

COVID-19

School Reopening Plan – Pike County Schools

August 2021

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention is urging schools to fully reopen this fall, even if the schools cannot take all of the steps the agency recommends to curb spread of the coronavirus.

The agency also said school districts should use local health data to guide decisions about when to tighten or relax prevention measures like masking and physical distancing. With the highly contagious Delta variant spreading and children under 12 still ineligible for vaccination, it recommended that unvaccinated students and staff members keep wearing masks.

To date (July 13, 2021), there have been 3,177 Covid cases in Pike County and 78 deaths. There have been 27 new cases in the last 14 days and the 7-day average of new cases is 3.7%. Pike County is currently considered “very high risk” with a 31% vaccination rate.

Given the county’s current status, the Pike County Schools will continue to require or recommend certain steps be taken to mitigate the spread of Covid among students and employees. Please review this plan carefully. We ask that you support this plan in its entirety. We certainly do not want to return to where we were last Winter and Spring. At one point, within the schools, we had 27 positive students/employees and hundreds in quarantine.

It is our hope that if we follow these reasonable steps, we can have a relatively normal school year. Please understand that this plan may change if conditions worsen and the risk to students and employees increase.

Questions concerning this plan may be directed to the Office of the Superintendent at 334-566-1850 extension 81112.

Health Screenings at Schools and Worksites

Daily health screenings for students and employees will not be required. However, **students and employees should not report to school or work** if they have any of the following symptoms:

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- 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

Additionally, students and employees should quarantine as prescribed by Alabama Department of Health Guidelines if they have been in close contact with a confirmed Covid positive person. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the Covid positive individual for 15 minutes. The 15 minutes need not be continuous. **Questions concerning quarantine guidelines should be directed to the school nurse.**

Fully vaccinated employees and students are not required to quarantine due to close contact.

Vaccinations

Vaccinations are not required for school or work attendance. However, Pike County Schools **encourages** all **students ages 12 and above, and all employees** to

get vaccinated. From time-to-time, the school system has and will continue to offer free vaccination clinics.

Employees should note that waivers of sick leave for Covid reasons will not be available this year for unvaccinated staff. Our best guess of our employee vaccination rate is around 60%. For safety, we encourage all employees to get vaccinated.

Use of Mask

- Masks are **not required** for **students, employees, and visitors** who attend outdoor events/activities.
- Masks are **strongly encouraged but not mandatory** for all **unvaccinated** students and employees when inside schools and other Board facilities.
- Masks are **optional** for **vaccinated** students and employees when inside schools and other Board facilities.
- Masks are **REQUIRED** for all **visitors** wishing to enter schools and other Board facilities regardless of vaccination status. This includes all events held inside a school facility.
- Masks will be provided to students who request to wear them.

Social Distancing

- Schools and worksites will continue with all social distancing protocols in place last year. However, the previously recommended spacing of six-feet will be reduced to three-feet.
- When three-foot spacing is not possible, schools may continue to use clear physical barriers.

Child Nutrition Services

The school year will begin with students eating breakfast and lunch in their individual classrooms. Many school systems have served meals in this manner for years. However, it is the intent of Pike County Schools to transition back to normal lunchroom procedures when it believed to be safe.

Transportation Services

School buses will operate normal and specialty routes in the same manner they did pre-Covid. However, **unvaccinated students and employees** are **strongly encouraged** for their own safety to wear mask. Masks on busses are **optional** for **vaccinated students and employees**.

Special Events, After School Activities, School Day Activities, Field Trips

These activities/events will be approved on a case-by-case basis depending on the threat level associated with each activity/event.

Students participating in Academy Programs are expected to follow the Covid Protocols specific to the post-secondary institutions in which they are enrolled when on their campuses and/or participating in their activities/events.

Sanitation

All schools, busses, and worksites within the school system will be sanitized using the same protocols established last year.

Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout all schools and workplaces.

Drinking fountains will remain closed for now. Water Stations are being installed in selected locations within each school.

Technology

All students enrolled in Pike County School are required to have internet access. Virtual Learning Days are scheduled for August 23 and September 20, 2021.

Students who require assistance in securing laptops, tablets, hotspots; or who need other technology related help, may call 334-566-1850 extension 115.

All students enrolled in the Pike County Virtual/Home School Consortium are required to be present at school on days when in-person state assessments are given. This plan, or any variation of this plan, arising due to changing circumstances brought on by Covid infection rates, etc. apply to these students on these days.

Special Student Populations

Some students may require modification of these protocols to accommodate special needs. Questions concerning students with special needs should be directed to Dr. Mark Head at 334-566-1850.

Changes to Plan Protocols

Changes to protocols will be announced in advance. School officials will make every effort to announce changes well in advance in order to make sure parents are well informed and can adjust their plans as necessary.

The kinds of changes that may be necessary due to increased Covid threats:

- Mandatory indoor masking
- Mandatory indoor and outdoor masking
- Reduction or elimination of some school activities
- Increased social distancing
- **Shift to partial or all virtual learning (please refer to Technology section of this plan)**
- Hard restriction of visitors, non-employees and any non-students from schools or worksites
- Reinstitution of Health Screening Procedures

Questions

Questions concerning this plan, or any changes to this plan that becomes necessary due to increasing threats to employee and student health from Covid, may be directed to the Office of the Superintendent at 334-566-1850 extension 81112.