

Hillsdale Preparatory School COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

Address of School District: 160 W. Mechanic Road, Hillsdale, MI 48242

District Code Number: 30901

Building Code Number(s): 08482

District Contact Person: Anne Fowler, Head of School

District Contact Person Email Address: Annie.Fowler@hillsdaleprep.org

Local Public Health Department: Branch Hillsdale St. Joseph

Local Public Health Department Contact Person Email Address: Rebecca Burns;
burnsr@bhsj.org; 517-933-3040

Name of Intermediate School District: Hillsdale ISD

Name of Authorizing Body: Grand Valley State University

Date of Adoption by Board of Directors:

Assurances

- The Academy will cooperate with local public health authorities if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified and, in particular will collect the contact information for any close contacts of the affected individual from two days before he or she shows symptoms to the time when he or she was last present at the Academy.
- The Academy will comply with guidance from the United States Department of Education, including its Office of Civil Rights and office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and the Michigan Department of Education concerning the delivery of alternative modes of instruction to students with disabilities in light of the impact of COVID-19.

President of the Board of
Directors

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Introduction and Overview

Hillsdale Preparatory School is a K-8 charter school in a rural community in southern Michigan. The school serves approximately seventy-five students in self contained classrooms. The school offers a curriculum that blends classical education with modern instructional techniques. When schools initially closed in March 2020, students were sent home with learning packets to reinforce previously learned skills. Once it was determined that school would remain closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, Hillsdale Prep quickly transitioned to online learning through the use of Google Classroom in all grade levels. During the 2020-21 school year, Hillsdale Preparatory School operated full in-person learning and provided a virtual learning as an option to parents. Virtual learning was used when students were positive with COVID or had been exposed and were quarantined. Since August 2021, Hillsdale Preparatory School has prioritized in-person instruction and has not made virtual instruction readily available as a full-time option. Students who must remain out of school due to being ill with COVID or being exposed, are able to pick up missing work and are given extended time to complete missed assignments. When possible, the teacher and parents will collaborate in order for students to join live instructional meetings via Zoom if appropriate.

Our mission at The Hillsdale Preparatory School is to impart the knowledge and academic skills with which our students can advance to schools of higher learning, and become educated, productive, responsible citizens of America. Hillsdale Preparatory School symbolizes a partnership among the students, parents, faculty, administration, and staff. These partners are united in their commitment to our common objectives and dedicated to our Mission Statement. As role models and instructors, Hillsdale Preparatory teachers are valued by students and parents for their caring attitudes. Intelligence, effective teaching ability, loyalty, and responsibility are characteristics we expect of the faculty. The bar is held equally high for the students of Hillsdale Preparatory School. Parents expect and appreciate direct and frequent communication from the faculty and administration regarding their children.

This mission has guided our work by planning opportunities for students to receive the same quality of education that they have come to know and expect from Hillsdale Prep, even in the midst of a pandemic. Parents have remained informed throughout the course of school closures and the reopening planning process. Regular communication through email, our social media page, letters, our school app and surveys have been consistent to keep parents informed and active in the decision making process. We view our school community as a family and these communications are of the utmost importance to maintain the relationships that we value so deeply.

In developing the Preparedness Plan, the guiding principles that we used were stakeholder involvement, options that meet the needs of all students and their families and providing a consistent educational opportunity across options and phases. The committee considered strongly recommended practices in the guidelines that kept the safety of staff and students as a top priority, while still considering the feasibility of each recommendation.

Mandatory Closure Safety Protocols

In the event of a mandatory closure issued by local or state agencies, Hillsdale Preparatory School will be closed for in-person instruction. The school building will not be used by a licensed child care provider unless county-wide emergency needs, coordinated by Hillsdale County ISD Superintendent, deems space necessary in the building.

During mandatory, Hillsdale Preparatory School employees will report to the building for the purpose of conducting basic school operations, including remote instruction. These employees include administrators and office staff and custodial staff for the purpose of maintaining routine and basic operations of the school building and its programs. Classroom teachers will report to the building and work in isolation from their individually assigned classrooms in order to have access to reliable internet connection, have access to instructional materials and resources and to maintain a structured learning environment that is consistent throughout all grades levels served by Hillsdale Preparatory School. Teachers will be present in the school building Monday through Friday for specific hours for the purposes including but not limited to providing live instruction, recording instructional videos, providing small group or individual virtual support, researching and creating resources and materials, planning future lessons, grading assignments and providing feedback, etc.

Hillsdale Preparatory School does not provide a hot lunch program, therefore there will be no direct food distribution for eligible students during school closures. To ensure that these students' needs are being met, Hillsdale Prep will consult with other local superintendents in Hillsdale County and provide their food distribution schedules and information to Hillsdale Preparatory School families.

While the school building is closed during mandatory closures, cleaning protocols will follow the current practices, which include: frequent sanitation of high touch surfaces, disinfection of all surfaces with electrostatic sprayer, increased hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.

Mandatory Closure- Mental & Social-Emotional Health

Hillsdale Preparatory School leadership, in collaboration with assigned ISD school social worker and school mental health worker, will establish and communicate guidelines to all staff regarding identification and referral of at-risk students to building-level support teams, including the Child Study Team. Staff will be provided training of the Hillsdale Preparatory School crisis management plan to understand what resources are available and how they can be leveraged in the event of significant events such as the loss of a student or staff member. Staff will regularly screen and evaluate the mental health status of students by using the Illuminate social-emotional screening tool at least once per quarter. Hillsdale Preparatory School will be provided resources for self-care including resiliency strategies and paid time off for mental health purposes. The Head of School will act as the mental health liaison who will work across the school with local public health agencies and community partners. School stakeholders will use communication channels such as the Head of School's email address, and a Google Form on the school website to address mental health concerns resulting from COVID-19. Hillsdale Preparatory School will communicate with parents and guardians via email, the school app, letters, the school website, SMS text messages and phone calls to relay information on school transition information. Additionally, the Head of School will hold frequent virtual town hall meetings focused on topics such as: understanding normal behavior responses to crises, talking through trauma with children, positive self-care strategies and destigmatization of COVID-19.

Mandatory Closure- Instruction

Instruction will take place online when a mandatory school closure is initiated by local or state agencies. Hillsdale Preparatory School will use the platform SeeSaw for grades kindergarten through third grade and Google Classroom for grades 4-8. All assignments, instructional videos and feedback will be done through these digital platforms. Feedback from teachers and parents on the Continuity of Learning plan from the spring of 2020, lead to the conclusion that live instruction would need to be a requirement for online learning in the future. Teachers and students will use Google Meet or Zoom to interact during daily live instruction. Hillsdale Prep will ensure that student learning continues by assessing students using NWEA Map Growth virtually and providing daily feedback to class assignments and teacher made assessments. Students will need access to school owned iPads and Chromebooks. Each student will get a white board and dry erase markers in order to participate in guided practice during live instruction. Students that do not have reliable internet access will be provided paper packets, partnered with weekly phone calls. Additionally students will need access to Google Suite for education including but not limited to email, Google Classroom and Google Meet. Engagement and attendance will be monitored by the assigned classroom teacher. Teachers will make biweekly phone calls to all students in their class to ensure that relationships are being maintained and to solicit feedback about the learning platform, technology difficulties. All teachers at Hillsdale Preparatory School have participated in extensive Google training through Grand Valley State University. Weekly staff meetings will be scheduled to allow teachers time to provide feedback about the distance learning plan, as well as to collaborate with one another and share knowledge, exchange ideas, discuss data results, progress monitoring and to build capacity around high-quality remote learning. A staff Google Classroom will also be available for teachers to collaborate and create consistency and appropriateness of workload and expectations. For students with disabilities, Hillsdale Preparatory School will have the special education teacher as a co-teacher in each Google Classroom so that proper support and accommodations can be made to online assignments. Additionally, the special education teacher will use Google Meet to provide virtual live instruction and check-ins for students with IEPs. IEPs that cannot be carried out fully due to distance learning will have a contingency of learning plan written or the IEP will be amended if the circumstances call for it. Auxiliary services will be coordinated by and with Hillsdale County ISD to determine appropriate and feasible methods to deliver these services remotely. Hillsdale Preparatory School will not provide supports for students transitioning to postsecondary because the school serves students K-8, therefore no students will be transitioning to postsecondary schools.

Mandatory Closure- Operations

Hillsdale Preparatory School works with a local office supply business in order to buy sufficient supplies of office supplies, cleaning and disinfecting supplies and PPE, including face coverings, hand sanitizer and gloves. Hillsdale Preparatory School owns 145 HP Chromebooks, which were secured prior to the pandemic. The school's enrollment is currently under 90 students, which allows for each student to have access to their own device to use for distance learning. This number allows for extra devices to be available and allows for easy swap out of devices when one breaks, without a student being without a device during distance learning. Hillsdale Preparatory School surveyed families to determine the accessibility to reliable internet and to internet ready devices. Using that information, Hillsdale Prep was able to identify families in need of school owned devices and those without reliable internet. Students will have the option to use their own personal devices for distance learning, but will have the access to school owned devices and will be encouraged to use school owned devices so that support can be given for technical difficulties. An inventory of each device is kept by school office staff so that each can be properly accounted for and it is known who the device is assigned to and missing and broken devices can be easily tracked back to individual students and staff. During distance learning, teachers will remain assigned to their individual classes. The title I teacher will remain in that role to support and co-teach classes with multi-aged students by becoming a co-teacher in each of those Google Classrooms. She will continue to serve these classrooms by collaborating and planning meaningful lessons and small group activities with the classroom teacher. Additionally, she will provide support and interventions to students using Google Meet or Zoom in order to ensure progress monitoring continues remotely. The custodian will remain full time, engaged in cleaning and disinfecting protocols in order to keep the building safe for staff who are working from their classrooms. The Head of School and Administrative Assistant will continue to work from the school building. The music and physical education teacher will be redeployed to provide supports to grades 4-8 with individual interventions and progress monitoring. A paraprofessional who is current assigned to two classrooms, will be redeployed to assist K-3 with individual interventions and progress monitoring.

In-Person Operating

In-Person Safety Protocols

- During the 2021-22 school year, Hillsdale Preparatory School will offer in-person instructions to all students five days a week, full-time. With six classrooms and less than 80 students in the building at any given time, the school is confident that a full time schedule can be handled safely and is what is best for students and teachers.

- Students and staff will have the option to wear masks.
- Hand sanitizer will be used in and out of every room. Hand sanitizer will be purchased for each classroom and also placed in community areas such as hallways, entryways and the main office. Students will use hand sanitizer before and after touching any community materials when handwashing with soap and water cannot be done. Custodial staff will check tissue, paper towel dispensers, soap dispensers at beginning, middle and end of every shift. Hand dryers will not be used. Teachers will teach and reinforce hygiene practices within the classroom setting.
- Students and staff will screen themselves for COVID symptoms and remain home if symptoms are present. Additional screening protocols may be put into place based on evolving information and recommendations of the local health department. Information regarding positive COVID-19 cases will be immediately reported to the contact at the local health department.
- Hillsdale Preparatory School will not procure portable handwashing stations to set up throughout the building. Classrooms will be assigned to specific bathrooms and classes will take periodic breaks for the purpose of handwashing with soap and water. The size of the school buildings does not warrant portable hand washing stations.

Lunch tables will be assigned to specific classes and labeled. Staff and students will wash their hands before every meal.

- Recess will be conducted outside whenever possible.
- All required cleaning protocols will be followed. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned by custodial staff during scheduled times at least every four hours daily while the school building is in operation. Light switches and doorknobs within the classroom will be the responsibility of the classroom teacher to disinfect periodically throughout the day. Each classroom and all of the surfaces within the classroom, including supplies, desks, Chromebooks, book shelves and other materials will be sprayed with a disinfectant using an electrostatic sprayer once daily while students are at lunch or recess and once daily at the end of the school day. All classrooms at Hillsdale Prep are self-contained, so there are no “class periods”, therefore this disinfecting procedure is efficient for all classrooms K-8. Art supplies will be sanitized by the Art teacher between classes using an EPA

approved disinfectant. The Art storage room and all of its contents will be sprayed with an electrostatic spraying at the end of each school day. Playground structures will continue to undergo normal routine cleaning using an EPA approved disinfectant. The custodial staff will properly store cleaning supplies away from children in a secured closet in each building of the school.

- Hillsdale Preparatory School does not provide transportation. Parents provide transportation of all students to and from school.

In-Person Mental & Social-Emotional Health (Strongly Recommended)

- Hillsdale Preparatory School will review all current IEPs and 504 plans for accommodating students with their health care needs and update their plans, along with their families, to decrease their risk for exposure to COVID-19.
- Hillsdale Preparatory School will implement a mental health screening for all students three times per year. A trained mental health professional, is assigned to Hillsdale Preparatory School through Hillsdale ISD
- Hillsdale Preparatory School leadership, in collaboration with assigned ISD school social worker, will establish and communicate guidelines to all staff regarding identification and referral of at-risk students to building-level support teams, including the Child Study Team.
- Staff will be provided training of the Hillsdale Preparatory School crisis management plan to understand what resources are available and how they can be leveraged in the event of significant events such as the loss of a student or staff member.
- Staff will regularly screen and evaluate the mental health status of students by using the Illuminate social-emotional screening tool at least once per quarter.
- Hillsdale Preparatory School will be provided resources for self-care including resiliency strategies and paid time off for mental health purposes.
- The Head of School will act as the mental health liaison who will work across the school with local public health agencies and community partners.
- School stakeholders will use communication channels such as the Head of School's email address to address mental health concerns resulting from COVID-19.
- Hillsdale Preparatory School will communicate with parents and guardians via email, the school app, letters, the school website, SMS text messages and phone calls to relay information on school transition information.

In-Person Instruction

- Hillsdale Preparatory School will offer full in-person instruction to all students. An exception to this will be when a student is ill with COVID-19, a student has been exposed to COVID and is unwilling to wear a mask or if the Head of School determines that a pause in in-person instruction is warranted due to staff absences or a COVID outbreak.
- In-person instruction will be in seat five days a week for a full school day. All classrooms K-8 will be self-contained. In-person instruction will include use of SeeSaw for K-3 and Google Classroom for 4-8 for the purpose of assigning work and turning in assignments. Additionally other Google Suite items such as Google Docs, Forms, Slides, etc. will be used during the in-person model. The reasoning behind the required use of these platforms during in-person instruction will be to familiarize students with navigating the systems and becoming comfortable with online procedures so that a seamless transition to online learning can happen should a classroom or school closure be warranted. Students with disabilities will have the option to attend in-person instruction and IEPs will be followed as written or amended if the individual cases deem it necessary.

In-Person Operations Hillsdale Preparatory School works with a local office supply business in order to buy sufficient supplies of office supplies, cleaning and disinfecting supplies and PPE, including face coverings, hand sanitizer and gloves. Hillsdale Preparatory School owns 145 HP Chromebooks, which were secured prior to the pandemic. The school's enrollment is currently under 90 students, which allows for each student to have access to their own device to use for distance learning. This number allows for extra devices to be available and allows for easy swap out of devices when one breaks, without a student being without a device during distance learning. Hillsdale Preparatory School surveyed families to determine the accessibility to reliable internet and to internet ready devices. Using that information, Hillsdale Prep was able to identify families in need of school owned devices and those without reliable internet. Students will have the option to use their own personal devices for distance learning, but will have the access to school owned devices and will be encouraged to use school owned devices so that support can be given for technical difficulties. An inventory of each device is kept by school office staff so that each can be properly accounted for and it is known who the device is assigned to and missing and broken devices can be easily tracked back to individual students and staff. During distance learning, teachers will remain assigned to their individual classes. The title I teacher will remain in that role to support and co-teach classes with multi-aged students by becoming a co-teacher in each of those Google Classrooms. She will continue to serve these classrooms by collaborating and planning meaningful lessons and small group activities with the classroom teacher. Additionally, she will provide support and interventions to students using Google Meet or Zoom in order to ensure progress monitoring continues remotely. The custodian will remain full time, engaged in cleaning and disinfecting protocols in order to keep the building safe for staff who are working from their classrooms. The Head of School and Administrative Assistant will continue to work from the school building. The music and physical education teacher will be redeployed to provide supports to grades 4-8 with individual interventions and progress monitoring. A paraprofessional who is current assigned to two classrooms, will be redeployed to assist K-3 with individual interventions and progress monitoring.

- In order to transition to full online learning, Hillsdale Preparatory School will use the school app to communicate pick up dates and times of devices for students. The Head of School and Administrative assistant will facilitate pick up of materials and maintain and sign out sheet of all students and the items that they receive. Parents will pull up in the front of the school and staff will place student materials in the back or trunks of cars and one staff member will review the list of items that their child(ren) is receiving before they leave.

