

DCHS Parents and Guardians,

I wanted to updated you on our Return to Learn plan. We didn't make many changes, but we did make a few. The changes will be in bold lettering. Many of the guidelines and suggestions that we are forced to consider before re-opening come from MDE, MS Dept of Health, and the CDC.

- These guidelines drastically and directly affect many DCHS “normal” Policies and Procedures, and we have to 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.

### **Desoto Central High School Return-To-Learn Plan**

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

#### Student Safety

Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible at DCHS. 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, and district guidance regarding staying at home when sick.

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

DCHS teachers and staff will follow contact tracing instructions from local and state health agencies.

We will isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces.

We will have a full-time school nurse who will be on campus all day. Sick students, regardless of illness, will not be sent to the office. Nurse Ellen Bickley will handle all sick students and medication and medical emergencies. She will be vital in tracking students for quarantine purposes.

- 1<sup>st</sup> block teachers will be required to evaluate their students’ symptoms of COVID before they start class and communicate with the school nurse any issues.

Below is information that we hope is temporary, but will be in effect for the 2020-2021 school year unless otherwise announced:

#### Classrooms and Instruction

- Once students are seated, they will be expected to remain seated unless instructed to move.
- Teachers must have social distancing in place and encourage wearing protective masks in their classroom.
- The use of shared materials in class should be limited.
- Extra classroom furniture should be taken out if possible, to provide more classroom space.
- Group work will be very limited to promote social distancing.
- All teachers will be required to have a seating chart assigned for each class.

Our start time has been moved back 10 minutes to 8:35.

- The time students may enter the building has been moved back 10 minutes to 8:00.
- Parents will NOT be allowed to drop students off prior to 8:00.

Students will NOT wait in the cafeteria or the gym in the morning before school.

- Students will go directly to their 1<sup>st</sup> block class upon arriving on campus by vehicle.
- Buses will drop students off as soon as they arrive at school (After 8) and those students will go directly to their 1<sup>st</sup> block class.

Dismissals to each block will be staggered.

- Different students will be dismissed at different times from block to block. Example: freshmen will be dismissed at 10:00, sophomores at 10:05...etc. This schedule will rotate day to day.

We will not dismiss from the classroom for break.

- We will serve break by cart to classrooms toward the end of 1<sup>st</sup> block.
- Every student will have break in their classroom each day.

We will have lunches scheduled during the entirety of 3<sup>rd</sup> block.

- Each 3<sup>rd</sup> Block teacher will have an assigned lunch time.
- Students will practice social distancing in the cafeteria.
- We will have three lunches each day. We will have an A, B and C lunch. Example: Each group will consist of 18-20 classes; one group of 6-7 classes will go to the café to eat the first day and the other classes will get grab and go lunches from the café and return to class to eat. The groups will rotate each day. Every student will sit down and eat in the café every third day. **The seats will be marked in the cafeteria.**

Afternoon dismissal will be staggered.

- Bus riders will be dismissed from 4<sup>th</sup> block in different groups according to their bus number.
- We will have a separate dismissal for car riders and walkers.

Printed Student Handbooks will not be issued.

- Students will have access, and be expected to know all DCHS rules, policies, and procedures that have not been affected by COVID AND/OR have been changed due to COVID.
- An updated (COVID) handbook will be printed and distributed to students and be accessible online.
- Students are encouraged to bring clear water bottles or containers.
- **A copy of the hand book will be on our website and on Schoology.**

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

- Inappropriate use of electronic devices will be handled as insubordination, but we will not collect student phones.
- **Masks are required. Students can wear the gaiters for a face covering. Bandanas will NOT be allowed to be worn as a mask.**
- Discipline issues and referrals will be handled electronically.
- We will expect students to be in dress code.
- We will have a procedure for late check-ins to 1<sup>st</sup> block.

We will lock our doors at the beginning of the day once students are in 1<sup>st</sup> block and anyone who needs to enter after that will have to call the school to be let in.

Parent meetings and conferences will be through technology--No in person meetings unless an emergency and/or approved by admin.

No guest speakers will be scheduled.

No visitors are allowed to come have lunch with students.

No assemblies... Including informational meetings or presentations such as class rings, etc.

No "outside" lunches and/or fast food will be allowed to be dropped off for students.

All visitors wishing to meet at DCHS face to face must be by appointment, unless an emergency.

**If parents are checking a student out, they will call the school and come to the foyer to show their ID to our front desk receptionist.**

**We will utilize curb-side services for parents and visitors who have to be on campus for various reasons. They will be directed to call the school once they are on campus, and we will assist them while they wait in their vehicle.**

Restroom access will be limited due to cleaning. Students will have scheduled opportunities during the day.

Students are encouraged to bring water bottles.

Other than safety, there are many concerns over Academic Guidelines. Below are our DCHS policies guideline changes/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, graduation requirements were revised for the Class of 2021. These adjustments were made to benefit the seniors in case there are closures throughout the school year. Graduation requirements will be consistent with the Mississippi Department of Education graduation requirements.
- 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 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 students will be held accountable for assignments and will be given grades regardless if they choose VIP (full-time online) or if they choose to come to school, AND we are shut-down in part or whole due to COVID.**

If you have additional questions, please contact one of our school counselors.

9<sup>th</sup> Grade: Lauren Springer [lauren.springer@dcsms.org](mailto:lauren.springer@dcsms.org)

10<sup>th</sup> Grade: Blakely Dendy [blakely.dendy@dcsms.org](mailto:blakely.dendy@dcsms.org)

11<sup>th</sup> Grade: Meghan Vaughn [meghan.vaughn@dcsms.org](mailto:meghan.vaughn@dcsms.org)

12<sup>th</sup> Grade: Adrian McNeil [adrian.mcneil@dcsms.org](mailto:adrian.mcneil@dcsms.org)

**Reminder:**

Everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures.

Parents must have plans in place if DCHS 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.

If there is a significant COVID-19 spread, DCS could be moved to a hybrid, or a distance learning schedule for an unspecified length of time. This could apply to individual classes, individual schools, multiple schools, or the entire school district.

PPE masks are recommended for all students who will be on campus. This is to help prevent the spread of COVID and to avoid being quarantined if another student around them were to be diagnosed with COVID. DCHS teachers and staff will be required to practice social distancing around students. When social distancing is not possible, teachers and staff will wear masks when feasible.

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. We are all in this together; parents and teachers 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.

It's a great day to be a Jaguar!!

Sincerely,

Cliff Johnston  
Principal  
Desoto Central High School

