **CONCLUSION: A LIVING DOCUMENT**

This plan is to develop a robust school program and well-maintained building throughout the extended period of closure. The goal is to eventually reopen our school. As a result, this educational plan is a living document, guided by constantly evolving expert advice about how best to keep our children and staff safe from the continued spread of COVID-19 and what resources are needed to put our school back on the road to recovery. It rests on the fundamental belief that without a vaccine, we must take specific steps to map out our new normal, which must include: some elements of physical distancing; infrastructure for testing, tracing and isolation; deploying public health interventions in our schools and workplaces and aligning them with the necessary educational supports; involvement of workers and community in the development of reopening plans; and significant investments in states, localities, schools, healthcare and the Postal Service—the essential systems that have carried us through this crisis and will need continued support. Together, we will work to carry our school community through the recovery that follows.