

OBHS 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 OBHS directly so you can start planning.

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 directly affect many of OBHS “Normal” Policies and Procedures drastically 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.

Olive Branch High School Return-To-Learn Plan

At Olive Branch, 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.

- Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) will be an option for students during the 2020-2021 school year. Virtual Instruction Program distance learning 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.
- 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. This is a personal decision each parent and student will have to make together.

While OBHS 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 spread in our schools and community.

Student Safety

Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible at OBHS. Social distancing recommendations and safest practices will be in place, 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.

OBHS teachers and staff will reinforce procedures regarding daily health questions for students and follow guidelines for students and staff who are experiencing symptoms. OBHS teachers and staff will follow contact tracing instructions from local and state health agencies. We will isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces.

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

Classrooms and Instruction

- Once students are seated, they will be expected to remain seated unless instructed to move.
- Teachers must do their best to distance student seating and promote 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 accommodate more classroom space.
- Group work will be very limited in order to promote social distancing.
- Students should all face in the same direction.

All teachers will be required to have a seating chart assigned for each class.

Our start time has been moved back 10 minutes to 7:45.

- The time students may enter the building remains 7:00.
- **Parents are encouraged not to drop off students prior to 7:00.**

Students will go to their first block class at 7:10.

- Buses will stagger letting students off to maximize distancing.
- We will serve break by cart to classrooms toward the beginning of 1st block.

We will have lunches scheduled during the entirety of 3rd block

- Each 3rd block teacher will have an assigned lunch time and tables.
- Students will remain 6 feet apart to and from the cafeteria.
- Students will have assigned tables in the cafeteria and must skip a seat between each individual.

Printed student agendas will not be issued. The student handbook will be available online.

- Students will have access, and be expected to know all of OBHS rules, policies, and procedures that haven't been affected by COVID AND/OR have been changed due to COVID.
- Students will be allowed to carry backpacks throughout the day from class to class.
- Teachers will have a place and plan to store backpacks in the classroom.

Dismissals to each block will be staggered.

- 9th and 10th grades will change classes together followed by a separate change for 11th and 12th grades.

Afternoon dismissal will be staggered as well.

- Teachers that drives buses and their 4th block classes will be dismissed at 2:34.
- Classes on the east side of campus will be dismissed at 2:37.
- All remaining classes will be dismissed at 2:40.

Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles rather than use the fountains.

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

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 highly encouraged. Masks must be ear loop style mask and not contain any inappropriate wording or design. Bandanas will NOT be allowed to be worn as a mask.
- Discipline issues and office referrals will be handled in open areas when possible.
- We will expect students to be in dress code
- We will have a procedure for late check-ins to 1st block.

No guest speakers will be scheduled.

No visitors are allowed to come have lunch with students.

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

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

No items can be dropped off to students such as clothes, cleats, phones, etc.

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

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. The school nurse will handle all sick students and medical emergencies. She will be vital in tracking students for quarantine purposes.

- 1st block teachers will be required to evaluate their students' symptoms of Covid before they start class and communicate with the school nurse any issues

Other than safety, there are many concerns over Academic Guidelines. Below is our OBHS 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 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 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 if we are shut-down in part or whole due to Covid.

Student schedules will be available in PowerSchool on July 31. They will also be mailed out July 31. Students must bring their schedule with them on the first day of school. Once you receive your students schedule please contact a school counselor if you have questions.

Last names beginning A-G katelyn.hutchens@dcsms.org

Last names beginning H-O lindsey.chunn@dcsms.org

Last names beginning P-Z angela.burkes@dcsms.org

Parent Reminder:

Everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures.

Parents must have plans in place if OBHS 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. It is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file.

If there is a significant Covid spread, OBHS could be moved to a hybrid, 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.

PPE 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.

- OBHS 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 children.

Olive Branch is a community of tremendous strength and determination. We will succeed as many generations have done before.

With Much OB Pride,

Jacob Stripling, Principal

