

# RETURN TO SCHOOL

## General Guidelines for Families

### Kansas MS/HS Schools

#### PROTECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

The following guidelines are shared with our school communities, including students, families, and staff, in an effort to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Over the past several weeks, representatives from all of the district's stakeholder groups, as well as leaders in specialized areas of the school district's service areas, have been researching the constantly evolving literature from the education, medical, and public health sectors. The goal has been to create carefully layered, flexible, and developmentally appropriate practices that will ensure the strongest advice given by the American Academy of Pediatricians: All policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school. (<https://tinyurl.com/yc4stuh8>)

A host of reasons support this American Academy of Pediatricians recommendation, from the importance of in-person learning to the damage of social isolation; and Kansas Public Schools is in complete agreement. The truth remains, however, that ensuring this goal will require all of us to work together.

The information presented in this document is shared so that all of our community can begin school with a shared understanding of our responsibility in keeping our students and staff safe from COVID19. We know we cannot eliminate the virus; but with wise choices, we can mitigate it.

#### LAYERED MITIGATION PRACTICES

**RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS** - While many children will present with fever initially, many will not. Other symptoms that may develop initially include the following: chills, cough, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Any of these are cause for keeping a child home.

**HYGIENE** - Handwashing is one of the best means of protection against infection. Students will be reminded to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their noses, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating. They will also have access to an alcohol-based hand sanitizer throughout the school building when hand-washing opportunities are not readily available.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING** - While it will be difficult to maintain distance between the students at school, each site will be devising plans to provide for this precaution in the common areas of hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, & gyms.

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#### **MASKS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**FACE COVERINGS** - Evidence continues to mount on the role and importance of face coverings in interrupting the spread of COVID-19. The latest indication is that the use of face coverings protects both the wearers and those with whom they come in contact. It is highly recommended that all employees, students and visitors wear a face covering. This can be a cloth mask, a disposable mask or a face shield. The face covering must effectively cover the nose and mouth at the same time. We ask that parents prepare your students for this. Students are reminded that by wearing a mask at school, they are protecting both themselves and those around them. As the school year commences, students should include a face mask in their list of school supplies. With respect to the spread of the virus, the optimal, safest situation is for all students and staff to mask at all times. When a student wears a mask at school, it is a sign of respect for both classmates and teachers; and by extension it is confirmation that the wearer understands his/her responsibility to his/her immediate family, extended family, school family, and the greater Kansas community. For this reason, Kansas's secondary students will be expected or possibly required to wear masks throughout the day - whether on school buses, in hallways or in classrooms. Face coverings cannot violate district policies regarding appropriate dress/student attire.

- Students with an Individualized Education Plan or Medical situation will be on a case by case basis.
- The wearing of masks is subject to change as directions from governing authorities and health officials respond to new information and developing environmental conditions.

#### **POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES**

- Students or staff who test positive may return to school after following the CDC guidelines: After 10 days of symptoms AND no fever for three days AND respiratory symptoms have improved OR if no symptoms, they may return after 10 days from a positive test.
- Students and staff are encouraged to wear a mask (if possible) for the remainder of the 14 days.
- While out of school, students will be educated through Distance Learning.

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#### CONTACT TRACING

- Students and parents/guardians will be notified if it is confirmed their student has been in **close contact** with someone who tests positive for COVID-19.
- It is recommended that the person who is a **close contact** stay home from school and start Distance Learning. This will be following CDC guidelines. They may return to school on day 8 with a negative test result between day 5 & 7. If they choose not to be tested, they can return to school after 10 days from exposure.
- If the person chooses to come to school, he/she will report to the site office in his/her building each day for temperature checks and COVID-19 monitoring protocols through the full 10 days. It will be highly recommended that they wear a mask during this time. If symptoms occur, they will be sent home or asked to stay home and follow the CDC guidelines.
- If someone in your household has COVID-19, you will be asked to stay home and start Distance Learning. Please follow the CDC guidelines.

#### **BREAKFAST & LUNCH**

Students will be reminded to access lavatories for handwashing prior to meal service. Accessible hand sanitizer dispensers will be available too. Because mealtime, by its very nature, presents many opportunities for the spread of germs, schools will be offering students a variety of seating options to provide safer situations than the typical cafeteria setting would allow.

Students will be reminded that sharing food is not a safe practice.

#### **Child Nutrition**

Our cafeterias will remain open and we will take different measures at each site to promote social distancing. We will incorporate meals in classrooms, have added lunch times, outdoor seating, spreading out tables, staggering seating and other measures as we see fit. There is no one size fits all plan as each site has a different number of students and varying space in cafeterias. We will adjust if needed during the school year.

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1. Breakfast/lunch locations will be determined by each site. This could be in the classrooms or in the cafeteria with social distancing being taken into consideration.
2. All leftover food will be disposed of.
3. All desks and tables will be sanitized after each lunch period.
4. No outside food deliveries will be allowed during the school day.

#### SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Extra and co-curricular activities such as marching band, vocal music, STUCO, drama and athletics of all descriptions are vital elements of a secondary student's experience. Responses to COVID-19 in these environments will vary, always with a keen eye to proven practices in prevention and protection. Research is presently under way by the National Federation of State High School Associations to help us know and apply the best precautions to take in order to protect our students involved in extra-curricular activities

#### ALL-SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

All-school assemblies will be limited at the beginning of the school year to avoid the likely possibility of exposure that would occur when hundreds of students gather to chant and cheer their teams to victory. As the year wears on, such events may be reinstated if the virus takes a turn toward diminishing infections.

#### LOCKER USE

No sharing of lockers will be allowed! For those students who choose to use their school lockers to retrieve materials will be limited in a manner that reduces the number of students in a hallway area at any one time. Students will be asked to refrain from decorating the inside of their lockers. At every opportunity, we will be seeking ways to minimize unnecessary material and items being brought into the school.

#### FALL SPORTS AND BEYOND

It is difficult to predict what our fall and winter inter-scholastic sports seasons will look like. We will seek assistance from the Oklahoma Secondary School's Activity Association, abiding by their guidance for safe play. It is equally uncertain what the high school and middle school fan experience will include. Our hope - especially for outdoor sports - is that fans will be able to enjoy a comparatively healthy setting by distancing and wearing a mask.

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#### **WATER FOUNTAINS AND RESTROOMS**

As school opens, all traditional “bubble up” water fountains. Elementary and Middle school will have water bottle filling stations; these will remain connected and available to students and faculty. High School Students and staff are encouraged to bring filled water bottles or other non-breakable water containers to school with them. Student restrooms will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day by the site custodial staff, who will use portable disinfectant foggers to sanitize the areas. Staff restrooms will also be disinfected periodically throughout the school day.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

The buses will still run a normal schedule, we strongly encourage you to bring your student to school and pick them up each day too. Parents are expected to take their students temperature before getting on the bus. The windows will be kept down while riders are on-weather permitting. Students and staff are encouraged to wear a face covering\mask in school buildings and on school buses. Family groups will be expected to sit with one another. In compliance with Oklahoma senate bill 658, face coverings/masks will not be required without consultation from the Delaware County health department and an emergency declaration for Delaware County by the Governor.

#### **CLEANING AND SANITIZING**

We will be disinfecting and cleaning even more each day with constant wipe downs of door handles, desks, chairs, computers, etc. There will be daily sanitizing of each classroom, the hallways and cafeterias. We will leave no stone unturned. We will encourage repeated hand washing throughout the day. We will have additional sanitizing products in the classrooms and at activities/events.

We also ask if you see an area where you think we could add another layer of precaution and prevention, please call your building administrator and let them know to have that area addressed. We will be listening for additional input as we go along trying to deal with this situation to the best of our ability.

#### **Site Screenings:**

Staff/Student:

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1. Staff will enter each site at a designated point of entry.
2. Face coverings will be available for staff upon request. All staff will be required to wear face-covering during the school day if social distancing is not possible or working 1:1 within close proximity to students.
3. Locations will be established to house students who may have symptoms or a temperature of 100 degrees or greater. Students will remain in the quarantined area while parents are notified and schedule a pickup time and location.
4. Cleaning of the location will occur upon the exit of the quarantined staff/student.

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