



COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Dear Wildcat Family:

I hope you have had a great summer thus far. The Columbia School District administration and staff have been busy planning and preparing to reopen schools. CSD is ready to begin the 2020-2021 school year! To open safely and successfully, CSD has developed The Columbia School District Guidelines to Reopening for the 2020-21 School Year. This plan outlines operational changes for the fall semester. Throughout the survey responses, many indicated you were ready for your student to come back to school traditionally with safety procedures in place. Some noted that you were still uncomfortable at this point to do so. Please know we dedicated our summer planning to diminish the spread of COVID-19 and to create safeguards to protect our students, staff, and community. As CSD makes final preparation to start school, our plan will likely be updated as events unfold within our community and across our state. In this letter, you will find highlights of our procedure and information relevant to reopening school. Below you will find topics most pertinent to your student. To construct the safest environment for our students and staff this fall, we have made the following modifications:

TRANSPORTATION

It will not be possible for social distancing on our school buses. We will sanitize the buses between routes and lower windows to increase airflow. Hand sanitizer will be available as students load the bus. All drivers and students will be required to wear masks/facial coverings while being transported on Columbia School District buses. Students who do not wear masks/facial coverings will not be allowed to ride the bus. After two documented requests, students will be suspended from the bus for the remainder of the semester.

ENTERING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Parents/guardians are asked to screen their students for COVID-19 symptoms each day before sending their students to school. We must have parents' cooperation in not sending children to school who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, especially if they are running a fever. Symptoms now include, but are not limited to: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. If your student is experiencing 100.4 or higher temperatures, it is critically important that they stay at home and seek medical advice from their doctor.

Sanitation Stations will be placed near entrances to buildings. Individuals will be encouraged to utilize this service at every opportunity.

SERVING MEALS

1. Breakfast and lunch will be free for all students this year. Students will be identified upon delivery of food to the classroom, and their name will be marked as receiving the meal delivered.
2. All Students will eat their meals in their classrooms to limit exposure to large groups of students

3. We are currently working out details for Grab and Go for online students. Details will be released as soon as the plan is finalized. Parents must indicate students they are picking up the meal(s) for, to comply with Food Service auditing
4. Each school building will create and mark traffic flows for buildings and hallways.
5. During the transition, students will be required to keep moving and wear masks/facial covering. Each school has social distancing markings on the floor; students will be asked to maintain a distance of one marker between them and other students.
6. Food allergy forms are available on the CSD website under food services.

TRANSITIONING

Arrival

1. Avoid early drop-offs in the morning. This will be critical to aid us in our social distancing efforts.
2. Students will arrive by walk-up, car drop-off, or school bus, but parents/guardians will not be able to leave their cars.
3. Parents that drop their students off after the tardy bell will need to sign their students in at a designated area located outside the front door.
4. Until further notice, parents/guardians/older siblings, etc. will not be permitted to walk students inside the school building.
5. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at the main entrance to the campus, in classrooms, and common areas throughout the school.
6. Homeroom/1st Period will hold a daily discussion of health, wellness, and prevention with a critical focus on proper mask-wearing and hand cleaning

Dismissal

1. Campuses may designate staggered dismissal groups. Staggering groups of walkers, car riders, bus riders, or grade levels will help manage student movement in the building and decrease the risk of potential crowding outside at dismissal time.
2. Parents picking up students during the day will call at least 15 minutes before checkout to allow students to be sent or accompanied to parent vehicles upon arrival. Standard checkout procedures will still be in effect.

CONDUCTING LARGE GROUP GATHERINGS

1. Discourage the congregation of students in parking lots and commons areas.
2. Staggered schedule for arrival, dismissal, and recess.
3. Follow MHSAA guidelines for events and practices.
4. Follow guidelines to maintain safety practices during chorus, band, and other activities.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Parents will have two options for school this fall:

In-person: Classes physically meet in-person on campus, with distancing between students and safety measures enforced.

Virtual: Classes are hosted remotely through Canvas; these classes may have synchronous meetings that require all students to log in at the same time to meet as a group, or they may be fully asynchronous, in which students are not required to come together at the same time for full class meetings.

Parents who elect to keep their students at home and participate in virtual learning must agree to the following terms. NO EXCEPTIONS WILL BE MADE:

1. By selecting a virtual learning option, parents agree to provide access to the internet at home.

2. Learning option selection will occur before the start of a nine-week grading period. You are committed to your option selection for the entire nine weeks. You cannot change your choice during the nine-week grading period.
3. Students who select online classes for the nine weeks will not be eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities.
4. Content standards and grading requirements will remain the same for both virtual and in-person learning.
5. All assignments and due dates apply to both learning options.
6. MDE requires all students to meet 240 minutes of instructional time daily. This will apply to both options.

All classes will place essential course materials and information in Canvas.

Currently, there is no plan to alter the school calendar. School start and ending time are as follows to accommodate safety requirements.

School Start Times:

Columbia Primary School and Columbia Elementary School:

- 7:20 Drop-off-Arrival
- 8:00 Start
- 2:00 Dismissal

Jefferson Middle School

- 7:40 Drop-off-Arrival
- 8:00 Start
- 1:45 Dismissal

Columbia High School:

- 7:50 Drop-Off-Arrival
- 8:15 Start
- 1:45 Dismissal

1. Teachers will monitor students throughout the day and refer to the nurse if symptoms are present.
2. Teachers and staff will have access to disinfectant wipes to sanitize high-touch and working surfaces and shared objects regularly.
3. Teachers and staff will limit the use of shared supplies when possible; shared supplies will be sanitized between use.
4. Internal classroom doors that open to hallways may be propped open.
5. Classroom space will be used to maximize social distancing as much as possible.
6. Hand sanitation will be encouraged utilizing sanitation stations upon each entry/transition.
7. Schedules and teachers may need to be adjusted throughout the year to accommodate needs.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATION

Masks

1. The Columbia School District will provide a mask to all students and employees.
2. Masks brought from home cannot contain anything perceived as political, offensive, or potentially disruptive. The school administration will make this determination.
3. CSD will require that students wear masks when in transition (moving from place to place within the school, and when in close contact with others).
4. Staff is required to wear masks when in transition and close contact with others.

5. Anytime social distancing guidelines are not able to be met, CSD requires all students and staff to wear masks/facial coverings.

Visitors

1. Columbia School District will have limited visitors to our buildings. Only visitors authorized by the administration will be permitted to enter.
2. Parents are not allowed to accompany their students in the building, including the first week of school.
3. All authorized visitors will remain in identified areas only.
4. All authorized visitors will submit to a temperature/health screening and wear a mask while inside our buildings.

WHEN STUDENT/STAFF BECOMES SICK

The District follows guidance from the Mississippi Department of Health and the County Health Department.

1. Students/staff will be sent home and should stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Known symptoms include, but are not limited to:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

2. Students/staff who test positive for COVID-19 will report to the County Health Department, who will conduct an investigation including contact tracing.

- a. Students/staff will be sent home if they have objective data such as a temperature of 100.4, cough, shortness of breath, etc.
- b. Students/staff may return to school when they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.

3. Students/staff will be advised to stay home if they have been around someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and return to school when they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.

4. Upon notice that a student/staff has tested positive for COVID-19, the District will:

- Close off areas used by the sick person and not reopen until appropriate cleaning and disinfection have occurred.
- Inform those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms and to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms follow appropriate CDC guidance for home isolation.

5. The District has designated the following employee to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Any student/ staff or families who have a question about COVID-19 or wish to self-report symptoms should contact:

Dr. Dee Dee Randall-drandall@columbiaschools.org
(601) 736-2366

As a reminder, online registration for the 2020-21 academic school year will open Monday, July 20. Please monitor your e-mail for additional instructions and information regarding online registration. When registering, you will also select your learning option for the first nine weeks.

We thank you for your support of the Columbia School District and welcome your patience as we adjust to the “new normal.” Our goal steadfastly remains to provide the safest and best education to the Columbia School District students.

As a reminder, regular updates will be available via the web at:

<https://www.columbiaschools.org/covid-19>

Respectfully,



Jason Q. Harris, Ph.D.
Superintendent