

HOWARD SCHOOL  
STRONG START PLAN 2020-21

The Strong Start Plan being implemented in August 2020 for Howard School includes information about teaching and learning, safety, cleaning/disinfecting, and food service. Due to the school servicing youth in a PRTF (Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility), the requirements of clinical care may require instructional settings to be altered to adequately meet the needs of youth based on a medical treatment plan. However, Howard School shall fully comply with the requirements of ACT No. 9 of the 2020 First Extraordinary Session of the Louisiana Legislature as well as policy and guidelines approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) as to a reopening of school process in view of the global pandemic.

Let it also be known that if the local governing authority of Howard School which is the Louisiana United Methodist Children and Family Services (LUMCFS), the Lincoln Parish School Board, or other municipality establishes a more restrictive phase of reopening, Howard School will conform to the more restrictive requirements in accordance with BESE policy.

The plan will be submitted to the Louisiana Department of Education on or before July 28, 2020, via the Strong Start Implementation Survey. Plans will be posted to the LDOE website no later than August 11, 2020.

**LEARNING OPTIONS**

**PHASE ONE**

**PHASE TWO**

**PHASE THREE**

## LEARNING OPTIONS

Youth enrolled at Howard School are residential and live on campus in houses or buildings with the exception of three youth from the local community. Youth residing on campus will receive instruction from a hybrid model of face-to-face and/or virtual with differences based on the phase of reopening as determined by the Governor. If the three local youth return for services, their parents may opt for the Howard School Virtual Program. If the parents select this option, they must notify Howard School administration by Friday, July 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Howard School Virtual Program

The virtual learning option is designed for students who do not feel safe returning to the classroom or simply refuse to comply with safety guidelines during the time of pandemic. Youth and/or guardians and/or administrative staff on behalf of students selecting this option will attend school from home or from a house or building on campus. Students in the residential program demonstrating significant behavioral issues relative to safety protocol such as refusing to wear face masks, refusing to distance themselves as directed, refusing to wash hands and/or any other outlined safety protocols approved for the school and/or who do not feel safe in the school or classroom environment as a result of the pandemic will be permitted to choose this learning option.

The following details needs to be considering in choosing or selecting youth to participate in this program:

- The Howard School Virtual Program will require internet access.
- Each student participating in this program will be issue a virtual learning device. This device will be provided at no cost, and students will be responsible for any damages.
- Not all courses will be available through this program, such as physical education, carpentry, welding, and barbering.
- If a student would like to return to in-class learning, the student will have the option to make this change between the first and second nine weeks. However, students having had behavioral issues relative to safety protocol will be considered for return following a review and meeting of the youth's therapist, school clinical liaison officer, school behavior interventionist/coordinator, and/or the principal.

Virtual learning is not best for every student. Student placement determinations will take into consideration a student's unique academic, social, emotional, familial, and medical needs of a student, as identified by the student's parent or custodian or therapist or school administrator.

## **In-Class Learning**

This option allows our students to return to the classroom where they will have interaction with other students as well as face-to-face learning with their teachers. The cleanliness of Howard School and John Allen Vocational Center has been and will continue to be a priority for our teachers, staff, school administrators, and custodial staff. Howard School and LUMCFS Maintenance Department inclusive of the custodial staff will make every effort to ensure our facilities are sanitized and as safe as possible in accordance with BESE, LDOE, LDH, and CDC guidance. Specific details are provided in the phase guidelines included in this PLAN.

## **PHASE ONE**

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**All Grades**      Maximum Group Size: 10 including adults

- Essential personnel report to support teaching and learning.
- Students receiving special education services and Section 504 accommodations will have options for in-person learning some days each week. Youth may only report in static groups based on residence of assignment on a specific morning or afternoon or specified day or days of the week as determined by the Howard School special education and 504 coordinator and/or principal.
- Students with no internet access may have options for in-person learning.
- All other students participate in virtual learning.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation is not applicable considering that Howard School serves residential youth in care. There are only three other local non-residential youth attending the school currently, and no other non-residential youth shall be enrolled until after the pandemic ends. All three youth are transported by the parents to school each day while the residential youth walk to campus.

### **MEALS**

The School Food Service Department of LUMCFS provides meals for the residential youth as well as the non-residential youth each day. Meals for residential youth will be served in the houses or buildings where the youth reside rather than amassing the youth in the cafeterias so as to prevent exposure to other static groups. Non-residential youth will eat at the school if

they are attending during this phase. The three youth, two high school and one middle school students, will eat on separate lunch shifts and eat in a commons area of Howard School observing all safety guidelines.

## **SAFETY**

- Howard School and the John Allen Vocational Center will be closed to non-essential visitors and non-essential personnel in accordance with BESE and/or LUMCFS policy. LUMCFS policy for visitor and personnel campus access shall supersede BESE policy ensuring compliance but can be more restrictive based on facility policy and clinical care guidelines.
- Students and staff are required to wash hands upon arrival, every two hours, before and after eating, and upon exiting the building.
- Howard School will utilize the campus infirmary for isolating sick students. This infirmary building will be under the direction of the Nursing Department of LUMCFS. This will be for all resident youth. Non-resident youth will follow the protocol used for isolating sick students in one of two rooms near the administrative offices of Howard School. All isolation areas will be cleaned thoroughly after the student has gone home or has been cleared from the infirmary placement.
- In accordance with BESE guidelines, all adults and youth (middle through high at Howard School) will be required to wear a mask. We are aware that this may be difficult for some students, and we will make every effort to ensure our students are comfortable while following this policy. In addition to face masks, teachers and staff of Howard School will be provided a face shield to protect their eyes. Face shields will not be required; however, they will be encouraged. Face masks will not be optional.
- Upon entering the school, an initial temperature check will be taken. Upon entering the classroom, each student's symptoms will be assessed. The student's symptoms will continue to be assessed throughout the day. The faculty and staff shall determine the frequency of the student symptoms check; it may be revised as needed.

## **CLEANING**

- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day, including restrooms, using EPA-approved substances and materials.
- School employees will be provided adequate access to hygienic supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectant wipes or spray, paper towels, and tissues.
- If a room is used by more than one group in a single day, high-touch surfaces in that room will be cleaned before and after use by each group. High-touch surfaces shall

include desk tops, door knobs, tables, shared pencils, shared pens, or other shared instruments of learning; however, other surfaces or items may be determined using good common sense.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Howard School and John Allen Vocational Center operate under the authority of Louisiana United Methodist Children and Families Services (LUMCFS), which serves youth from across the State of Louisiana. Louisiana Methodist Children's Home (LMCH), a facility of LUMCFS, is an LDH/Health Standards-licensed Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF). Children who attend Howard School and the John Allen Vocational Center are residents of LMCH. Communications regarding resident students are properly handled by the Clinical Services staff of LMCH.
- Information shared with parents or guardians is HIPPA-protected and communicated directly by the student/resident's assigned Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP) or designee. In matters relating to the *Strong Start Plan for Howard School* inclusive of student learning options in the three phases, meals, safety, cleaning, COVID-19 illness issues as well as student quarantines and/or infirmary placements, and any other related *Strong Start Plan* components shall be communicated to parents or guardians directly by their child's assigned Licensed Mental Health Professional (LMHP) or designee.
- Communications may occur either by telephone or by the HIPPA-secure LifeSize communications platform or any other technological application approved and utilized by LUMCFS.
- Howard School and John Allen Vocational Center teachers and staff communicate through a clinical coordinator or directly with each resident student's assigned Licensed Mental Health Professional regarding matters relating to student learning and academic performance as well as any and all other matters that should be communicated with parents or guardians of students in care and treatment at Louisiana Methodist Children's Home.
- The method or process of communications with parents or guardians shall not be changed due to this pandemic. All communications shall go through each youth's assigned Licensed Mental Health Professional.

## **PHASE TWO**

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

**All Grades**      Maximum Group Size: 25 including adults

- All personnel report daily to school and respective work areas.

### **Grades 5-12/Middle through High School**

- Students report to school every other day. At Howard School, that will be boys on one day and girls the next day. On the days they do not report to school, students will be assigned a device and will complete virtual lessons from their house, building, or home. This method of alternating days will allow for 50% capacity of the school and classrooms which is in line with transportation and face-to-face attendance requirements in school districts.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

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### **MEALS**

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### **SAFETY**

- Howard School and the John Allen Vocational Center will be closed to non-essential visitors and non-essential personnel in accordance with BESE and/or LUMCFS policy. LUMCFS policy for visitor and personnel campus access shall supersede BESE policy ensuring compliance but can be more restrictive based on facility policy and clinical care guidelines.

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- Upon entering the school, an initial temperature check will be taken. Upon entering the classroom, each student's symptoms will be assessed. The student's symptoms will continue to be assessed throughout the day. The faculty and staff shall determine the frequency of the student symptoms check; it may be revised as needed.

## **CLEANING**

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- School employees will be provided adequate access to hygienic supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectant wipes or spray, paper towels, and tissues.
- If a room is used by more than one group in a single day, high-touch surfaces in that room will be cleaned before and after use by each group. High-touch surfaces shall include desk tops, door knobs, tables, shared pencil, shared pens, or other shared instruments of learning; however, other surfaces or items may be determined using good common sense.

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John Allen Vocational Center are residents of LMCH. Communications regarding resident students are properly handled by the Clinical Services staff of LMCH.

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## PHASE THREE

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

**All Grades**     Maximum Group Size: 50 including adults

- All personnel report daily to assigned classroom or work location.
- Students report to school Monday through Friday.
- Students in virtual program may choose to remain in program.

### TRANSPORTATION

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no other non-residential youth shall be enrolled until after the pandemic ends. All three youth are transported by the parents to school each day while the residential youth walk to campus.

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**Revised for Communications – 8/6/2020**