

CHMS Parents and Guardians,

The release of the DCS Return-To-Learn Plan has caused many questions to be raised by parents and students. I wanted to let you know now how this plan will affect CHMS directly so you can start planning.

Many of the guidelines and suggestions that we must consider before re-opening come from MDE, MS Dept of Health, and the CDC.

These guidelines directly and drastically affect many of CHMS's "normal" Policies and Procedures. We must make things work the best we can while putting changes in place to protect our students' and teachers' safety.

All information is subject to change if new guidance is issued by government and/or health officials.

Center Hill Middle School Return-To-Learn Plan

At CHMS, we understand not every parent or student will be in favor of these temporary changes whether it be the safety aspect, academic issues, limited extra-curricular, and/or the limited social contact students will have.

Full-time distance learning: Our Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) will be an option for students during the 2020-2021 school year. This program will allow students to remain enrolled in DeSoto County Schools while receiving teacher-facilitated online instruction.

Parents can register by completing the distance learning application on the DeSoto County Schools website, <https://www.desotocountyschools.org/distancelearning>, and questions about the application process can be answered by sending an email to distancelearning@dcsms.org. *The application form must be completed by Wednesday, July 22nd.*

Please note extracurricular activities will not be available to full-time distance learning (VIP) students.

This is a tough decision and there is no right or wrong answer here. This is a personal decision each parent and student will have to make.

While CHMS intends to begin the school year with the traditional school model, all parents must be prepared for individual students or groups of students to be sent home for distance learning during the school year. Frequent changes could be made throughout the school year based on COVID-19 spread in our schools and community.

Student Safety

Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible at CHMS. Social distancing recommendations and safest practices will be in place and reminders will be posted throughout the building, and students will be reminded of these daily over the intercom. We will post signage

throughout the school regarding good hygiene practices. We will also post district guidance regarding staying at home when sick.

CHMS teachers and staff will reinforce procedures regarding daily health questions for students and follow guidelines for students and staff who are experiencing symptoms.

CHMS teachers and staff will follow contact tracing instructions from local and state health agencies. We will isolate and deep-clean impacted classrooms and spaces.

Masks are highly recommended for all students who will be on campus. This is to stop the spread of COVID and to avoid being quarantined if another student around them is diagnosed with COVID.

CHMS teachers and staff will be required to practice social distancing around students when feasible. When social distancing is not possible, teachers and staff are asked to wear a mask.

Parent Reminder:

Everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures.

Parents must have plans in place if CHMS closes or if their children are not able to attend school because of a quarantine situation. Parents are urged to be prepared to change plans within 24 hours if needed, and it is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file with their child's school.

If there is a significant COVID-19 spread, CHMS could be moved to a hybrid schedule or a distance learning schedule for a specified length of time. Any group of students could be moved to temporary distance learning for a period of time. This could apply to individual classes, individual schools, multiple schools, or the entire school district

Health Procedures

CHMS will have a full-time school nurse on campus all day. Sick students, regardless of illness, will be sent to our nurse, Mrs. Smith, and not to the front office. Mrs. Smith will handle all sick students and medical emergencies. First period teachers will be required to evaluate their students for symptoms of COVID before the start of class and communicate any concerns to Mrs. Smith. She will be vital in tracking students for quarantine purposes.

We will continue to issue daily medications to our well students in the front office.

Academic Concerns

In addition to safety, we recognize there are many academic concerns. We are including CHMS policy changes and updates taken directly from DCS Return-to-learn plan.

- The absence requirement in the DeSoto County Schools exemption policy has been removed for the 2020-2021 school year. Students are encouraged to stay at home if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- As a proactive measure, the grading scale for the 2020-2021 school year has been adjusted. Instead of a grade of 65 being the minimum passing grade, a grade of 60 will be the minimum passing grade. This adjustment was made to benefit the students in case of closures throughout the school year.
- The Mississippi Department of Education has given school districts the flexibility to adjust the amount of time that students spend in the classroom each day. DeSoto County Schools will reduce the amount

of instructional time in order to allow more time for bus arrivals and cleaning, extended class changes if needed, and extended lunch periods to promote social distancing.

- Distance learning opportunities are available for students on a full-time basis.
- If distance learning or a hybrid model must be implemented throughout the school year, students will be held accountable for assignments given during that time.

Parents and students MUST understand that student will be held accountable for assignments and will be given grades regardless if they choose the VIP (full-time online) or if they choose to come to school, AND we are shut-down in part or whole due to COVID.

Other Classroom & Instruction Matters

Below is information that we hope is temporary, but will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year until further notice:

- Once students are seated, they will be expected to remain seated unless instructed to move.
- Wearing of masks will be encouraged.
- The use of shared materials in class should be limited.
- Extra classroom furniture will be taken out if possible to accommodate more classroom space.
- Group work will be limited in order to promote social distancing.
- Students will all face in the same direction.
- Students will not be able to leave the classroom unless there is an emergency.
- All teachers will be required to have a seating chart for each class.

New Bell Schedule

Our start time has been moved forward 10 minutes to **8:10**. The time students may enter the building has been moved forward 10 minutes to 7:50. **Parents will NOT be allowed to drop student off prior to 7:50.**

Students will NOT wait in the fine dining hall (FDH) or the multipurpose facility (MPF) in the morning before school. They will go directly to their 1st period class upon arrival.

Break and Lunches

We will continue to have Break for students and sell break items from room to room.

We have added extra lunches to our schedule. Each teacher will have an assigned lunch time. Students will social distance to the greatest extent possible to, inside, and from the FDH. Students will have assigned seats to sit in the FDH that are spaced - skipping seats. No visitors will be allowed to come have lunch with students, and no "outside" lunches and/or fast food can be dropped off for students.

Class Change and Dismissal

Dismissals to certain periods will be staggered. Different grades will be on different bell schedules during certain periods to allow for extra lunch periods as well as to limit the number of students in the hall.

Hallway traffic at CMHS will flow in one direction. Students will only be allowed to travel to the right upon exiting classrooms. We will go over this with our students on the first day of school.

Afternoon dismissal will be staggered. Bus riders will be dismissed from 8th period by class.

Once bus riders are dismissed, car riders will report to the FDH and sit in designated areas for social distancing. **We are asking parents to have the name of the student they are picking up in their windshield or window to aid in expediency.**

We will have one or more staff members out front taking names of car riders and radioing them in to the FDH so the student can be sent out and ready for pick up by the time the parents are in the designated pick up spots.

Behavioral Expectations

Our expectations for behavior in and out of the classroom have NOT changed, but some of our methods for handling discipline issues HAVE changed.

- Inappropriate use of electronic devices will be handled as insubordination, but we will not collect student phones.
- Masks are highly encouraged. Masks may not cover the whole face and not contain any inappropriate wording or design. Bandanas will NOT be allowed to be worn as a mask.
- We will expect students to be in dress code.

Other Housekeeping Matters

Parents & Visitors

Student check-out: Parents should call ahead if they are checking out a student. We will send for them to minimize wait time and crowding in the front office. Parents must still come in to show ID.

Parent/visitor meetings and conferences will take place through technology and be by appointment. No in person meetings will be held unless there is an emergency and/or prior approval by administration.

Other Matters

Students will receive a printed agenda in a small binder. The agenda will have the normal expectations and procedures for CHMS as well as the new COVID procedures that we will follow.

Lockers will NOT be issued to students. **Students will be allowed to carry backpacks throughout the day from class to class.** Please note we have updated our supply lists to help minimize what students carry on a daily basis. Teachers will have a place and plan to store backpacks in the classroom.

Restroom access will be limited due to cleaning.

Students are encouraged to bring clear water bottles or containers.

No guest speakers will be scheduled. Also, we will not have assemblies... Including class meetings and Informational meetings or presentations such as class rings, etc.

First Day of School

Your student's homeroom teacher will make contact with you prior to the first day of school to let you and your student know what room to report to on the first day. Schedules will be passed out at this time. Additionally, we will post a map of our building on the CHMS website. This map will label halls and teacher classrooms to assist students in finding where to report on the first day.

I know this is a lot of information, but I hope this will help parents with planning and decision making as we prepare to reopen our school. Please refer to the DCS Return-To-Learn plan for additional guidance. Parents and teachers are in this together and will face many challenges as we figure out the best way to safely educate our precious children.

We hope with the greatest anticipation that we will return to our normal school policies and procedures as soon as possible but, until then, we will make the most of our circumstances.

Sincerely,

Larry Hood

Principal

Center Hill Middle School

<https://chms.desotocountyschools.org/>