

# BETTER TOGETHER

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## Central Office Reoccupation Plan

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## 1| Introduction

On March 12, 2020, State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Karen Salmon, announced the temporary closing of all Maryland Public Schools, due to COVID-19, effective March 16, 2020. On May 6, 2020, Dr. Salmon announced the closing of all Maryland Public Schools for the remainder of the 2019/20 school year. Because of these closings, the majority of Howard County Public School (HCPSS) non-school employees shifted to telework for continuity of operations.

HCPSS developed this plan to begin a gradual approach for safely and efficiently returning employees to work in their physical office space.

- The plan follows, and will continue to follow, current Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Howard County Health Department (HCHD) guidance.
- In developing the plan, HCPSS consulted with, and worked in collaboration with:
  - Howard County Health Department (HCHD)
  - Maryland Association of Boards of Education (MABE)

The HCPSS Reoccupation plan considers guidance from:

- American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

The HCPSS Reoccupation plan is developed with the tenets of:

- Safety
- Operations
- Instruction

These protocols are in place for the HCPSS Central Office and Non-School Buildings, including:

- ARL
- Ascend One
- Berger Road
- Logistics Center
- Mendenhall (with some adjustments, as required by the Custodial Department)
- Old Cedar Lane
- Ridge Road

## 2| Cost and Operations Overview:

1. Central Office - Initial building capacity 25%, with ability to expand as needed.
  - a. Some non-instructional staff in satellite offices have been reporting to work due to the itinerant nature of their positions. Applicable guidelines are being followed.

2. A standardized departmental work rotation was determined to be the best approach, based on the concept of work “families” occupying the building together.
3. To implement this plan completely, the Recovery Team required approximately six weeks for all Central Office buildings to be set up to accept staff back into buildings. This work has been completed.
4. Additional hand sanitizer and related cleaning products were purchased at an approximate cost of \$57,000.
5. HVAC systems are utilizing higher efficiency MERV 13 air filters instead of the standard efficiency MERV 8 air filters. Air filters will be replaced on an annual basis or as needed, based on system performance. The estimated annual cost to provide MERV 13 air filters for the Central Office HVAC systems is \$1,100.
6. For all other business office buildings that the HCPSS owns, operates, and maintains, it will cost approximately \$1,100 per year for filter changes.
7. Plexiglass barriers for public-facing work areas were purchased at a cost of \$1,500.

**3| Time Considerations and Durations to ensure buildings ready to open: 30 work days total**

<b>Task Description</b>	<b>Time to Complete</b>
Staff Survey	Completed
Create and implement SafeSchools training module	Completed
Evaluate Building needs	Completed
Order materials and supplies	Completed
Install physical barriers as needed	Completed

**4| Estimated Costs for business offices**

<b>Building</b>	<b>Annual filter replacement costs</b>
Central Office	\$1,100
Logistics	\$ 200
Berger Road	Owned and maintained by Howard County Department of Public Works
Mendenhall	Owned and maintained by Howard County Department of Public Works
Ascend One	Owned and maintained by Howard County Department of Public Works
Old Cedar Lane	\$ 800
Old Bushy Park	\$ 100
Ridge Road	Owned and maintained by Howard County Department of Public Works

## 5| Reoccupation Plan

### Reoccupation Considerations

Prior to reoccupation, a supervisory survey was distributed to determine staff ability to return to work in an office setting and focused on:

- Which, if any, essential functions have not been able to occur while teleworking.
- Which departments require more routine access to buildings. Prioritization is given to departments that have the greatest need for building access.
- Which employees are building-dependent or public-facing.

Divisions held focus group sessions to provide input.

- Budget impact - having partial staff entering the building will mean that utilities costs will return to normal levels, while costs associated with teleworking (such as home printer supplies, hotspot services, etc.) will still be incurred. (recurring)

## 6| Building Use Considerations

HCPSS reoccupation approach is broken down into five steps:

### Step 1

Buildings prepared for staff return:

- HCPSS Facilities reviewed and evaluated all non-school buildings
  - Installed MERV 13 air filters
  - Installed plexiglass shields or other barriers, where applicable
  - Established signage needs
    - Health guidance signs
    - “Entrance” and “Exit” signs on portable doors
    - “One way” signs for stairways (In CO, one stairway up; one stairway down)
    - Hallway directional signs, where necessary
  - Changed group seating in visitor areas to accommodate social distancing
  - Turned unavailable seats backwards or placed “Not for use” signs
- Budget impact - increased cost of supplies and labor to complete the installation (non-recurring)

### Step 2

Staff with enclosed offices may return to the administrative buildings as necessary (30 people or fewer). In addition, those employees whose jobs cannot be performed by teleworking may also return.

### Step 3

25% of HCPSS return to work in Central Office, as determined by an evaluation of work tasks by their supervisor. Each department will maintain an employee schedule.

### Step 4

50% of HCPSS return to work in Central Office, as determined by an evaluation of work tasks by their supervisor. Each department will maintain an employee schedule.

### Step 5

Following state and Howard County Health Department guidance, all employees return to work in Central Office and other non-school buildings.

Steps are subject to review based on current information, state and local orders, and Howard County Health Department guidance. HCPSS' priority is to maintain a safe working environment for our employees and visitors. At times, HCPSS may need to return to a previous step, as the situation requires.

## 7| Health Guidance

- Employees will perform an at-home health evaluation each day they report to an office building.
- Employees should begin by checking their temperature at home each day, before they report to an HCPSS building. Employees must also self-check the following information:
  - That they have been fever free (temperature less than 100.4) for 72 hours
  - That they do not have a cough
  - That they do not have a sore throat
  - That they do not have muscle or body aches
  - That they have not had vomiting or diarrhea
  - That they have no new loss of taste or smell
  - That they have not been in close contact with anyone who has tested positive or has been suspected of having COVID-19

- The [CDC website](#) has a Coronavirus Self Checker designed to help make decisions about seeking medical treatment.
  - (Click on the link and scroll to “Self Check”)
  - It is important that employees answer the questions honestly, contact their supervisor, and remain home if symptomatic.
- Employees are required to wear face coverings as they approach their office building.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, the Howard County Health Department will provide guidance on how to proceed.
- Employees who are awaiting COVID-19 test results should remain at home.

## 8| General Guidance

- Central Office will be available for employee use Monday through Friday, with a consistent opening and closing time of 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, respectively.
- Offices - single occupancy with no visitor access. Face coverings may be removed while an employee is alone in an enclosed office.
- Central Office Cubicles - workspace seating has been mapped for:
  - Capacity
  - Social distancing
  - Discontinued use of shared seating areas
  - Employees are required to wear face coverings while working in cubicle seating, pursuant to Howard County Health Department guidance
    - Employees may remove their face covering to eat lunch at their desk, while maintaining social distance.
- Employees are encouraged to avoid using water fountains, and to instead bring a personal water bottle.
  - Signage is displayed, indicating that water fountains should only be used as water bottle filling stations.
- Usage of personal fans and/or air purifiers is **prohibited**.
- Conference rooms – until further notice, discontinue use of conference rooms for group meetings, and encourage video conferencing.
  - Conference rooms may be used by an employee in a high traffic location or by an employee wishing to do project work.
  - Conference room(s) use will be scheduled in advance through the calendar system.
  - Only one employee may occupy a conference room, after receiving confirmation through the calendar system.
  - Place a sign on the door to indicate that the room is in use.
- Board Room – Has been mapped to allow for social distancing.
- Restrooms – Maximum of two person occupancy. Employees must be able to maintain a six foot separation while in the restroom.
- Refrigerator/microwave areas - limit use to one person at a time.

- Cafe – when operational, food is available for carry out only, until further notice.
- Stairways – signage for an “up” stairway and a “down” stairway.
- Elevators - limit to one occupant. Hand sanitizer stations have been placed outside of elevators.
- Signage placed throughout common areas to remind of social distancing, face coverings, and washing hands, including entry to building (reminding not to enter if experiencing fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of taste, etc.).
- Employee work spaces have been evaluated in all other non-school buildings

## 9| HVAC Guidance

### Central Office and Non-school Buildings

- Ensure that filters are installed correctly
- Access and correct filter breakthrough/bypass
- Disable demand-controlled ventilation (DCV), where applicable
- Ensure economizer mode is working properly
- Ensure that bathroom exhaust fans are operational
- Ensure that outside air dampers are open, if there is no impact to system performance
- Run HVAC two hours prior to occupancy, if it will not impact indoor relative humidity
- Run HVAC in the evening to aid in dilution while Custodial staff clean and disinfect, if it will not impact indoor relative humidity

### Specific to Old Cedar Lane

- Ensure that filters are installed correctly
- Access and correct filter breakthrough/bypass
- Ensure economizer mode is working properly
- Ensure that bathroom exhaust fans are operational

## 10| Cleaning Guidance

- Cleaning process in compliance with current [CDC Guidelines](#)
  - High touch areas – frequent cleaning by Custodial staff.
  - Hand sanitizer stations placed near restrooms, printer/copier machines, elevators, and entrances/exits.
  - Personal work spaces – Employees may choose to disinfectant their own work spaces.
    - Disinfectant wipes and/or spray cleaner and paper towels are readily available upon employee request. Please check with your Custodial staff member when needed.
- Budget impact - increases in Custodial supplies, and staffing needs (recurring).

## 11| Signage

- Printed arrows to indicate foot traffic direction.



- “In Use” signs for Conference Rooms.
- “Entrance” and “Exit” signs for portable doors.
- Teleworking sign – Employee may print and place on seat, indicating that they are teleworking. Employee completes name, email and phone information on sign.

## 12| Training Guidance

- Staff training regarding COVID-19 symptoms, best practices for hygiene, social distancing, usage of face coverings, and cleaning practices is required through a combination of SafeSchools and [CDC](#) videos before employees return to their normal workspace.
- Face coverings – employees are required to approach the building wearing a face covering.
  - Employees have been issued two reusable face coverings.
  - Employees without face coverings will not be permitted to enter the building.
  - A limited supply of disposable face coverings will be available for employees who forgot a personal face covering, or do not have one available.
- With guidance from the local health department and CDC regulations, Health Services has developed procedures for employees to follow when they are not feeling well, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

## 13| Related Guidance

### HCPSS Fleet Vehicle Usage

- Single occupancy of HCPSS fleet vehicle is strongly encouraged.
- If vehicle must be occupied by more than one employee, they are to follow current CDC guidelines for occupancy and cleaning.
- Maintain social distancing guidelines, where possible.
  - Wear face coverings inside the vehicle.
  - Avoid using the recirculated air option for the car’s ventilation during passenger transport; use the car’s vents to bring in fresh outside air and/or lower the vehicle windows.
  - Carry disinfectant wipes and disposal trash bags in the vehicle.
    - Employees are responsible for wiping the steering wheel, door handle, grab bar, and any other surfaces touched before exiting the vehicle.

## 14| Human Resources

- Modified or staggered work schedules for employees, where necessary, to meet work requirements.
- ADA, flexible sick, and leave policies to support:
  - Employees who will require reasonable accommodation to return to work.
  - Employees who test positive for COVID-19 due to workplace exposure or who have been instructed to quarantine based close contact at work.
  - High-Risk Employees or immune deficient employees.
  - Employees who require mental health support to return to an office setting.
- Counseling and support services for employees who have concerns about returning to the workplace:
  - Guidance Resources provides up to six free and confidential counseling and support sessions for employees.
  - Long-term counseling and support services available through existing health insurance coverage.

**15| Employee Well-Being**

- The employee counseling and support services program provides resources for emotional support and work-life solutions.

**16| Visitor Access**

Visitors are to access office buildings only when necessary.

- Identify departments that require visitor access.
- Limit number of visitors and areas of the building that are accessed.
- Facilities reviewed areas that receive visitors and evaluated the needs for barriers or shields between staff and visitors to maintain social distance.
- Visitors are required to wear face coverings before they are allowed to access the building.
- Bins are available at entrances for visitors who simply need to drop off items.