

## Return to School Information:

\* Social distancing will be difficult in many ways with school opening again. There are a limited number of buses, and we have limited classroom space. Students and staff will social distance as much as possible to try to keep everyone healthy.

\* Different families have different needs and situations. Because of this, full-time distance learning will be an option for students during the 2020-2021 school year. Distance learning will allow students to remain enrolled in DeSoto County Schools while receiving teacher-facilitated **online instruction** at home. Parents can register by completing the distance learning application on the DeSoto County Schools website. (more details on next page)  
If you have questions about the application process send an email to [distancelearning@dcsms.org](mailto:distancelearning@dcsms.org) or check with your child's EL teacher. While face-to-face interaction is a better means of instruction, the distance learning option is available for parents who do not want their children in the classrooms.

\* Everyone must be prepared for possible closures. Parents must have plans that can be activated immediately if there is a school closure or if their children are not able to attend school because of a quarantine situation. Plans may have to change within 24 hours, so it is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file with their child's school.

Information about the 2020-2010 return to school plan to help you decide:

### Cafeteria:

Student breakfasts will be "Grab and Go" meals that students will take to the classroom. Schools may alter their lunch schedule so that fewer students are in the cafeteria at one time, and schools may also serve lunch in the classroom in certain situations. Social distancing will be promoted in the serving lines and at cafeteria tables.

### Buses:

Because social distancing on buses will be a challenge, parents are encouraged to provide transportation to school if possible. It is strongly recommended that parents provide masks for their children for bus transportation. Each bus will be sanitized between routes, and buses will be deep cleaned as frequently as possible. A seating chart will be developed to maintain as much distance as possible. Siblings may be asked to sit together in the same seat to allow more social distancing opportunities for students.

### Building Guidelines:

All facilities will be deep cleaned before the return of students and staff, and buildings will receive a deep cleaning on a regular schedule. Every campus will have one maintenance employee that is devoted to cleaning frequently touched areas throughout the entire school day.

## Operational guidelines:

- There will be minimal movement inside the classroom. Once students are seated, they will be expected to remain seated unless given instructions by the teacher to move to another location.
- Morning arrival procedures and class changes may be altered on each campus to promote social distancing.
- School assemblies will take place outdoors with social distancing procedures as feasible.
- Students will hear frequent intercom announcements about fever, sickness, and good hygiene.
- The use of shared objects at recess will be limited.
- The use of shared materials in class will be limited. Each student will have separate materials, pencils, crayons, etc.
- In elementary grades, teachers may switch and students may stay in the same classroom all day when feasible.
- Group work will be limited in order to promote social distancing.
- Students should all face in the same direction in class when feasible. This is dependent upon classroom furniture, enrollment, and room size.
- Teachers will keep the same seating arrangements on a weekly basis.

## Health & Hygiene:

- Every elementary school, middle school, and high school will have a full-time, on-site nurse.
- Because social distancing will often be a challenge, it is strongly recommended that parents provide masks for their children if age-appropriate. While masks are not required, masks could reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission, and masks significantly reduce the possibility of a student being quarantined by the Mississippi State Department of Health for 14 days because of close contact at school with a confirmed COVID-19 case.
- Students will be taught and reminded about proper handwashing and cough covering.
- Field trips will not be allowed until further notice. This situation will be monitored throughout the school year.
- Guest speakers will not be allowed until further notice. This situation will be monitored throughout the school year.
- Shared materials (such as computers) will be cleaned after each use.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home.
- Home is the first screening point on the continuum. It is requested that parents check for symptoms and check their child's temperature each morning before leaving for school. Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness to the school nurse.
- Students will be asked at the beginning of each day to confirm that they are not experiencing the following symptoms: high temperature, cough, chills, shortness of breath, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell. School nurses may conduct temperature checks and well-being checks as deemed necessary throughout the school day.
- An isolation area will be designated for students exhibiting symptoms while they wait for their parents.
- Mental health support will be available for students on each campus.

Are you thinking about applying for the Distance Learning option?  
Information to consider:

In order to be enrolled in the DeSoto County Schools Virtual Instructional Program to begin the 2020-2021 school year, the application form must be completed by **Wednesday, July 22nd**. If you are interested in the DeSoto County Schools Virtual Instructional Program, you can find the application form on the DeSoto County Schools website

- Online/digital learning will be the primary method of working towards competency in a grade level and/or content area. Because distance learning will not be delivered through paper packets, **students must have access to adequate Internet services**. Students will use the district-approved online learning management system, Schoology.

- Distance learning students will follow the academic calendar approved by the school board. Classes will start on the first student day in August 2020 and end on the last student day in the spring of 2021.

- Best practices for distance learning will be employed to include rigorous instruction, high expectations of student performance, and meeting all grade-level standards.

- Distance learning students must be committed to online learning. While distance learning is an option for students in unique situations, distance learning does not serve as an equitable alternative to the traditional classroom setting.

- Attendance will be taken in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education's attendance guidelines regarding distance learning.

- Some elective courses and opportunities may not be offered to full-time distance learning students. For example, extracurricular activities such as athletics and fine arts will not be available because full-time distance learning students will be working off-campus.

- All Desoto County grading policies and procedures will apply during distance learning.

- A unique partnership must be established between all educators, students, parents and caregivers. It is imperative that all parties communicate to pay close attention to the development of each child and ensure that appropriate grade level growth takes place at a distance.

- Grab-and-Go meals will be available for distance learning students. The Child Nutrition Department will follow a schedule similar to the Spring 2020 Grab-and-Go meal distribution plan.

- Approved applications will be in effect on a semester-by-semester basis. There will be an opportunity to transfer from full-time virtual learning to the school/traditional classroom setting at the end of each nine weeks.

- Expressing intent to participate constitutes a commitment to virtual learning and acknowledgement to all the statements in this document, the DeSoto County Schools Distance Learning Description and Considerations.

- Universal screener and state assessments are required by the Mississippi Department of Education and/or state law. Benchmark assessments, Advanced Placement assessments, and other assessments due to the student's classes or grade may also be necessary. At this point in time, students in a distance learning environment may be required to participate in any or all of these assessments. These assessments will be completed at home if possible. Details regarding these assessments will be discussed with guardians when they become available.

