

SHEPARD

SHEPARD SCHOOLS 2026-2027 LEARNING PLAN

Schools: Shepard School -2 Miller Road, Kinnelon NJ 07405
Shepard Preparatory High School - 8 Columba Street, Morristown, NJ 07960

Director: Mrs. Lauren Nava
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Principal: Karyn Gove
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Population: All students in grades K-transition who attend Shepard School and Shepard Preparatory High School. Both locations are state-approved private schools for students with disabilities. Shepard continues to implement a plan to support the best practices necessary to ensure a safe learning environment (see below) for all students and staff.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING: IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

Educational and health protocols may be amended by the State of New Jersey, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and other local health authorities. As such, Shepard may update the policy.

CONDITIONS FOR IN-PERSON LEARNING:

- School hours are 8:15-2:20
- Shepard Schools have maintained heating and ventilation systems, have open windows whenever possible, and maintain filters for A/C units according to manufacturer recommendations.
- Visits to the building from non-Shepard students and staff are limited.
- Students may bring their own water bottles to limit use of hallway water fountains.
- Each student has his or her own technology device (Ipad and Laptop).
- Signs informing of students of proper hand-washing remain installed throughout the school building.
- School lunch is served to all eligible students here at Shepard. Meals are provided by the Morristown School District. Shepard does not have a breakfast program.

During any closures or when learning virtually due to illness, students can pick up school lunches from their sending school district. ***Sending districts are responsible for transportation. Student transport will be provided by the district and/or parent.**

Sanitation

- Sanitizer dispensers with alcohol-based hand sanitizers are installed in all classrooms, at entrances and exits of buildings, and near bathrooms.
- Classrooms are sanitized each day following student dismissal.
- Wherever possible, hands-free plumbing fixtures have been installed.
- If an individual tests positive for Covid-19, defogging, targeted cleaning and sanitation will be implemented.

Student and Staff Health

Pandemic Response Team: Shepard Schools have developed a Pandemic Response Team to coordinate all efforts connected to COVID-19 and other illness-related decision-making. The Shepard Pandemic Response team will work closely with local health departments, and others in municipal and county government to implement the plans based on current Covid-19 conditions.

Exclusion Criteria

Re-admittance policies are consistent with guidance issued by the CDC, New Jersey Department of Health, the Department of Education and local health authorities. As such, Shepard may update the policy.

Students and staff with the following symptoms should be excluded from school if they exhibit:

- A. At least two of the following symptoms: fever, chills, shivers, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, congestion, or runny nose.
- B. At least one of the following symptoms: cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell.

Students and staff that test positive with Covid-19 and exhibit symptoms may return to school/work and resume normal activities, when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

- Symptoms are improving overall, **and**
- Have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

Upon return to work/school, for five days, students and staff should take additional precautions including increased hygiene and wearing a mask. If a fever develops, or the individual starts to feel worse after return and resuming normal activities, they will be advised to stay home and away from others again until, for at least 24 hours, both of above are true: symptoms are improving overall, and have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication) with the added precautions for the next 5 days. ****The school nurse will be in contact with the individual and parents to coordinate.***

Contract Tracing: Shepard Schools' school nurses will collaborate with the local health department and nurses and will follow contact tracing policies and procedures. School nurses will also educate the broader school community on the importance of contact tracing.

Reasonable Accommodations: Shepard Schools will 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.

Parents, district case managers, and staff will be alerted to any updates in the schools' plan or procedures via email, letters, and/or Realtime Alert System.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING: VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION

Some students may not be able to attend classes in person due to illness or quarantine. Instruction continues to focus on meeting the educational and social-emotional goals and objectives as outlined in each student's IEP.

Teachers and counselors work collaboratively with parents via phone and email to address and revise the implementation of accommodations in the home setting. Shepard Case Manager Liaisons provide updated instructional plans to sending district case managers on an ongoing basis. The liaisons notify sending district case managers if there are any required changes to the IEP. The sending district is responsible for conducting in-person or virtual IEP meetings, evaluation, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or reevaluate students with disabilities. Shepard staff members participate in all in-person and virtual IEP meetings held by the sending district to which they are invited.

In the event of a school-wide closure, students will have instruction and scheduled assignments provided utilizing Microsoft Teams for instruction, communication, and assignment submission. All related services and independent activities will be made up upon the student's return (unless New Jersey guidelines allow for virtual delivery of related services). Students will have all course subjects and assignments commensurate with an in-person school day. Assignments and instruction will meet/exceed the four-hour requirement. Grading and monitoring of student progress will remain aligned with Shepard grading procedures.

Shepard teachers call each student's parent/guardian weekly with academic and behavioral updates. This will continue during remote instruction. Excessive absences or difficulty with virtual learning and what is being addressed to remediate any challenges would be discussed.

Technology surveys are sent to all families. Shepard utilizes Microsoft Teams for virtual instruction. Students and/or staff without access to a laptop are provided one by Shepard Schools. Individual technical support is provided by Shepard. Any emerging technology issues are addressed by teachers and counselors (i.e., one-to-one assistance on how to successfully access technology, providing alternate supports such as email assignments, and paper copies when possible). A technology coordinator is also available for live support. For families without internet access, paper copies for all subjects will be mailed directly to the child's home.

Attendance is determined and recorded by logging into Microsoft Teams classroom, participation in live instruction, and submission of written assignments. Any lapses or changes in attendance or participation are immediately addressed with both student and parent via teacher and counselor communication. Adjustments are made if necessary to foster or increase student participation.

* Since the virtual learning model is aligned with the in-person learning model, and both models are utilizing the Microsoft Teams platform, Shepard Schools will be able to make a quick and efficient shift to the all virtual model in the event of a district-wide closure.

SHEPARD SCHOOLS 2026-2027 ATTESTATION INFORMATION

Equitable Access and Opportunity to Instruction:

1. In a school-wide closure, students will have instruction and scheduled assignments provided utilizing Microsoft Teams for instruction, communication, and assignment submission. A student learning virtually due to illness or quarantine will have all course subjects and assignments commensurate with an in-person school day. Assignments and instruction will meet/exceed the four-hour requirement.
2. Differentiation for age and ability appropriate educational approaches and instructional delivery are implemented.
3. Since the virtual learning model is aligned with the in-person learning model, and both models are utilizing the Microsoft Teams platform, Shepard Schools will be able to make a quick and efficient shift to the all virtual model.
4. In a virtual format, all measures and assessments of student growth will continue. This includes quarterly progress reports, quarterly updates of individual goals and objectives, yearly IEP and annual review meetings, and adherence to grade policy.
5. Technology surveys are sent to all families. Shepard utilizes Microsoft Teams for virtual instruction. Students and/or staff without access to a laptop are provided one by Shepard Schools. Individual technical support is provided by Shepard. Any emerging technology issues are addressed by teachers and counselors (i.e., one-to-one assistance on how to successfully access technology, providing alternate supports such as email assignments, and paper copies when possible). A technology coordinator is also available for live support. For families without internet access, paper copies for all subjects will be mailed directly to the child's home.

Addressing Special Education:

1. As a state-approved private school for students with disabilities, each student has an IEP that is implemented in virtual formats. All required accommodations, strategies, and supports will be implemented. Related services will be provided upon return or virtually if permitted by the New Jersey Department of Education. We will stay apprised of broadcasts and updates in the delivery of related services.
2. Remote/virtual instruction is provided to all students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) as described in the instructional plan above. Instruction continues to focus on meeting the educational and social-emotional goals and objectives as outlined in each student's IEP. Teachers document IEP implementation through quarterly progress reports. Related service providers document services provided through quarterly progress reports and monthly service logs. All services are provided in accordance with the frequency and modality as mandated by the student's IEP.
3. Teachers and counselors work collaboratively with parents via phone and email to address and revise the implementation of accommodations in the home setting. Shepard Case Manager Liaisons provide updated instructional plans to sending district case managers on an ongoing basis. The liaisons notify sending district case managers if there are any required changes to the IEP.
4. The sending district is responsible for conducting in-person or virtual IEP meetings, evaluation, and other meetings to identify, evaluate, and/or reevaluate students with disabilities. Shepard staff members participate in all in-person and virtual IEP meetings held by the sending district to which they are invited.

Addressing English Language Learners (ELL) Plan Needs:

1. Shepard Schools does not provide ESL or bilingual education services.
2. All English Language Learning materials, assistive translation technology, and bilingual 1-1 paraprofessionals are provided in virtual instruction as in in-person learning when included as part of a student's IEP.
3. Any English Language Learner at Shepard would have an individualized learning plan specific to that student. That learning plan would be implemented as designed in both virtual and in-person contexts.
4. There is annual training for all staff on cultural diversity, sensitivity, and awareness. Trauma-informed training is provided to all certified staff.

Attendance Plan:

1. Attendance is determined and recorded by logging into Microsoft Teams classroom, participation in live instruction, and submission of written assignments.
2. Any lapses or changes in attendance or participation are immediately addressed with both student and parent via teacher and counselor communication. Adjustments are made if necessary to foster or increase student participation.

*Shepard teachers call each student's parent/guardian weekly with academic and behavioral updates. This would continue during remote instruction. Excessive absences or difficulty with virtual learning and what is being addressed to remediate any challenges would be discussed.

Safe Delivery of Meal Plans: School lunch is served to all eligible students here at Shepard. Meals are provided by the Morristown School District. Shepard does not have a breakfast program. During any closures or learning virtually due to illness, students can pick up school lunches from their sending school district.

Facilities Plan: In addition to standard sanitation practices, in the event of an extended period of closure, cleaning crews and custodial staff will still oversee sanitation and maintenance on a rotating schedule. Both of Shepard's physical buildings are rented from religious organizations. Each organization has a building manager that is responsible for building compliance, repairs, and operations. Shepard administration communicates actively and regularly with these building managers.

Other Considerations:

- a. Accelerated learning opportunities (i.e. honors courses) will continue in a virtual format.
- b. All students have an individual counselor that can provide support during virtual learning. Counselors will also consult with teachers and parents and implement strategies and make recommendations when warranted.
- c. Title I extended learning programs: Not applicable
- d. Community opportunities and involvement will occur in a virtual format or as permitted by community programs.
- e. Credit recovery as deemed required by sending school districts will continue to be implemented during individual student virtual learning or an extended school closure both during the school year and during the extended school year program.
- f. Any and all extended learning programs will be provided virtually and any in-person opportunities as is permitted.
- g. Transportation is provided by the sending school district.

- h. Shepard extra-curricular activities held during the school day will continue in a virtual format. After-school activities are provided by the sending school districts.
 - i. Childcare: Not applicable
 - j. Community programming will occur in a virtual format or as permitted by community sites.
- *Shepard will notify sending districts of all student needs.**

Sharing Plans: The plan has been shared with all sending districts.

Essential Employees: Our school business office keeps updated and accurate records of essential employees. In the event of a closure, the school business office, in conjunction with administration will summarily provide this list to the county office.

Shepard's Learning Plan is posted on the website.