



Piedmont City School System

Safe Return to Schools Frequently Asked Questions 2020-2021

Navigating a Safe Return to School

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What are the expectations for student attendance during the 2020-2021 school year?**
 - Students who attend traditional school will be expected to attend on a regular basis in accordance with the board-approved attendance policy. The local school administration will consider extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19.
 - If traditional school transitions to a remote learning environment, attendance will be taken through participation in the assigned remote learning activities.
 - Virtual students attendance will be taken through participation in the virtual curriculum.
 - Students who are absent should timely submit a note for their absence to the school administrator in accordance with board policy.
 - In the case of COVID-19 related absence, the student is strongly encouraged to notify the school administrator and submit a physician's note in a timely manner to the school.

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2. What is the difference between traditional learning, remote learning, and virtual academy?

- Traditional learning takes place in the classroom and may involve a combination of paper and digital tools.
- Remote learning, provided by the classroom teacher, will be used in the event of school closure. Students who are in traditional classrooms will transition to digital learning utilizing Blackboard Learning Management System, Schoology, and Google Classroom.
- Piedmont Virtual Academy (PVA): Students enrolled at PVA are assigned coursework that comes completely from a digital platform (Schools PLP or Access) and is facilitated by virtual academy instructors. Students enrolled in PVA will not attend the school in an on-campus manner. PVA students will remain enrolled in PCSD. Students may apply for PVA, [HERE](#). PVA registration will be open from July 14 to July 24.

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3. What is Blended Learning, and when will it be needed?

Blended Learning will be Phase 2 of the Traditional School Plan. Schedules will be created to allow for one group of students to attend on Monday and Wednesday and a second group of students to attend on Tuesday and Thursday. Friday will be used for additional student support, teacher professional development, and sanitization of school.

4. What is the difference between Temporary Remote Learning and Virtual School?

Temporary Remote Learning will be utilized for long term absences due to illness for students on the Traditional School Plan. It will be a continuation of learning from the regular classroom with the regular classroom teacher(s). Virtual School is separate from the Traditional School Plan. In order to participate in Piedmont Virtual Academy (PVA), the student must enroll in PVA and will have an individualized learning path facilitated by an educator (not necessarily an educator from his/her base school.)

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5. What if I don't feel comfortable sending my child to school?

Piedmont Virtual Academy is an online learning option. Students may transition to/from PVA to/from traditional school at the end of each nine-weeks period. Students who choose the PVA options will be provided a MacBook or iPad depending on grade level.

6. How do I enroll my child in the virtual school option?

The Piedmont Virtual Academy Application is an online form. You can access the form by clicking this link. [PVA Application](#) You can also visit the Piedmont City School System Website or the Local School's website for more information. PVA registration will be open from July 14 to July 24.

7. Will there be school closure for the 2020-2021 school year?

Under current guidance we do not expect a school closure. In the event of widespread COVID-19 cases within our local communities or county, we will strongly consider a transition to our blended or remote learning option.

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8. How will the instructional phase of the Traditional School Plan be determined?
 - The Superintendent will determine the initiation of each phase in consultation with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), CDC, Calhoun County Health Department, and local medical professionals.
 - Transition to remote learning- Currently, no guidance has been presented from the ALSDE, ADPH or the CDC regarding an infection rate that would trigger a transition to blended or remote learning.

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9. Will we have an Orientation/MacBook Deployment at the beginning of the school year?

Orientation/MacBook deployment information will be communicated to parents by the individual schools at a later date.

10. Will students have physical education?

Yes. Students will engage in non-contact activities and exercise.

11. Will students participate in extracurricular activities?

Field trips have been suspended at this time. Athletics, band, clubs, etc., will continue with additional safety requirements (social distancing, face coverings recommended per the Governor's health order, etc.)

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12. How will safety guidelines impact extra-curricular activities, including athletics?

- Additional Guidance may be forthcoming as athletic seasons progress.
- Students and families are encouraged to self-report to administrators, sponsors, or coaches if they have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Students who miss any school-related activities due to COVID-19 will not be punished.
- All athletic teams, band, cheer, academic clubs will follow guidance as applicable during meetings, practices, transportation, competition and other organized activities provided by the AHSAA, ADPH, ALSDE and the Piedmont City Board of Education.
- Only Essential Personnel should be directly involved on sidelines or club-based practices, competitions, etc

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13. Are face coverings/shields required? Will face coverings/shields be provided by the school?

- The required use of face covering or masks will be governed by Alabama Health Order as directed by Governor Kay Ivey. (As of 7/15/2020, the current health order requires the use of a mask or other facial covering by an education employee, with few exceptions.)
- Students will follow Governor Ivey's July 15th, 2020 health order and wear face coverings when at school or a school function, with few exceptions.
- Students should bring their own face covering to school. Face coverings will be provided by PCSD to students who do not arrive at school with a face covering.
- The use of masks or other facial coverings by bus drivers will also generally follow the Alabama Health Order as directed by Governor Kay Ivey. However, careful consideration should be given as to driver visibility and safety of transportation when determining the use of a mask or other facial covering.

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14. What happens if my child must miss school due to self-quarantine or self-isolation?

Please notify the school immediately if the student is exposed to COVID-19, the student is tested for COVID-19, or a household member tests positive for COVID-19. With documentation from the doctor, your child's absences will be excused. During this time, your child can either move to Temporary Remote Learning or enroll in PVA for a long-term virtual placement.

15. What if I need to check my child in/out of school during the school day?

Each school is creating a procedure to ensure the safety of students and staff. Your child's school will communicate this procedure with you.

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16. How will instruction be provided for students with extended absences due to a positive COVID-19 test or mandatory quarantine?

Teachers will provide assignments to students who are absent for an extended number of days through digital platforms (Blackboard or Google Classroom) or paper resources in the event they are needed. Parents of students who are absent more than 14 consecutive days should collaborate with their classroom teacher and school administrators to develop a plan for instruction.

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17. Will teachers and students be responsible for grades in the event of remote learning?

Assignments will be graded and grades assigned to students during blended and remote learning.

If a student has internet connectivity issues, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to contact the teacher and the principal regarding said issues. In such cases, the student may be required to physically go to a location that has internet access, complete alternative assignments, or work with the school to make other arrangements.

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18. How will classrooms maintain a six-foot distance between all students?

Teachers will work to maximize the distance between desks as much as possible. Unnecessary furniture will be removed from rooms in an effort to create more space between desks. Classrooms that utilize tables for student and group seating will evaluate their ability to distance students with the tables and identify potential solutions to ensure a safe learning environment.

19. Will visitors be allowed on campus for events, eat lunch with students, walk students to class, etc...?

Visitors will have minimal access to the campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that visitors will not be allowed to eat lunch with their children in the cafeteria or visit for other non-essential activities. While we strongly desire parent and community engagement, we will work to collaborate and engage our community and family partners in other ways. In the event a visitor is allowed access to campus, the visitor will be required to wear a mask or other facial covering for the duration of their visit.

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20. Will any changes be made to the *breakfast and lunch* program due to COVID-19?

- Lunch- The local school and BOE will work with the ADPH to follow current guidance. The lunchroom will be limited to 50 percent occupancy, classrooms and outdoor spaces will be utilized as additional lunch spaces.
- Breakfast- Will be served in classrooms only
- Outside visitors and/or family guests will not be allowed to dine in the school cafeteria.
- Meals will be packaged by the CNP staff; students will not self-serve meals.
- The CNP department will adhere to current school nutrition guidelines and practices.
- Families are encouraged to prepay to reduce and/or eliminate the handling of money.
- Should school(s) transition from traditional face to face learning to remote learning due to COVID-19, the system will provide students with meals based on guidance from ALSDE. A plan for preparation and delivery will be provided.

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21. If a student or employee test positive for COVID-19, will the entire class be asked to quarantine?

- If an employee or student tests positive, he or she will follow the current guidance of ADPH and his or her health care provider. The guidance can be found at the ADPH website. We are requiring masks in schools to help divert the possibility of entire classes having to be quarantined in the event of a positive case.
- It is possible a class may be required to quarantine if direct exposure occurred. The ADPH has defined direct exposure as being in contact closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.
- It is the responsibility of the ADPH to conduct contact tracing and determine any necessary actions regarding quarantine or isolation.
- In the event an employee tests positive for COVID-19, he or she will notify a supervisor and follow the directions of a medical provider.

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22. Will I be notified if a classmate/teacher of my child has tested positive for COVID-19?

We are awaiting further guidance from the ADPH, ALSDE, and other sources on notification procedures.

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23. What cleanliness measures will be in place during a regular school day?

- Restroom Sanitation- Restrooms will be sanitized multiple times a day. Soap and/or sanitizer will be available in the restroom and throughout the school buildings.
- Common Area Sanitizations- Common areas and surfaces (handrails, doorknobs, etc) will be sanitized throughout the day by custodial staff. All efforts will be made to minimize contact with common surfaces.
- Classroom sanitization and cleaning will be a joint effort by the school custodial staff, classroom teachers, and other school personnel.
 - The Piedmont City Schools Board of Education will provide sanitation equipment, material, sanitizer, soap, training, etc. to ensure proper sanitation of each local school.
 - The local school custodial staff will work to sanitize classrooms and common spaces daily.
 - Classroom teachers will be provided sanitizing liquid to spot clean as needed and to sanitize desks, counters, etc.
- Signage about frequent hand washing/hygiene will be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.
- Water fountains will be disabled. Individual water bottles are encouraged.
- School leaders will conduct facility walkthroughs with custodial staff to ensure the classrooms, common spaces, and the exterior are prepared and safe for staff and students.

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24. What preventative measures will be in place during a regular school day?

- Each school will have a specific plan for the following topics. However, typical guidance is as follows:
 - Lunchroom- 50% or less capacity or eat in classrooms.
 - Breakfast- Will be served in classrooms only.
 - Assemblies/Pep Rallies- Will be limited and observe all social distancing requirements recommended by ADPH.
 - Elementary Snack- Elementary students will have break within their classroom or in an assigned area outside the building maintaining social distance guidelines.
 - Middle School Break-Students will have break in their classroom
 - High School Break- High school students will have break in their classroom.
 - Middle/High School Transitions- transition plan will be developed based on their number of students and facility layout that ensures minimal contact with students from other classrooms.
 - Elementary Transitions-transition plan will be developed based on the number of students and on the facility layout that ensures minimal contact with students from other classrooms. Where feasible, elementary classrooms will consider self-contained classrooms.

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Continued.

24. What preventative measures will be in place during a regular school day?

- Each school will have a plan for the following topic, however, typical guidance is as follows:
 - Classroom Seating-Student desks should be spaced apart as much as possible and placed in forward-facing rows. Flexible seating should be removed as practical.
 - Career Tech Classrooms, labs and workspaces-Social distancing recommendations should be maintain as much as practical. Equipment should be regularly sanitized.
 - Employee Masks-The use of masks or facial coverings will be governed by Alabama Health Order as directed by Governor Kay Ivey. (As of 7/15/2020, the current health order requires the use of a mask or other facial covering by employees.)
 - Student Masks-Students 7 years of age and older will follow Governor Ivey's July 15th, 2020 health order and wear face coverings when at school or a school function, with few exceptions. Masks are recommended, but not required, for students 6 years of age and under.
 - Masks may be required for specific extra-curricular activities. See current AHSAA guidelines. Masks or other facial coverings may also be required for certain activities.

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Continued.

24. What preventive measures will be in place during a regular school day?

- Classroom teachers will educate students on best practices for self-care for themselves as well as others (hand-washing, limit sharing of personal items, sneezing in elbow, etc). When feasible, desks counters and table surfaces should be cleaned during transition times.
- All efforts should be given to not send students to the nurses office for well visits and/or minor needs.
- Students arriving to school will proceed to their homeroom or 1st period classroom as soon as possible and limit the time spent in commons areas. First period or homeroom teachers will welcome students into their classroom soon after arrival to school each day.
- Additional classroom procedures will be provided at each local school campus.

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25. Safety & Wellness Measures- Parent and Home Prevention (First Screening)

Parents

- If a child has a pre-existing condition, parents are advised to speak with their child's primary care physician about returning to school.
- Parents are encouraged to take students' temperatures and assess students before sending to school. Students who have an elevated temperature of 100.0 or greater and/or are exhibiting symptoms should stay at home.
- Parents will be encouraged to give appropriate contact information and make plans to ensure someone could check student out if needed.
- Parents should discourage students from taking non-essential items to school. Items taken to school should be sanitized as feasibly as possible.

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26. Safety & Wellness Measures- Transportation and School (Second and Third Screening)

Transportation

- Transportation is the second point on the screening continuum. Bus drivers, upon entrance to the bus, will visibly check for any symptoms or signs of COVID-19 or other visible illness.

School

- School is the final point on the screening continuum. School system staff will visually check for symptoms which may include temperature checks and/or confirmation with families that the students are COVID-19 symptom free.
- Faculty will limit the items sent home with students that need to be returned. Items sent home will be sanitized as feasibly as possible.

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27. Safety & Wellness Measures- Nurse Office Visits

Nurse Office Visits

- Teachers will limit well-child visits with minor problems (ex. Keep Band-aids on hand for minor cuts and abrasions and clothing for student bathroom accidents).
- Teacher/Staff will call a school nurse before sending a student to them to limit the number of students in the health room and limit exposure.
- School Nurse will work closely with administrators in developing a plan to isolate sick children until someone comes and gets them.
- School Nurse will continue to develop Individual Health Plans for students with chronic health problems.
- School Nurse will assess the student and take appropriate actions if symptoms for COVID-19 exist.
- School Nurse will sanitize and disinfect as needed.

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28. How can I make sure I receive up-to date information?

Visit our system/school websites and social media platforms for current information on school activities.

It is very important to ensure that your local school has accurate and up-to-date contact information. If your contact information has changed or if you are unsure about its accuracy, please contact your child's teacher and/or the school secretary to make sure accurate information is available.