July 21, 2020

Dear Hardeman County School Parents and Guardians,

We hope you and your family are healthy, well and safe this summer. HCS appreciates your patience and understanding during this time of change. As we move towards the 2020-2021 school year, we will all need to work together as a HCS community of staff, students, and parents as we all do our best to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

The District has diligently been working to plan for the 2020-2021 school year. Today we are releasing the Health and Safety Protocols which provides information and student expectations regarding reopening schools. This plan was developed with the guidance we have received thus far from the CDC, the Tennessee Department of Health and other health authorities. Information changes quickly and may continue to change as the pandemic fluctuates, so please check back for further updates on the HCS website.

Please direct any questions to Lisa Raines, RN, BSN at rainesl@hcsedu.org.

Hardeman County Schools
Health and Safety Protocols
Procedures for all Campuses

The following guidelines will be consistent for all campuses; however, the principal may identify additional procedures that are unique to the specific schools. Information and guidance from health authorities continues to evolve, and we will adjust our planning as needed.

Class Size/Spacing/Social Distancing

- Cohort students/classes to minimize crossover among children and adults within the school. This could involve teachers rotating from room to room instead of the students. Cohorting practices may vary from school to school.
- Arrange all desks facing the same direction toward the front of the classroom with 6 feet or more between them or the maximum amount possible.
- Schools have been asked to survey classrooms in efforts to remove all unnecessary furniture/equipment to increase the available square footage of the rooms.
- Teachers are discouraged from congregating in staff lounge areas and other common areas.
- Classroom windows should be open when possible and conditions allow
- Classes on occasion and weather permitting may occur outside to allow for greater social distancing
- Assemblies of more than 50 students at a time are discouraged but allowed with social distancing enforced and face masks are expected
- Large scale assemblies, pep rallies, etc. should be discontinued
- Parents and guests to campuses shall adhere to social distancing requirements (ie, COVID-19 screening questions, wearing face covering when in the schools, having one’s temperature checked)
- Students will be encouraged to bring their personal water bottles to be filled at the Water Bottle Filling Stations.
Handwashing and Sanitizing

- Staff must be aware that it is critical to set a good example for the students. Physical Distancing, face coverings and most importantly frequent handwashing are vital in mitigating the transmission of the virus.
- Staff may at times need to wipe down surfaces between students. Gloves are recommended to be worn when wiping down surfaces. Dispose of gloves after using and remove them inside out, one inside of the other.
- Classroom schedules will include designated times for handwashing. Students and staff will be encouraged to utilize hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting classrooms when feasible.
- Classrooms will be provided an initial supply of disposable gloves, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.
- All classrooms and buildings will undergo a daily systematic and thorough cleaning.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes brought in by stakeholders are appreciated.

Face Masks

- Teachers, students, and staff are urged to bring their own masks. However, the district will have masks available for any student or employee who does not have their own.
- A cloth or disposable face covering is expected to be worn by all students, staff and visitors while on school property except:
  - When an individual cannot safely wear a cloth or disposable face covering (health concerns, age, physical and emotional limitations)
  - While eating and drinking
  - While indoors and maintaining social distancing, at the direction of HCS staff
  - While outdoors and maintain social distancing, at the direction of HCS staff

Movement Operations

- Flow of traffic should be directed in only one direction if possible.
  - If one-way flow is not possible, hallways can be divided with either side following the same direction
- Efforts should be made to try and keep six feet of distance between persons in the hallways
- Facemasks shall be worn when in hallways using restrooms, changing classes, etc.
- Signs and markers may be utilized to remind students to maintain social distancing in hallways, front offices and other common areas.

Transportation

The school bus may be the first place a student is in the morning and the last place at the end of the school day. Therefore, transportation is a crucial part of reopening Hardeman County Schools. Maintaining six feet of distance between students on a bus will be extraordinarily difficult, therefore parents must decide if they want their child to continue to ride the bus or find another option of transportation.

Recommendations:

- Face masks shall be worn by the bus driver and students to wear during the bus route when social distancing is not possible
- Drivers and students will be expected to utilize the hand sanitizer station upon entry and upon exiting the bus.
- To the extent possible, windows will be open to increase circulation of air
Requirements:

- Buses will be sanitized daily, paying particular attention to bus seats, steering wheels, knobs and door handles.
- Students will be assigned a seat with siblings seated together, if possible
- A student that appears ill will be seated on the front seat, door side of the bus

Temperature Checks/Screening Questions

Parents, teachers and staff should be involved in preventing the spread of the virus by conducting the Self-screening Protocol prior to leaving home by taking their temperature (or their child’s) and asking the six (6) COVID-19 questions below:

1. Have you been in close contact with a person with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19?
2. Have you had unusual cough or shortness of breath?
3. Have you had a sore throat or other flu-like symptoms?
4. Have you had a fever of 100.4 degrees F or greater in the past 72-hours?
5. Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
6. Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24-hours?

A student or staff member should not come to school with a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher or if yes was the answer to any screening question.

- If feasible, daily temperature checks should be performed on students upon arrival or as soon after arrival as possible. These decisions will be unique to each campus.
- Students with temperatures of 100.4 and above should apply a face mask and be sent to a specified isolation room/area away from the public where the student can be supervised until picked up.
- Staff should notify their supervisor before arriving to school if answering yes to any of the above questions. Staff with temperatures of 100.4 or more upon arrival to school will be asked to return home.
- Students returning to school must have a statement from their medical provider if they were sent home due to answering yes to the above questions.

School Meals

- Students/staff shall sanitize hands before and after each meal.
- Cafeterias may continue to be utilized on some campuses if social distancing is feasible. Lunch and breakfast procedures will be unique to specific schools. Parents should expect some combination of grab-and-go meals, shorter lunch periods, and/or lunches consumed in the student’s classroom or outdoors.
- Students may bring their lunches from home if they prefer.

Sharing of Supplies

- Do not share writing utensils, classroom, and office supplies between students/staff (when possible)
- Place hand hygiene supplies in close proximity to shared equipment (copier, etc.)
Recess/PE

- Enforcing physical distancing in an outside playground is difficult and presents a challenge to the teacher. Emphasis should be placed on cohorting students and limiting the size of groups participating in playground time.
- Playground equipment will not be used unless it can be sanitized in between usage.

Library

- Library books that have been “checked out” should be isolated for at least 72 hours prior to any other student using the book.

Field Trips

- All district field trips for all grade levels are canceled for the first semester.

Parent Conferences and Meetings

- Parents may request virtual or phone meetings to discuss any aspect of their child’s education.
- Parents wanting or needing to come to campus for any reason should contact the school office first so that prior arrangements can be made.

Visitors

- Anyone coming to campus to drop off items and not requiring interaction with school staff may drop off items at a designated area at the building entrance.
- Anyone coming into the school or office area to visit with staff shall wear a mask or face covering and have their temperature checked before entering the building. If temperature is 100.4 or greater, the visitor will be asked to exit the building.

Responding to Positive Cases

- Hardeman County Schools will not administer COVID-19 tests to employees or students. We will check temperatures and encourage all students and staff to stay at home if they are sick.
- Students or parents are required to report to their school nurse, or the school principal BEFORE arriving at school, if:
  - they had close contact with an individual who has tested COVID-19 positive, or
  - If they themselves have any symptoms of COVID-19. The reporting party may be asked to produce confirmation of a positive test result. Confidentiality of the personal health information will be maintained. The Hardeman County Health Department will be contacted so that contact tracing can be initiated. The school and the Hardeman County Health Department will work together to contain the exposed areas.
- Those who have been within 6 feet of the individual for 10 minutes or more at any time within 48 hours before the individual’s onset of symptoms until the individual has left school property will be required to self-quarantine for 14 days.
- Classrooms or areas exposed will be closed as quickly as possible until cleaning and disinfection can be performed. ([https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html))
- Depending on the extent of positive cases within a school, a school may need to close for 2 days or up to two weeks or more. A case-by-case review will be warranted and guidelines will be followed as set out by the Tennessee Department of Health.
• Parents will be notified via the call message system of the presence of any confirmed positive cases in the classroom and or school to encourage closer observation for any symptoms at home. Parents should check student’s temperature at home every morning; with students having a temperature of 100.4 or above staying at home and consider coronavirus testing if no other explanation is available.
• Parents should monitor their children for any cough, congestion, shortness of breath, or gastro intestinal symptoms every morning. Any positives should prompt the parent to keep the student home from school and seek out guidance from your local medical provider.
• Students sent home from school should be kept home until they have completely recovered according to Tennessee Department of Health Guidelines. Students will receive remote instruction until conditions for re-entry are met.
• Students and staff who have tested positive shall require written notice from the Department of Health or their personal Medical provider granting admission back in to the school.