



DeSoto County Schools Return-To-Learn Plan 2020-2021

BACK
TO
SCHOOL



- DeSoto County Schools has developed a comprehensive Return-To-Learn Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. This plan contains guidelines for parents and school officials, and it is built within the framework of considerations issued by the Centers for Disease Control, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the Mississippi Department of Education. In preparing this document, the district leadership team and Return-To-Learn Task Force received input from parents, teachers, administrators, staff members, and the DeSoto County Schools Medical Task Force.
- On June 8th, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) issued Considerations for Reopening Mississippi Schools. In the MDE document, three options were outlined: the traditional school model, a hybrid school model, and a distance learning model. While DeSoto County Schools intends to begin the school year with the traditional school model, parents must be prepared for all three models to be utilized during the school year. As outlined in the DeSoto County Schools Return-To-Learn plan, frequent changes could be made throughout the school year based on COVID-19 spread in our schools and community, and based on directions from the Governor's Office, the Mississippi State Department of Health, and the Mississippi Department of Education.

DISCLAIMERS

- School districts face the challenge of implementing plans that will not be ideal for everyone. Every family situation is unique, and district officials are committed to providing the best educational experience possible for students under the current circumstances.
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- Social distancing will be a challenge in many situations with the traditional school model. School districts have a limited number of buses, limited square footage in classrooms, and many other efficiency-related obstacles. Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible, and strategies will be implemented by school officials based on the feasibility of the unique space at each school and in each classroom.
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- Because district officials respect each family's needs, full-time distance learning will be an option for students during the 2020-2021 school year. Distance learning will allow students to remain enrolled in DeSoto County Schools while receiving teacher-facilitated online instruction. Parents can register by completing the distance learning application on the DeSoto County Schools website, and questions about the application process can be answered by sending an email to distancelearning@dcsms.org. While face-to-face interaction is a more effective means of instruction, the distance learning option is available for parents that do not prefer the traditional model for their individual family situation.
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- Everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures. Parents must have plans that can be activated immediately if there is a school closure or if their children are not able to attend school because of a quarantine situation. Parents are urged to be prepared to change plans within 24 hours if needed, and it is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file with their child's school.

Procedures

- ❑ School officials will establish and maintain communication with the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the local healthcare community.
- ❑ School officials will post signage throughout the school regarding measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. These measures include but are not limited to being aware of COVID-19 symptoms, good hygiene practices, and district guidance regarding staying at home when sick.
- ❑ School officials will reinforce procedures regarding daily health questions for students and follow guidelines for students and staff who are experiencing symptoms.
- ❑ School officials will follow contact tracing instructions from local and state health officials.
- ❑ The district maintenance team will isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces.
- ❑ If there is a significant COVID-19 spread, secondary schools could be moved to a hybrid schedule or a distance learning schedule for a specified length of time.
- ❑ Elementary schools will remain on a traditional schedule if at all possible due to the nature of the static learning environment in elementary schools.
- ❑ If there is a significant COVID-19 spread, any group of students could be moved to temporary distance learning for a period of time. This hiatus could apply to individual classes, individual schools, multiple schools, or the entire school district.



DeSoto County Schools Return-To-Learn Guidelines

Academic Guidelines



- The absence requirement in the DeSoto County Schools exemption policy has been removed for the 2020-2021 school year. Students are encouraged to stay at home if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- As a proactive measure, graduation requirements were revised for the Class of 2021. These adjustments were made to benefit the seniors in case there are closures throughout the school year. Graduation requirements will be consistent with the Mississippi Department of Education graduation requirements.
- As a proactive measure, the grading scale for the 2020-2021 school year has been adjusted. Instead of a grade of 65 being the minimum passing grade, a grade of 60 will be the minimum passing grade. This adjustment was made to benefit the students in case of closures throughout the school year.
- The Mississippi Department of Education has given school districts the flexibility to adjust the amount of time that students spend in the classroom each day. DeSoto County Schools will reduce the amount of instructional time in order to allow more time for bus arrivals and cleaning, extended class changes if needed, and extended lunch periods to promote social distancing.
- Distance learning opportunities are available for students on a full-time basis.
- If distance learning or a hybrid model must be implemented throughout the school year, students will be held accountable for assignments given during that time.

Child Nutrition Guidelines






- Student breakfasts will be “Grab and Go” meals that students will take to the classroom.
- Schools may alter their lunch schedule so that fewer students are in the cafeteria at one time, and schools may also serve lunch in the classroom in certain situations.
- Social distancing will be promoted in the serving lines and at cafeteria tables.
- Cafeterias and kitchens will be cleaned frequently throughout the school day.
- Students will be able to wash hands before and after lunch.
- If needed, entrance and exit pathways will be marked to designate student flow.
- Cafeteria staff will wash hands immediately after unpacking and storing deliveries.
- All surfaces will be sanitized daily, and all tools and equipment used in the kitchen will be sanitized between uses.
- Guests for lunch must be requested and approved in advance through the principal. These visits will be limited to birthdays and special occasions, and guests will not be seated near students or staff. Depending on current COVID-19 conditions, guests may be prohibited. Guests will be asked to complete a self-screening form.

Transportation Guidelines



- Because social distancing on buses will be a challenge, parents are encouraged to provide transportation to school if possible.
- It is strongly recommended that parents provide masks for their children for bus transportation.
- Each bus will be sanitized between routes, and buses will be deep cleaned as frequently as possible.
- A seating chart will be developed to maintain as much distance as possible.
- Siblings may be asked to sit together in the same seat to allow more social distancing opportunities for students.

DeSoto County Schools Return-To-Learn Guidelines

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| <p>Facility Guidelines</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facilities will be deep cleaned before the return of students and staff, and buildings will receive a deep cleaning on a regular schedule. • Every campus will have one maintenance employee that is devoted to cleaning frequently touched areas throughout the entire school day. • Signage will be located throughout the building reminding students about social distancing and what to do if they are showing symptoms. • Age-appropriate signage will be posted throughout the building with tips for proper hygiene and preventive measures. |
| <p>Operational Guidelines</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be minimal movement inside the classroom. Once students are seated, they will be expected to remain seated unless given instructions by the teacher to move to another location. • Morning arrival procedures and class changes may be altered on each campus to promote social distancing. • School assemblies will take place outdoors with social distancing procedures as feasible. • Students will hear frequent intercom announcements about fever, sickness, and good hygiene. • The use of shared objects at recess will be limited. • The use of shared materials in class will be limited. Each student will have separate materials, pencils, crayons, etc. • Extra classroom furniture can be eliminated to accommodate more classroom space. • In elementary grades, teachers may rotate and students may stay in the same classroom all day when feasible. • Group work will be limited in order to promote social distancing. • Students should all face in the same direction in class when feasible. This is dependent upon classroom furniture, enrollment, and room size. • Teachers will keep the same seating arrangements on a weekly basis. |
| <p>Health and Hygiene</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every elementary school, middle school, and high school will have a full-time, on-site nurse. • Because social distancing will often be a challenge, it is strongly recommended that parents provide masks for their children if age-appropriate. While masks are not required, masks could reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and masks significantly reduce the possibility of a student being quarantined by the Mississippi State Department of Health for 14 days because of close contact at school with a confirmed COVID-19 case. • Students will be taught and reminded about proper handwashing and cough covering. • Field trips will not be allowed until further notice. This situation will be monitored throughout the school year. • Guest speakers will not be allowed until further notice. This situation will be monitored throughout the school year. • Only essential vendors will be allowed on campus. Essential vendors will be asked to complete a self-screening form. • Shared materials (such as computers) will be cleaned after each use. • Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home. • Home is the first screening point on the continuum. It is requested that parents check for symptoms and check their child's temperature each morning before leaving for school. Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness to the school nurse. • Students will be asked at the beginning of each day to confirm that they are not experiencing the following symptoms: high temperature, cough, chills, shortness of breath, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell. School nurses may conduct temperature checks and well-being checks as deemed necessary throughout the school day. • An isolation area will be designated for students exhibiting symptoms while they wait on their parents. • Mental health support will be available for students on each campus. |

DeSoto County Schools Return-To-Learn Guidelines

COVID-19 Confirmed Case Guidelines



- When a student has a confirmed case of COVID-19, he/she will be quarantined by the Mississippi State Department of Health. The student will be able to make-up any missed assignments during his/her time away from school.
- Confirmed cases will be reported by the school district to the Mississippi State Department of Health. After contact tracing, the Mississippi State Department of Health will determine if any students and/or staff will be subject to a 14-day quarantine period.
- When a student or staff member has a confirmed case of COVID-19, email notifications will be sent to the parents of the students in his/her classes. In the days following the notification, the school nurse will take the temperature of the students in those classes as a proactive measure. In addition, school officials will follow all directions given by the Mississippi State Department of Health regarding contact tracing and quarantining of students that are deemed as "close contacts" by the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- Deep cleaning procedures will be implemented.

Parent Support



- Please check for symptoms at home each morning before school. These symptoms include fever of over 100 degrees, new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, body aches, muscle pains, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, unusual fatigue or irritability, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unusual rash, or unusual pink/red eyes not explained by allergies or injury.
- Please keep children at home when symptoms are noticed during the morning health check.
- Please provide transportation to and from school when feasible.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your household, please report that information to school officials immediately.
- Please follow all guidance from school officials and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

VIRTUAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

DeSoto County Schools Full-Time Distance Learning Program: Description and Considerations

In order to give flexibility to families during the 2020-2021 school year, school officials are offering students the option of participating in the DeSoto County Schools Virtual Instructional Program.

Students in the Virtual Instructional Program will still be enrolled at their regular school, but they will participate in virtual learning and complete their assignments at home. Teachers will assist students in working through weekly assignments with a mix of interactive and independent activities. The content and the pace will match traditional school curriculum expectations.

Please note the following when determining if applying for distance learning is the best option for your child:

- Online/digital learning will be the primary method of working towards competency in a grade level and/or content area. Because distance learning will not be delivered through paper packets, students must have access to adequate Internet services. Students will use the district-approved online learning management system, Schoology.
- Distance learning students will follow the academic calendar approved by the school board. Classes will start on the first student day in August 2020 and end on the last student day in the spring of 2021.
- Best practices for distance learning will be employed to include rigorous instruction, high expectations of student performance, and meeting all grade-level standards.
- Distance learning students must be committed to online learning. While distance learning is an option for students in unique situations, distance learning does not serve as an equitable alternative to the traditional classroom setting.
- Attendance will be taken in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education's attendance guidelines regarding distance learning.
- Some elective courses and opportunities may not be offered to full-time distance learning students. For example, extracurricular activities such as athletics and fine arts will not be available because full-time distance learning students will be working off-campus.
- All DeSoto County grading policies and procedures will apply during distance learning.
- A unique partnership must be established between all educators, students, parents and caregivers. It is imperative that all parties communicate to pay close attention to the development of each child and ensure that appropriate grade level growth takes place at a distance.
- Grab-and-Go meals will be available for distance learning students. The Child Nutrition Department will follow a schedule similar to the Spring 2020 Grab-and-Go meal distribution plan.
- Approved applications will be in effect on a semester-by-semester basis. There will be an opportunity to transfer from full-time virtual learning to the school/traditional classroom setting at the end of each nine weeks.
- Expressing intent to participate constitutes a commitment to virtual learning and acknowledgement to all the statements in this document, the DeSoto County Schools Distance Learning Description and Considerations.
- Universal screener and state assessments are required by the Mississippi Department of Education and/or state law. Benchmark assessments, Advanced Placement assessments, and other assessments due to the student's classes or grade may also be necessary. At this point in time, students in a distance learning environment may be required to participate in any or all of these assessments. These assessments will be completed at home if possible. Details regarding these assessments will be discussed with guardians when they become available. Safety for the students will be the top priority.

In order to be enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools Virtual Instructional Program to begin the 2020-2021 school year, the application form must be completed by **Wednesday, July 22nd**. If you are interested in the DeSoto County Schools Virtual Instructional Program, you can find the application form on the DeSoto County Schools website or at the following link.

[DCS Virtual Instructional Program Application](#)

For any questions please contact us at distancelearning@dcsms.org.

Dear Parents:

Please be mindful that as long as there are cases of COVID-19 in the community, there are no strategies that can completely eliminate transmission risks within a school population. The goal is to keep transmission risks as low as possible.

For the safety of your children, other students, staff, and extended family members, we are asking parents to **please conduct a health check every morning on your children at home prior to sending them to school.** If your child exhibits one or more of the following symptoms, please keep him/her at home and contact your healthcare provider: fever over 100 degrees, new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, body aches, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, unusual fatigue or irritability, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unusual rash, or unusual pink/red eyes not explained by allergies or injury. Seek immediate medical care if someone has any of the following emergency warning signs: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face.

Symptoms can range from mild to severe illness and appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. If **ANY** of the above symptoms are detected at school, your child will be isolated from other students, he/she will be provided a face mask, and we will contact you to pick up your child as soon as possible. These guidelines will be strictly enforced, so please provide several current, up-to-date phone numbers to your child's school.

Return-To-School guidelines after any of the above symptoms:

If your child has or you think he/she has COVID-19, it is important for them to stay away from other people. If they have an emergency warning sign, get emergency medical care immediately.

Your child may return to school after one of these criteria are met:

- 3 days with no fever without the use of fever reducing medications **AND** symptoms have improved **AND** 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
OR
- You provide a medical statement from your healthcare provider stating that your child does not have COVID-19, is not contagious, and may return to school. This statement must have a return-to-school date included in order for your child to be able to return to school.

We must all work together to keep our community, our staff, and our community safe. I appreciate your cooperation.

Thank you.

Patsy Davis R.N.
Director of Health Services
DeSoto County Schools

DeSoto County Schools
2020-2021 School Calendar

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| August 3, 2020 | Teachers' First Day |
| August 6, 2020 | Students' First Day |
| September 7, 2020 | Labor Day Holiday |
| October 12, 2020 | Columbus Day Holiday |
| November 3, 2020 | Professional Development Day |
| November 23-27, 2020 | Thanksgiving Holidays |
| December 18, 2020 | End First Semester |
| December 21, 2020- January 1, 2021 | Christmas Holidays |
| January 4, 2021 | Students return |
| January 18, 2021 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday |
| February 12, 2021 | Professional Development Day (Tentative) |
| February 15, 2021 | President's Day Holiday (Tentative) |
| March 15-19, 2021 | Spring Break |
| April 2, 2021 | Good Friday Holiday |
| April 5, 2021 | Easter Break (Tentative) |
| May 24, 2021 | Students' Last Day (Tentative) |
| May 26, 2021 | Teachers' Last Day (Tentative) |

Tentative Make-up Days: February 12, February 15, April 5, May 25, and May 26

EARLY SCHOOLS DOORS OPENING AS USUAL / **LATE SCHOOLS** DOORS OPENING 10 MINUTES LATER

ALL SCHOOLS INSTRUCTIONAL TIME STARTING 10 MINUTES LATER

EARLY SCHOOLS ENDING 10 MINUTES EARLIER / **LATE SCHOOLS** ENDING AS USUAL

| SCHOOL | DOORS OPEN | START | RELEASE |
|-----------------------|------------|---------|---------|
| Center Hill Elem. | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Overpark Elem. | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Center Hill Middle | 7:50 AM | 8:10 AM | 3:40 PM |
| Center Hill High | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:45 PM |
| | | | |
| DC Primary | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:20 PM |
| DC Elementary | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Pleasant Hill Elem. | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| DC Middle | 7:50 AM | 8:10 AM | 3:40 PM |
| DC High | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Hernando Elem. | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:25 PM |
| Hernando Hills Elem | 7:10 AM | 7:55 AM | 2:30 PM |
| Oak Grove Central | 7:00 AM | 7:45 AM | 2:20 PM |
| Hernando Middle | 6:50 AM | 7:25 AM | 2:40 PM |
| Hernando High | 7:00 AM | 7:45 AM | 2:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Horn Lake Elem. | 7:10 AM | 7:55 AM | 2:30 PM |
| Shadow Oaks Elem. | 7:10 AM | 7:55 AM | 2:30 PM |
| Horn Lake Inter. | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:20 PM |
| Horn Lake Middle | 6:55 AM | 7:20 AM | 2:40 PM |
| Horn Lake High | 7:00 AM | 7:45 AM | 2:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Lake Cormorant Elem | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Walls Elementary | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Lake Cormorant Middle | 7:50 AM | 8:10 AM | 3:40 PM |
| Lake Cormorant High | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Lewisburg Primary | 7:10 AM | 7:55 AM | 2:30 PM |
| Lewisburg Elementary | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:25 PM |
| Lewisburg Middle | 6:55 AM | 7:20 AM | 2:40 PM |
| Lewisburg High | 7:00 AM | 7:45 AM | 2:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Olive Branch Elem | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:25 PM |
| Chickasaw Elementary | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:25 PM |
| Olive Branch Inter. | 7:05 AM | 7:50 AM | 2:20 PM |
| Olive Branch Middle | 6:55 AM | 7:20 AM | 2:40 PM |
| Olive Branch High | 7:00 AM | 7:45 AM | 2:45 PM |
| | | | |
| Southaven Elementary | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Hope Sullivan Elem. | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Greenbrook Elem. | 8:05 AM | 8:40 AM | 3:25 PM |
| Southaven Inter. | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:20 PM |
| Southaven Middle | 7:50 AM | 8:10 AM | 3:40 PM |
| Southaven High | 8:00 AM | 8:35 AM | 3:45 PM |