



Increased Risks of the **A** Model



What are some of the increased risks associated with combining the cohorts?

Your child will be at greater risk for being exposed to and contracting COVID-19 returning in Phase II. This is due to less than 6 feet social distancing and a greater number of students in the classrooms

NJDOE and CDC guidelines still recommend at least 6 feet of physical distance to the greatest possible extent. While the Haddonfield BOE agrees with this recommendation, **we will not be able to meet 6 feet of physical distancing in our classrooms** based upon the Phase II preliminary survey data. Physical distancing between seating in the classrooms will be three to four feet, on average. Whenever physical distancing is less than 6 feet, there is an increased risk for exposure to and contracting COVID-19.

While we do monitor student, class, grade-level, and school trends of student symptoms reported, contact tracing only occurs for confirmed cases of COVID.

If a symptomatic student does not get tested for COVID and is only excluded due to symptoms, contact tracing will not occur and you will not be notified. You will only be notified if a close contact of your child tests positive for COVID. This is in accordance with NJDOH guidelines. Also, your child may be at risk based on not being told of a possible exposure to a close contact who has symptoms but has not been tested. This in turn leads to the possibility of unknowingly exposing others in your household and (y)our community.

When we are made aware of a COVID+ individual in our schools, our contact tracing includes an analysis of the class seating charts, as well as interviews with teachers. The students sitting adjacent to an infected individual, even if at 6 feet, are provided notices and required to be excluded from school. Factors that weigh into this include the degree of fresh air circulation in the classroom, indoor vs. outdoor, the potential that students moved their chairs/desks during the infectious period, the type of mask worn (and we can't guarantee that a student didn't have his/her mask down/below nose for a period of time), and that most class periods are well above 10-15 minutes.

In most instances during our current hybrid/cohort model, there are typically 2-3 students seated either at or slightly within 6 feet who are deemed close contacts and are required to be excluded from school for 14 days. With the Phase II combined cohort model, instead of 2-3 students deemed close contacts, that number will likely increase to 4-6 students at the elementary level and 5-7 students at the middle and high school levels.

In HSD's planning and preparation for Phase II implementation, several classrooms were set up based upon the preliminary Phase II survey data to help get a better understanding of what level of physical distancing was possible. This was done by identifying classes where a large, medium, and a small number of students were anticipated to return. Using head-to-head measurements, we were on average, able to achieve **between 3 and 5 feet of physical distancing**. In some K-2 classrooms, tables will be employed with students seated facing each other with 3 to 5 feet of physical distance, using head-to-head measurements, and with the use of a desk shield.

We also continue to urge our school community to get COVID testing when symptoms are present and/or if you or your child has a known exposure to a COVID+ individual and/or an individual displaying COVID-like symptoms. We cannot require COVID testing.