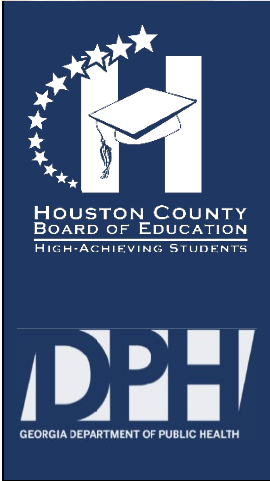
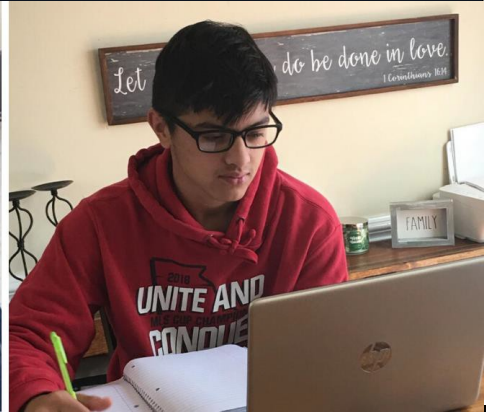


# Houston County School District Plan for Reopening





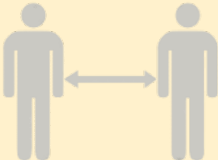

The Houston County School District's (HCSD) *Plan for Reopening* was developed to share the safety measures established to keep our students and employees safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. District leadership considered the guidance of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Georgia High School Association, Governor Kemp's executive orders, Houston County and North Central District Health Departments, and our local Board of Education. This *Plan for Reopening* focuses heavily on the health and physical requirements necessary for the 2020 - 2021 school year. The HCSD will continue to provide guidance and procedures to schools on navigating the academic, social, and emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and employees.

*Please note that this plan will be revised as needed.*

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# Definitions

<p><b>Face Coverings</b></p> 	<p>Recommendations for face coverings / masks / face shields differ based on the level of community spread and can be found throughout this document. Information will be provided to staff, students, and families on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Any policy regarding face coverings will be sensitive to the needs of students and staff with medical issues that make the wearing of a face covering inadvisable. &gt; <a href="#">CDC Guidance</a></p>	<p><b>Hand Sanitizer</b></p> 	<p>Hand sanitizers should contain at least 60% alcohol and only used with staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer. &gt; <a href="#">CDC Guidance</a></p>	<p><b>Social Distancing (Physical Distancing)</b></p> 	<p>Social distancing, also known as “physical distancing,” means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces. &gt; <a href="#">CDC Guidance</a></p>
		<p><b>Clean/Disinfect</b></p> 	<p>Safe storage out of reach of children and correct application of disinfectants will be ensured. &gt; <a href="#">CDC Guidance</a></p>		

## Guiding Principles for Decision Making



- Social distancing will be expected.
- Regular hand washing will be part of the daily routine.
- Staff members and students should wear a face covering in all areas of the school campus where social distancing requirements cannot be achieved or maintained. Examples include areas such as on school buses, at bus stops, during hallway transitions, or at drop-off/pick-up.
- Visitors will wear a face covering while on campus.
- Elementary students will form cohorts by class, with limited interaction with other classes.
- All school buildings and buses will be cleaned and sanitized.
- Daily pre-screening is required of staff members and by parents of students prior to arriving at school.
- Sick employees and students will be required to remain at home.
- Large gatherings are suspended at this time.

# Health and Wellness



## What families can expect from the District and schools regarding health and wellness:

- All staff will receive COVID-19 training on transmission, prevention, and [use of face coverings](#) with an opportunity for Q & A.
- All staff and students will be issued a cloth face covering.
- A daily staff health screener will be implemented.
- Prevention protocols will be reviewed regularly with students.
- Face coverings are required when social distancing requirements cannot be achieved or maintained.
- Parents and other visitors will wear a face covering while on campus.
- In partnership with the [Department of Public Health](#), expectations and procedures for notification of illness have been established.
- District signage will be posted describing signs/symptoms, proper handwashing, sanitizing, social distancing, and when to stay home.
- There will be frequent promotion of daily hygiene and social distancing measures throughout the school building.

## What families can do to support the health and wellness of students, peers, and school staff:

- Be informed about this reopening plan and ask questions to clarify procedures.
- Update parent contact information in [Infinite Campus](#), the parent portal.
- Screen your child daily prior to coming to school. Keep your child home if they are sick or exhibiting [symptoms](#).
- Actively monitor your child's health daily for any changes or concerns.
- Follow appropriate [DPH procedures](#) regarding your child's return to class after illness.
- Inform the school as soon as a positive COVID test result occurs with any members of the household.
- Follow healthcare provider or [health department directives](#) regarding the need for quarantine or isolation for you or your family.
- Provide your child with age appropriate [explanation of COVID-19](#), and ask what questions they may have to ensure they have accurate information and to relieve their fears.
- Educate your child to consistently self-regulate their behaviors in following CDC and school guidelines for the safety of themselves, other students, and staff. Educate them about handwashing, social distancing, refraining from touching others, and refraining from touching their face.
- Practice ways your child can greet/interact with peers without using physical contact.
- Encourage your child to wear a face covering, wash hands frequently, and follow good general hygiene practices.
- Provide personal face covering and hand sanitizer for your child.
- Reinforce/educate your child on proper handwashing, covering coughs or coughing into a tissue, sneezing into their elbow, wearing a face covering, and social distancing.
- Avoid any after school face-to-face social interactions between your child and their peers unless [CDC guidelines](#) are followed.
- Speak with your healthcare provider regarding the importance of flu vaccination this season to avoid absences.
- Encourage your child to eat healthy, exercise, and develop good sleeping habits.
- Be patient and understanding when plans and procedures need to change to keep students and staff safe.

# Mental Health and Wellness



## What families can expect from the District and schools regarding mental health and wellness:

- The Houston County School District is aware that all of our students and families have been impacted in some way by COVID-19, and is prepared to continue to support our students when they return to school, regardless of the learning option they select.
- Resources are available to assist your student with mental health needs. This ranges from direct support from our school counselors, social workers, psychologist and school nurses, as well as connecting your child with community resources.
- There will be more frequent student well-being checks upon school reopening to ensure students are receiving the emotional or mental health support that they need.
- The *Houston Hopeline* remains open to serve students and families. Call (478) 273-9174 with any crisis.

## What families can do to support the mental health and wellness of students, peers and school staff:

It is important to understand that we are all in this pandemic together. Just as your family has been impacted by COVID-19, your student's classmates, teachers, administrators and all school staff have been impacted as well. The safety and wellbeing of our community is extremely important as we prepare to reopen our schools. [Crisis resources](#) are available for your child. New procedures have been established to ensure safety in our schools. Please talk to your student about the importance of learning and following the new procedures.

# Practicing Prevention



## What families can expect from the District and schools regarding practicing prevention:

- A classroom seating chart will be established for all classes, including connections, specials and electives.
- Desks will face the same direction.
- Teachers will remove non-essential furniture to maximize space between desks.
- Classrooms will be provided necessary cleaning and sanitizing supplies.
- Custodians will be given a school specific disinfection routine and schedule.
- Books returned to the Media Center will sit for 24 hours after they are returned.
- Programmable sinks in all schools will be reprogrammed to run for at least 30 seconds.
- Students will be taught correct hand washing procedures.
- Students will be encouraged to practice frequent hand washing.
- Each classroom in the District will be provided with hand sanitizer.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer.

- Staff members and students should wear a face covering in all areas of the school campus where physical distancing requirements cannot be achieved or maintained.
- Signage will be posted to encourage preventive practices.
- Students will not share disposable items, such as glue, scissors, markers, crayons, colored pencils, unless properly cleaned between uses or left for 24 hours.
- Shared items, such as textbooks, keyboards, mouse, and science lab equipment, will be sanitized between groups.
- The water supply to water fountains will be cut off, and bottled water will be available.
- Events resulting in students congregating are suspended.
- Recess and lunch times will be staggered to implement social distancing.

## Transporting Students



### What families can expect from the District and schools regarding transporting students:

- Students and transportation staff members are required to wear face coverings while on the school bus.
- Bus riders will have assigned seats.
- No temperature checks of students will be required before boarding the bus.
- Each bus will be provided with hand sanitizer, paper towels, disposable gloves, tissues, and disinfectant cleanser. The drivers and monitors will follow a schedule to clean and sanitize the buses regularly.
- Students will only be allowed to ride their assigned bus.
- Field trips, Community Based Instruction trips, and non-essential transportation are suspended.
- Bus and car rider lanes will be marked with social distancing reminders.
- Staff members will be at bus and car rider lanes, reminding students to social distance.
- Paths to enter and exit the building will be marked.
- Hallways will be marked with clear pathways to the bus ramp and car lanes.
  - **Buses:** Student arrival and dismissal will be staggered to allow for social distancing.
  - **Car Riders:** Students will line up to allow for social distancing under the supervision of staff.
  - **Walkers:** Students will be dismissed at the designated time and reminded about social distancing as they exit the building. Parents who meet their student at the school should not be near the car/bus dismissal area and should practice social distancing.
  - **Walk Ups:** Parents shall not enter the building. Students must exit the building to meet a parent after being dismissed by an adult.
  - **After School Program:** Students will be called to the front to meet their parent for dismissal.

### What families can do to support the transporting of students:

- When possible, transport your child to and from school.
- Screen your child daily prior to coming to school. Keep your child home if they are sick or exhibiting symptoms.
- Do not enter the building when dropping off or picking up your child.

# Entering and Exiting School Buildings



## What families can expect from the District and schools regarding entering and exiting school buildings:

- Parents and visitors will not be allowed past the front office for any reason.
- School Meet and Greets and new student orientations will be virtual or drive-thru only.
- School volunteers will not be allowed.
- Parents will not be allowed to walk students to the classroom.
- Safety precautions will include social distancing markings and one-way building entrances and exits.
- A staff member at the car and bus ramp will remind students to social distance.
- Staff members who open car doors at the primary/elementary schools will use hand sanitizer and/or gloves.
- Parent conferences will be conducted either virtually or in the office with proper social distancing.
- PTO and School Council meetings shall be conducted virtually.
- Parents who walk-up for dismissal will not be allowed to enter the building.
- High-touch surfaces will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Elementary schools with sufficient demand will offer an after school program.

# Serving Meals



## What families can expect from the District and schools regarding serving meals:

- Students will wash hands before meals.
- Cafeterias will have designated entrances and exits.
- Meals will be served using a “grab and go” service style with disposable containers and utensils.
- Food items will be pre-portioned, instead of self-service.
- Menus will include as much variety as possible, while maintaining efficient and safe service.
- Each serving line in the cafeteria will contain the same menu items.
- Students will come through their designated serving line with their class.
- Students will not use a pin pad to enter ID numbers at the cash register.
- Class rosters may be used, or students may verbally communicate their numbers to the cashier.
- Meals may be consumed in alternate locations such as classrooms, outdoors, etc.
- If meals are consumed in the cafeteria, there will be a modified seating arrangement to ensure social distancing.
- Lunch monitors and/or custodians will disinfect each table and seat between classes when eating in the lunchroom.
- Families are encouraged to pre-load any necessary funds onto student meal accounts using [MySchoolBucks.com](https://myschoolbucks.com) to minimize contact.

- Meal schedules may be adjusted as necessary to ensure social distancing.
- Visitors will not be allowed to eat with students.
- All students, to include Houston Virtual distance learners, will have access to school meals.
- Families participating in Houston Virtual will be provided information on how to receive meals.
- School nutrition staff will follow all appropriate guidance.

## Cohort Transitions



### What families can expect from the District and schools regarding cohort transitions:

- Students will remain with their cohort when possible, to help limit the number of interactions on a daily basis. A cohort is a group of students who work through a grade level or subject curriculum together.
- During transitions where social distancing cannot be practiced, students and staff will wear face coverings.
- Schools will implement directional hall traffic where possible.
- The use of hallway lockers is suspended.
- Transitions will be coordinated to promote physical distancing.
- Students will be educated regarding procedures and expectations during transitions.

## Supporting Teaching and Learning



### What families can expect from the District and schools regarding teaching and learning support:

Due to COVID-19, the District is offering two options for students.

#### Option 1

Students will return to campus with enhanced health and safety protocols.

#### Option 2

Distance Learning will be offered through Houston Virtual, a learning platform to deliver online courses to our students. Elementary schools (grades K-5) will utilize Google Classroom, along with the i-Ready digital learning program. Middle schools (grades 6-8) will use Google Classroom and Odysseyware, a digital learning program. High school (grades 9-12) will utilize Odysseyware. All students will have a district-assigned teacher.

Parents interested in Houston Virtual must:

- commit to distance learning for the minimum of a grading period, which is 9 weeks for elementary students and 18 weeks for middle and high school students;
- have a device that will connect to the internet, along with internet access at home;

- During the Houston Virtual registration, parents may indicate the need for a device or internet, and the District will try to assist with this need.
- be available for instruction during normal school hours;
- log-in and participate in the class to be counted as present for the day;
- meet all normal academic and attendance requirements;
- take state-mandated standardized tests; and
- be enrolled in the District.

In addition, students in Houston Virtual distance learning will have limited options for specials, connections, and electives. They will not participate in school activities or extracurricular activities.

**What families can do to support students with instruction for both options:**

- Communicate with teachers on a regular basis and let them know if your child is experiencing specific challenges.
- Visit the [district website](#) regularly for updates.
- Talk to your child routinely to make sure he/she understands work expectations.
- Talk to your child regarding how they are feeling.
- Be patient and accepting of how they are feeling during this stressful time.
- Maintain a daily routine around school and schoolwork.
- Conduct check-ins regarding academics by logging into Google Classroom with your child and checking their courses.
- Encourage your child to seek assistance for emotional or mental health by talking with their school counselor.
- Reach out to your child’s teacher or counselor with any changes that may impact your child’s success.

***Elementary (K-5)***

**Face-to-Face blended learning model:**

- Teachers will use a blended learning approach that includes the integration of traditional instructional methods and technology learning programs.
- Teachers will use Google Classroom a minimum of 1-2 times per week.
- Teachers will use school level online learning programs (i-Ready, Istation, STAR Reading, etc.).
- Remediation and enrichment will be provided within the classroom.
- The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment will be administered to students receiving face-to-face instruction between weeks 1-4 of the school year.
- Elementary – After School Program (ASP)
  - Elementary schools make decisions about having ASP programs yearly based on staffing and the number of student registrations.
  - ASP will continue with the use of social distancing and proper handwashing/sanitizer use.
  - Staff members and students will wear a face covering where social distancing requirements cannot be maintained.
  - Visitors will wear a face covering while on campus.
  - The approximate adult to student ratio will be 1:15.
  - Students will be in the same cohort each day.
  - Snacks will not be distributed in large group settings.

**Houston Virtual:**

- Teachers will deliver instruction through Houston Virtual, using Google Classroom, i-Ready and video conferencing.
- Specials will be offered.
- PE will be required.



## Middle (6-8)

### Face-to-Face blended learning model:

- Teachers will use a blended learning approach that includes the integration of traditional instructional methods and technology learning programs.
- Teachers will use Google Classroom a minimum of 2 times per week.
- Teachers will use school level online learning programs (e.g., Edgenuity, Study Island).
- Remediation and enrichment will be provided within the classroom.
- The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment will be administered to students receiving face-to-face instruction between weeks 1-4 of the school year.

### Houston Virtual:

- Distance learning teachers will use Google Classroom, Odysseyware and video conferencing.
- Electives and Connections courses will be offered.

## High (9-12)

### Face-to-Face blended learning model:

- Teachers will use a blended learning approach that includes the integration of traditional instructional methods and technology learning programs.
- Teachers will use Google Classroom a minimum of 2 times per week.
- Teachers may use school level online learning programs.
- Remediation and enrichment will be provided within the classroom.
- The Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment will be administered to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students receiving face-to-face instruction between weeks 1-4 of the school year.

### Houston Virtual:

- Teachers will assign lessons through Odysseyware and deliver support lessons through video conferencing.

# Access to Special Programs and Services



### What families can expect from the District and schools regarding access to special programs:

- **Special Education Services:** Students with disabilities, including those with underlying health conditions, will continue to receive services in person or virtually when school reopens. An Individual Education Plans (IEP) meeting may be held to determine the most appropriate services. The district is committed to providing free and appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible in alignment with public health guidelines. Collaboration with families has always been an integral part of the special education process and continues to be essential during this time. To address the unique needs of students with disabilities, staff will continue to work with families to collaboratively identify the most essential services for each student. IEPs will be reviewed for the circumstances of the learning environment that the family selects.
- **Community Based Instruction:** Although students with disabilities who access Community Based Instruction will not take trips in the community, they will conduct activities in the school building.
- **Child Find and Evaluation:** HCSD will continue to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having a disability and needing special education and related services. We are mindful that students have been displaced from their typical

learning environment when initiating the referral process. Evaluations may be conducted remotely or in-person, while adhering to public health guidelines. Educational evaluations that were suspended during closure have resumed, with all parties adhering to safety protocols. Evaluations that were suspended are due to be completed within 45 days of school resuming.

- **IEP meetings:** HCSD is committed to providing families the opportunity for meaningful participation in the special education process. IEP teams will partner with families to determine the most practical format to conduct meetings.
- **COVID Compensatory Impact Services:** IEP teams will review each SWD progress monitoring mid-September to determine eligibility for COVID Compensatory Impact Services. Parents may decline the review. Teams will develop a plan for delivery of services per the student's IEP and review again by the end of the semester.
- **Itinerant Personnel:** Personnel who travel between schools will wear a face covering where social distancing requirements cannot be achieved or maintained. They will be provided with sanitizing products and designated workspaces, in which they will work as much as possible. Classroom visits will only be made when necessary.
- **Social Workers:** Social workers will make home visits, but will attempt to call parents and meet outside the residence while wearing a face covering.
- **Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan accommodations in Houston Virtual:** All students attending Houston Virtual will be provided their specified accommodations per their IEP or 504 Plan. The IEP team will work collaboratively to determine appropriate accommodations.
- **Related Services:** Students in Houston Virtual will receive their IEP related services (OT/PT/SLP) virtually.
- **Students Pursuing Alternative Standards:** Parents have the option of enrolling students pursuing alternative standards in traditional schools or Houston Virtual with a Distance Learning Plan.
- **Small Group Classes:** Students placed in small group classes that enroll in Houston Virtual may not have the same teacher that they would have in the traditional setting.
- **Pre-K Students with Disabilities:** Parents of Pre-K students with disabilities may enroll in traditional school or Houston Virtual.
- **Medically Vulnerable Populations:** School health staff will develop or review medical plans in consultation with the family and child's doctor for medically vulnerable students.
- **ESOL/ELL:** The District is committed to continuing to identify and serve English Language Learners. Whether in-person or an alternative format, ESOL strategies will continue to be implemented by instructional and support staff to address the academic and language needs of ELL students. In addition, ESOL teams will continue to partner with families and schools to provide resources and tools to ensure the academic success of ELL students. Whether the students attend on campus or Houston Virtual, we are committed to providing instruction that will allow students to reach their maximum potential.

## Extracurricular Activities and Athletics



### What families can expect from the district and your school regarding Extracurricular Activities and Athletics:

- Strict cleaning procedures and guidelines for athletic venues, sports equipment, locker rooms, and restrooms.
- Use of face coverings will be based on current district procedures.
- Social distancing guidelines will be encouraged in all athletic facilities and performing arts centers.
- Only approved trips will be permitted.
- As of Nov. 2, 2020, schools may reinstate club meetings and activities for face-to-face learners, with implementation of safety procedures. (Revised Oct. 28, 2020)

## What families can do to support the health and wellness of your student, their peers and school staff beyond the school day:

- Make sure your child has a water bottle and a face covering when they go to practice each day.
- Remind them to wash their hands frequently when on campus and also before and after practice.
- Please be patient with our new processes and understand that things can change quickly.
  
- Please notify your child's coach or school if he/she becomes ill after participating in practice or other activities held on the school campus.
- Please encourage your child to practice social distancing at all times possible.
- Practice social distancing when attending events to support your child.
- A face covering will be worn at all events where social distancing requirements cannot be achieved or maintained.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer when available.
- Do not attend an event if you are feeling ill or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Model positive behavior and words for your child. They will follow your lead.

## When a Child or Staff Member Becomes Sick at School



- Each school will identify an area where anyone exhibiting COVID-like symptoms can be kept separate from other individuals.
- Med Techs and School Nurses will use *Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions* when caring for anyone presenting with symptoms of illness.
- Employees who present with symptoms of illness will be sent home and advised not to return until they have met [DPH criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- Anyone who has had exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 will be notified and required to follow [DPH guidance](#).
- The following protocol will be utilized in the event that a student presents with symptoms of illness:

## Student Illness Screening Protocol

1. Assess symptoms of ill student. Allow only one student at a time in the Health Clinic.
  - If the student is exhibiting behavior that could produce airborne droplets (coughing, sneezing, clearing throat), place a procedural face covering on the student.
  - Take the temperature of the student. The student presenting with the symptoms of illness listed below should go home immediately until symptoms resolve and they are fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication. Please keep ill student separate from other staff and students while arranging transport home.
    - fever of 100.00 or higher
    - shortness of breath
    - chills/repeated shaking with chills
    - vomiting
    - rash/red eyes, cracked/swollen lips or tongue, swelling of hands/feet, stomach pain
    - muscle pain
    - difficulty breathing
    - new loss of taste or smell
    - diarrhea
2. Assess for additional symptoms of an illness with or without a cough present.
  - Review the student's health record to determine if symptoms could be the result of an underlying diagnosis or condition.
  - Discuss results of health screening with parents to determine appropriate course of action.
  - Assessment of symptoms should include the following:
    - headache
    - sore throat
    - undiagnosed rash
    - stomach ache
    - sinus symptoms/runny nose
    - fatigue
3. Screen student and parent using questions below to determine if further action should be taken.
  - Have you or anyone in your household had a fever, chills, muscle or body aches in the previous 14 days?
  - Have you or anyone in your household had a cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or sore throat in the previous 14 days?
  - Have you or anyone in your household had fatigue, headache or new loss of taste or smell in the previous 14 days?
  - Have you or anyone in your household had congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea in the previous 14 days?
  - Have you or anyone in your household been diagnosed with COVID-19?
  - Have you or anyone in your household been in contact with or cared for anyone diagnosed with COVID-19?

If the student and/or parent answer *yes* to any of the above questions, the student should be isolated from other students and staff. The parent/guardian should be notified that they will be sent home and should seek care from their health care provider. Obtain/verify a contact phone number for the parent/guardian for follow up on the student's health.

Report any ill student with above symptoms and/or positive health screening responses to your school nurse. The school nurse will follow up with the parent/guardian and determine a return to school date as appropriate.

The clinic area will be thoroughly cleaned with an approved disinfectant prior to seeing other students.