

Hickman County Schools

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Parent/Guardian Guidance on Safety Expectations and Best Practices for Kentucky Schools (K-12)

In just a few short weeks, the 2020-2021 school year will begin. Our staff has been working diligently to prepare for the seeming endless possibilities of how that will look when we return. The plan we have developed has both daily operational and instructional strategies that are subject to change as the school year proceeds. These plans have incorporated the district parent survey and have been approved by state and regional health officials as well as our local board of education. Nonetheless, we are all driven to provide the best educational experiences for our students this fall.

The current plan for Hickman County Schools is to reopen on August 12th for in-person classes. However, this date is subject to change due to developments around Covid-19 and the details surrounding it.

Our main focus is always providing a safe & secure return for all our students and staff members. Hickman County Schools will use every available health and safety measure to make sure that students and staff are safe in all school activities. In order to have in-person class again, HCS must follow the Kentucky plan for "Healthy at School" and the safety expectations that exist within it. We will keep you updated on the evolving plan if changes are required. Within this plan, the Kentucky Department of Public Health has provided safety expectations that schools must follow (Social Distancing, Cloth Face Coverings, Screening/School Exclusion, Sanitation/Environmental Factors, Contact Tracing).

Safety Expectations MUST be implemented by schools as determined by the Kentucky Department of Public Health

1. Social Distancing

- Schools will make every attempt to increase space between students to 6 feet (in classrooms, cafeterias, etc.)
- If the physical space in the school does not allow for spacing students' desks 6 feet apart, students and teachers will be expected to wear a face mask (in first grade and above) per health official guidance.
- Every possible attempt will be made at the school to reduce congestion in the classroom and in common areas.
- Food service will utilize the cafeteria, classrooms and outdoor areas to provide meals to the students in a safe environment. Alternating schedules will be developed to provide opportunities in each of these areas throughout the school year.
- Limits to non-essential visitors on school property.

2. Cloth Face Coverings, Personal Protective Equipment and School Health Policies

Face masks prohibit spread of the virus even when the infected person is without symptoms:

- All students in **first grade and above**, as well as staff, are expected to wear a cloth face covering, unless medically waived.
- The school district will provide each student with one (1) cloth face mask at the beginning of the school year. Parents and guardians are encouraged to purchase additional masks for their child.
- Masks may be removed during class time if all students and staff are seated 6 feet apart and no persons are walking around the classroom. (We developed several opportunities throughout the day for students to remove face coverings and still maintain distancing requirements.)
- When students are outside and 6 feet from others, masks are not required.

3. Screening and School Exclusion

- Parents should make sure that student(s) have no signs or symptoms of illness prior to sending them to school. If student(s) rides the school bus. A parental assurance form must be signed and returned to the school.
- Staff members taking temperatures will use a touchless thermometer before students enter the school.
- If a student shows at least one symptom (fever, chills, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell or gastrointestinal symptoms), the student must be isolated immediately until the parent can pick up the child. The parents will be encouraged to notify their health care provider for further guidance and possible testing for COVID-19.
- A student sent home with COVID-19 symptoms who has a negative COVID-19 test or the symptoms have subsided may return to school once they are fever-free (without fever reducing medication) for **72** hours and have no other COVID-19 related symptoms (fever, chills, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell or gastrointestinal symptoms). Examples of student exclusion criteria are included in the following website.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

4. Sanitation and Environmental Standards

- As always, proper hand washing and respiratory hygiene practices (covering coughs and sneezes) will be taught and emphasized to students. Hand sanitizer will also be encouraged throughout the school day.
- Daily cleaning and disinfection of school facilities will follow KDE and the Kentucky Department of Public Health guidance.

5. Contact Tracing

- Hickman County Schools will be notified by the local health department of any positive cases of COVID-19 and be prepared to cooperate with the contact tracing investigation with manifests of bus transportation, classroom cohorts, cafeteria setting charts, etc., that will allow quick identification of those at high risk of infection from the positive COVID-19 student/staff. Quickly initiating a 14 day quarantine of these at risk individuals is our best defense against further spread of the viral illness. The Kentucky Department of Public Health will determine if students/staff are quarantined and for how long the quarantine will last.

6. Transportation Plan (includes sanitation, screening & social distancing)

- Parents will be asked to check students for COVID symptoms before leaving for school each day.
- Wearing a mask while riding the bus is a **safety expectation** unless medically waived. (Preschool and Kindergarten students will not be required to wear a mask.)
- The bus will load back to front—unload front to back
- Assign seating for all passengers/ Seat students from same household together/ Preschool & Kindergarten will sit at front
- Students with medical concerns, allergies, asthma should be assigned seating at front of bus with windows up.
- Maintain social distancing (6 feet apart) at bus stops.
- Parents are encouraged to limit the number of pick up/drop off locations that students will need through the school year.
- Parent and bus pickup will be located in the same places as last year at the elementary. Parent drop off at the high school will be done in front of the school. Parents please do not exit your vehicle during drop off.
- If you have to pick up a child early from school or drop off late due to an appointment, please call the respective school and someone will escort your child out to you or come outside and accept the child from you when returning to school.

While most families look forward to the beginning of in person classes this fall, we know that there are some who will need alternative instructional methods due to the nature of the pandemic. Understanding this, our district has adopted the following instructional delivery methods that will be used during the 2020-2021 school year.

➤ **In-Person Classroom Instruction**

The most effective method of instruction will have students at school receiving face-to-face instruction from a highly qualified teacher. Safety expectations will be implemented to provide students and staff with the safest learning environment possible.

➤ **Distance Learning**

This method will allow students to receive instruction while not attending in-person. This method of instruction will include an online option or a hard copy alternative. If you plan to use distance learning, please contact the Hickman County Board of Education at (270)653-2341 and speak with Mr. Perry Collins or Jan Johnson. They will set up a meeting to discuss your preferred option. Staff members will also be reaching out to your child by the end of the summer to discuss the best learning option for you.

Online Learning: This method will include an online option that will be facilitated by a HCS teacher and utilize a learning management system, Campus Learning. Campus Learning is part of Infinite Campus which many of you use to check your students grades.

NTI Instructional Packets: For those that do not have an Internet connection or do not have reliable Internet, this method will use hard copy paper packets as the main method of instruction. Families will be required to pick up and deliver work to and from the school at a scheduled time. Instruction will follow in-class activities. All instruction will be graded and regular classroom assignments and assessments will be used. Packets must be turned in according to the schedule given so that grades can be assigned and student progress monitored by the teacher throughout the year.

We have missed our students and are ready to start this unprecedented school year. Students will have new avenues for learning like never before—with your help and support, it will be a great opportunity for educational success.

Sincerely,

Casey Henderson, Superintendent
Hickman County Schools