



# **Return**



# **To Learn!**

***Plan for Reopening Alexander City Schools***

**2020 - 2021**

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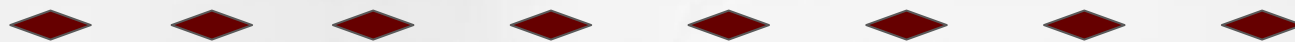
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# Acknowledgement & Disclaimer

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**Special appreciation is extended to the educators, community members and state and local leadership teams who contributed to the provision of data and development of this document.**



The Alexander City Schools “20-21 Return-to-Learn” plan is provided as interim guidance and does not constitute legal or medical advice, or circumvent any applicable laws, policies, or mandates established by federal, state, or local agencies. This document is put in place based on the current national pandemic as related to COVID-19/Coronavirus. All information, content, and materials available in this document are for general informational purposes only and should be viewed as advisory unless it’s specifically authorized by state statute, according to Alabama Code section. Guidance contained within this document has been updated based on current evidence and information available at the time of publishing provided by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Alabama State Department of Public Health. We acknowledge that situations pertaining to the pandemic are ever changing and guidance will be regularly reviewed with regards to the evolving nature of the pandemic and emerging evidence.

This document may contain links to other third-party websites. Such links are only for the convenience of the reader or user. Alexander City Schools does not recommend or endorse third-party vendors unless stipulated herein as a “partner” in education for providing curricular content to best serve our students.

Finally, the Alexander City Schools Board of Education acknowledges that the implementation of guidelines and policies contained within this 2020-2021 Return-to-Learn plan, as it relates to COVID-19, are intended to mitigate, not eliminate, risk. No single action or set of actions will completely eliminate the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission, but implementation of several coordinated interventions can greatly reduce that risk.

# Guiding Principles

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The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has established five guiding principles to guide the planning and decision making process and the execution of reopening schools across the state for the 2020-2021 school year. The Alexander City Schools' *Return to Learn Plan* is rooted in the vision and mission of our system and aligns with these five guiding principles.

**1**



**We will be transparent. We will share what we know and what we do not know and be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.**

**2**



**We will be equitable. We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators.**

**3**



**We will listen. We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to understand realities on the ground and to surface creative solutions.**

**4**



**We will put safety first. We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.**

**5**



**We will be decisive. Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We may need to adapt and if so, we will adapt quickly.**

# Our Commitment to You

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To all Alexander City Schools Parents and Guardians,

As we prepare for the opening of school in just a few short weeks (August 20, 2020 for ACS Virtual Academy and September 8, 2020 for Traditional Brick and Mortar), we understand that the 2020-2021 school year will bring many challenges. Several of those challenges are addressed in our Return-to-Learn plan, and still many other challenges that we will face are yet to be discovered. No matter what we face, I believe that by working together, the Alexander City Schools (ACS) Community will no doubt be ready!



The Return-to-Learn plan provides best practices for students to continue their education in multiple modes: traditional, blended, or virtual. Our plan encompasses safety strategies and procedures that will be taken as students enter the buildings, ride the bus, participate in extracurricular activities, or work from home. Though this plan is not all inclusive, we feel it provides a framework that emphasizes health and safety for our employees and students. The Return-to-Learn plan is also a working document and will be updated as new information is brought forth from credible agencies and partners of Alexander City Schools.

The Alexander City Schools team will work diligently to keep you abreast of changes and modifications to this plan. We acknowledge that scenarios involving increased cases of COVID-19 within our schools, city, or county may lead to a decision to close classrooms, schools, or the entire system. In this event, we will give as much notice and information as possible to help you make the best decisions for your family.

One thing we have all learned about this pandemic is that it affects us all in one way or another! Open lines of communication and transparency from all levels will be essential to everyone knowing and understanding the direction we are headed. The Return-to-Learn plan, upon approval by the Board of Education, will be posted to our website and updated regularly. There will be several live links embedded in the plan to assist our community with resources for learning, safety procedures, and updates to the number of positive COVID-19 cases in our schools.

The ACS family is here for you!

Dr. Keith Lankford



**2020-2021**



# Protocols

**Confirmed Diagnosis of Student/Staff for COVID-19 (ACS will comply with the guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health ([ADPH Back to School Toolkit](#))).**

- Parent/Staff should alert the school nurse and/or principal immediately of positive test results.
- School officials will notify the District Nurse that a positive case has been confirmed. Staff/Student will quarantine in accordance with ADPH guidelines (p.9 and 10 of ADPH Back to school Toolkit).
- Classrooms will be sanitized and cleaned immediately after notification of a positive diagnosis.
- ACS will not be responsible for contact tracing, as it is the responsibility of the Alabama Department of Public Health; however, school officials will alert both the ADPH and students/parents of any individuals known to be within 6 feet for 15 minutes of the confirmed individual.
- Students or staff with *confirmed* COVID-19 should remain home until completely recovered and no longer displaying symptoms (ADPH generally requires 10 days with a 24 hours period of being fever-free without medication).
- Class work will be offered through the Blended Instructional Model during the quarantine phase for students confirmed and students deemed exposed.
- Instruction in the classroom will continue as normal with all asymptomatic students not being notified by ADPH/ACS for exposure.

## **COVID-19 Exposure in the Home/School**

- Students or employees exposed to a *confirmed* individual within the home should self-quarantine for 14 days while symptoms are monitored.
- ACS guidelines will define exposure as *close proximity (within 6 feet) for a duration of more than 15 minutes (6-15)*. ACS will not consider an entire class as exposed if a student or faculty member in the class tests positive, as the exposure level will be determined by ADPH's contact tracing protocols.
- Any school employee who has knowledge of exposure defined by the 6-15 rule will contact school officials who will notify students/parents of potential exposure, and the 14-day quarantine and symptom monitoring should occur.
- Contact the school nurse or principal to inform them of the possible exposure immediately.

To comply with [HIPAA](#) and [FERPA](#), no personal information will be released.

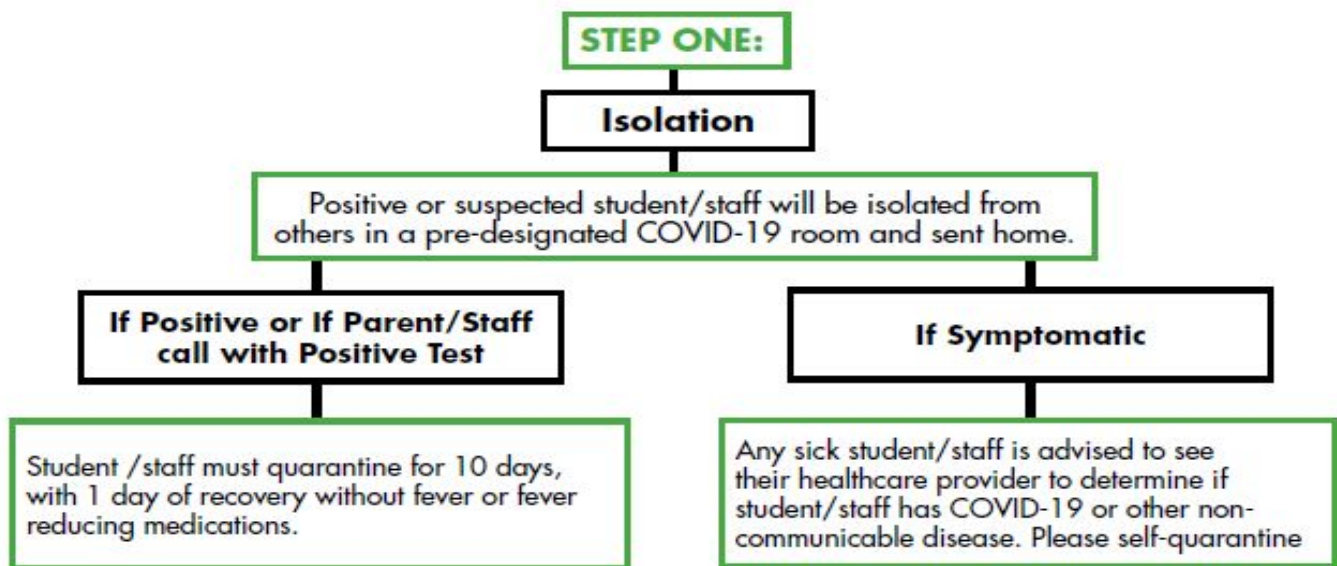
# ADPH Guidelines

## Scenario - Student or Staff Member is Positive or ill with COVID like symptoms

Reminder: Close Contact is defined as those students/staff that have been within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes. (6/15 rule)

In order to help determine the "6 feet 15 minute" scenario, an assigned seating chart for the bus and a seating chart for the classroom will assist Public Health case investigators.

**SCHOOL ROLE:** Per our notifiable disease rule, the Healthcare Provider, school nurse, or principal should immediately report COVID-19 positives or suspects to public health using our online ADPH Report Card. <https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/healthcare.html>



### STEP TWO: Identify Close Contacts to symptomatic staff or student

- The School Nurse will help determine who are close contacts to the positive or symptomatic student or staff.
- The close contacts will be isolated and sent home until COVID-19 is confirmed or other diagnosis is confirmed. The school may require a healthcare provider's release to return to school/work.
- If COVID-19 is confirmed, the school nurse will advise close contacts (6/15 rule, masked or un-masked) to self-quarantine for 14 days from exposure (see CDC calculator) and monitor their health closely. (refer to page 18)
- School nurse will communicate that a representative from the Alabama Department of Public Health will be contacting them.
- Aggressively clean and disinfect per CDC guidance (see cleaning and disinfecting guidance).

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# ADPH Guidelines

## **STEP THREE: Report to ADPH**

- The school nurse shall report the positive or suspected case using the ADPH on-line COVID-19 Report Card.  
<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/covid19/healthcare.html>
- Information needed in the ADPH on-line COVID-19 Report Card includes the list of students in the classroom, Teacher/staff names, guardians for the students and telephone numbers. Seating charts for bus and classroom may be uploaded in the ADPH on-line COVID-19 Report Card.

## **STEP FOUR: School Communication with Parents/Guardians and School Staff**

- The school will use their existing school process to notify parents/guardians that an exposure has occurred. Confidentiality and privacy must be maintained.

## **STEP FIVE: CLEANING and DISINFECTING CLASSROOM – See Pages - 32-43**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S ROLE**

Public health will investigate and conduct contact tracing. Recommendations will be provided per the Alabama Department of Public Health and CDC guidelines.

### **ADPH Case Investigation**

Public Health Staff work with a patient to help them recall anyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they have been infectious.

### **ADPH Contact Tracing**

Public Health Staff begin contact tracing by notifying exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.



# ACS Learning Environment Facts

## Traditional Brick and Mortar

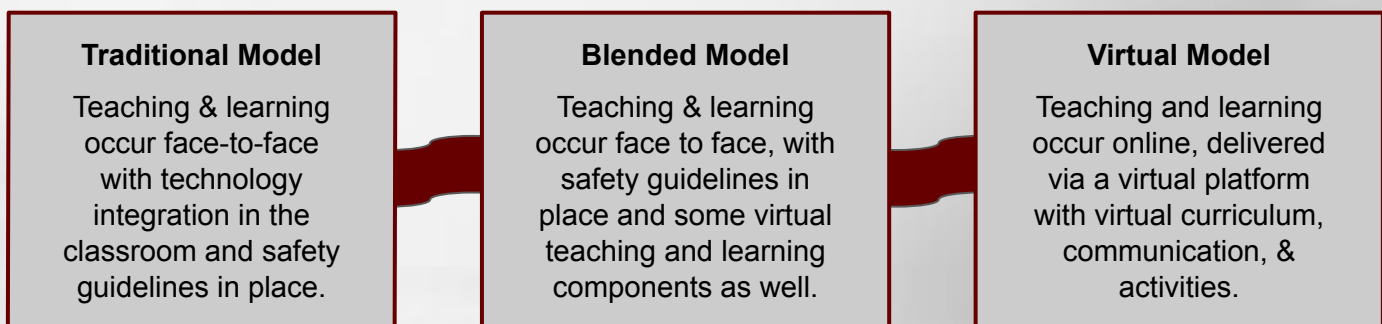
Under the ACS Return-to-Learn Plan, the Traditional Brick and Mortar model offers families the option of in-person/face-to-face instruction in all ACS school buildings. ACS will open all school buildings September 8, 2020.

Each school will adhere to the following:

- Safety procedures and social distancing guidelines;
- Best practices provided by the [ADPH Back to School Toolkit](#), Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC);
- Classes five days a week, with possible modifications if necessary based on guidance from state officials; and
- Registration for each school provided through Registration Gateway.

Note, that teaching and learning within the Alexander City Schools will be ***intentionally flexible in design*** to accommodate any need to transition to a fully remote environment. All methods of instructional delivery will concentrate on the Alabama Course of Study with an emphasis on essential standards in grades K-8 as well as required standards for high school graduation credits in grades 9th-12th.

Transition between the traditional and blended model will be responsive to the instances of COVID-19 in our schools.



## Blended Environment

There is a possibility that abrupt changes in public health data relating to the Coronavirus pandemic could necessitate a rapid change to the Alexander City Schools traditional school day/year. The blended environment will involve both face to face as well as virtual teaching and learning components.

- The expectations communicated for face to face engagement will be followed when students are in the building.
- The expectations for virtual engagement will be followed when the need for a classroom or school closure occurs.

It is important for us to ensure that connections between school and home remain intact during a temporary classroom quarantine, extended student absence, or an immediate school closure, so that the education of our students can remain a top priority through the seamless continuation of teaching and learning.

Alexander City Schools will provide a “bridge” from traditional classroom instruction to home based learning through our ***Blended Learning Model***.

- Content standards will mirror regular classroom standards in all subjects.
- Instruction from the classroom will be delivered by the regular classroom teacher through technology devices and approved learning management systems and tools, such as:
  - Schoology & Schools PLP
  - Edgenuity
  - Google Classroom
  - See-Saw
  - Zoom
  - Etc.



**We are currently working on an alert system and matrix to help inform all stakeholders when current health conditions warrant a school closure, temporary quarantine, or district shut down. Once the matrix is developed, it will be posted to our webpage and added to this document.**

## Virtual Environment (Alexander City Virtual School - ACVS)

- Information is Relayed via Digital Means
  - Digitally Posted Lessons and Assignments
  - Discussion Boards & Communication
  - Video Conferencing
  - Online Assessment Administered On-site
- Learning Can Be:
  - **Synchronous** - Real-Time, Peer-to-Peer Interaction in Same Setting and Same Time
  - **Asynchronous** - Self-Paced, Occurs at Independent Times and Locations



Virtual students will be assigned to a class or classes with dedicated Alexander City Schools teachers, and consistent, standards-based content will be provided through SchoolsPLP in the following content areas:

- Mathematics;
- Science;
- Social Studies; and
- English Language Arts, to include Reading in grades K-5.

In grades 9-12, core and elective courses will be offered via ACCESS and SchoolsPLP, with many electives available beyond the required core, such as:

- Advanced placement;
- Dual enrollment;
- Foreign language; and
- Career tech.

All ACS Student & Parent Handbook policies and procedures will be in effect for Alexander City Virtual School students, including

- Attendance & behavior
- Academic integrity and dress code (when videoing with others); and
- The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for technology.

**Assessments may be required to be taken on-site at the virtual school or through an ACS secure digital platform.**

***Students who are enrolled in virtual school out of district will be allowed to transfer to the brick and mortar environment at a prorated tuition if they meet the criteria set forth in the ACS Code of Conduct.***



**2020-2021**

# Daily Procedures for all Alexander City Schools

## ● Health and Safety

- Parents should [check the health status](#) of their student(s) daily.
- Parents should seek medical attention and keep students at home if experiencing:
  - fever (temp. of 100.4 or above) or cough;
  - shortness of breath or sore throat; and
  - diarrhea or other COVID-19 related symptoms.
- Parents should immediately report a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis to the school nurse for guidance.
- [Facial masks](#) are required in all areas where social distancing of at least 6 feet cannot be maintained. [See Gov. Ivey's current Public Health Safer at Home order](#)
- Alexander City Schools reserves the right to enforce facial PPE based on guidance from state and local health officials.
- Temperature checks are not currently required for school entry but may be required for extra-curricular activities.
- Students will be reminded to wash hands appropriately and use the sanitizing stations in each classroom and at various locations throughout the school.
- For symptoms developed while in school, the nurse/school official will:
  - Immediately contact a parent /guardian;
  - Require facial PPE for the student;
  - Isolation of the student; and
  - Await pick-up.

## ● Social Emotional Health

- ACS will establish a crisis response team at each school as well as the district office to focus on student and staff mental health and wellness using trauma informed models.
- ACS will employ a Social Worker and Mental Health coordinator to further support the mental health needs of our student body.
- School counselors will continue to provide support with small group counseling in traditional, blended, and virtual settings.

## [ADPH Back to School Toolkit](#)

**It is imperative that each family have a working number on file with the school and each day make arrangements for someone on the student contact list to be available if the parent is unable to pick-up their child in a timely manner.**



**2020-2021**



- **Arriving at School**

- Facial PPE and social distancing is required for school entry.
- Signage will be placed throughout each ACS school.
- Students will travel directly to their designated classrooms and not gather in groups upon arrival.
- Breakfast will be provided daily to each student at no cost in homeroom.

- **Class Transitions During the Day**

- Elementary teachers will travel between classes for class transition and students will remain in their assigned classes.
- Secondary teachers and students will maintain social distancing to transition between classes.
- Large gatherings will be avoided when social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.
- Some transitioning may depend on the school's ability to social distance during transitions and the likelihood the class can be taught without specific equipment or materials that are only available within designated classrooms (band room, AG shop, robotics lab, etc.)
- Daily classroom instruction will be provided for all students in accordance with state and local guidelines for social distancing.
- Locker access may be limited or restricted to reduce exposure and may not be an option in some schools.
- Sharing of instructional materials is prohibited.
- Purposeful integration of technology into the curriculum will better equip students for a transition to remote learning should it become necessary.

- **Ending the day**

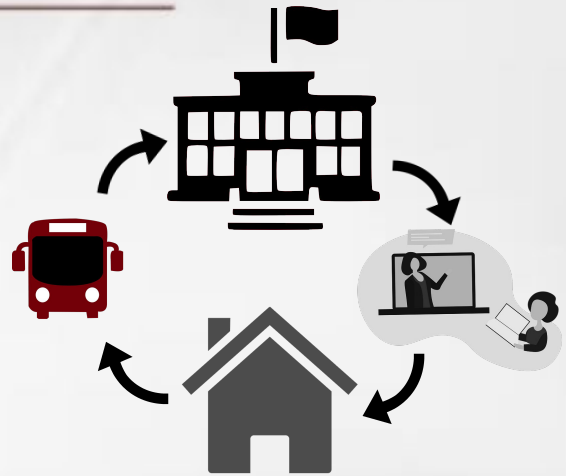
- Students will be dismissed on a staggered schedule to promote social distancing.
- Each school will provide specific dismissal procedures prior to school starting.
- Buses will run daily with new routes and possible staggered times to reduce exposure and eliminate transfers at various schools.

***Please see the Transportation section of this Return-to-Learn plan.***

# Alexander City Schools Operations Division

The Alexander City Schools Operations Division is comprised of the following departments:

- Food Services
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Custodial/Janitorial Services
- Information Technology



The Operations Division provides an essential function to the overall well-being of our employees and students, and each department will fulfill duties to ensure the following:

- Facilities stay clean and sanitized;
- Students arrive safely to and from school;
- Students receive a nutritional breakfast and lunch each day; and
- Students are able to expand their learning through the power of technology.

## Food Services

- Breakfast and lunch will be served daily ***in the classroom*** for all students.
- Parents are encouraged to pay for meals through My School Bucks.
- For safety purposes:
  - Parents will not be permitted to eat with students in classrooms.
  - Snacks and food items brought from home cannot be shared with classmates.
- Students may receive a Grab-n-Go meal for:
  - COVID-19 Quarantine for Classroom Exposure;
  - Temporary School Closure; or
  - Temporary District Shutdown.
- Each school will designate a time, location, and safety measures (PPE and social distancing) for parents to pick up the Grab and Go meals.

## Transportation

Buses are dedicated for daily transportation of students to and from school. Given the confined space and number of students on our regular bus routes, parents who may not require bus transportation are encouraged to consider transporting their child in a personal vehicle.

- The potential for separate bus routes for elementary and secondary is being explored to eliminate student transfer from one bus to another.
- All parents requiring bus transportation must register their child through Registration Gateway and complete the Transportation Form linked on the Alexander City Schools district website.
- Parents are encouraged to conduct a health check to assure that students are *symptom-free* prior to boarding the bus.
- Self-check signage will be on the exterior of the bus during a.m. and p.m. routes for students.
- Hand sanitizer will be available on each bus as students enter and exit.
- All buses will be cleaned and sanitized daily.

## Bus Rider Requirements

- Bus Registration (with accurate address, working phone number, and emergency contact info)
- Facial mask **at all times** during transport
- Assigned seating\*
- No eating allowed on the bus
- Face forward and no leaning across the aisle
- Must ride the assigned bus only

\*Family members or members of the same household will be seated together when appropriate.

***These requirements will be strictly enforced and violation may result in removal from the bus.***

## **Maintenance Services**

The Maintenance Department is dedicated to providing a safe environment for all students and employees by:

- Providing soap, paper, and sanitizing stations throughout each school;
- Focusing attention on maintenance requests in a timely manner; and
- Appropriate use of PPE on all school campuses.

## **Custodial/Janitorial Services**

- All custodians will be trained in sanitation and cleanliness standards relating to COVID-19.
- Cleanliness checks will be conducted daily.
- Electrostatic sprayers will be used in each school for sanitation purposes on a bi-weekly basis (or when a deep cleaning of exposed classrooms/areas is reported).

## **Information Technology (IT)**

The IT team is dedicated to ensuring the provision of:

- Tools and programs that enhance teaching and learning in our 1:1 digital environment;
- Access to Schoology - a '*one-stop*' Learning Management System (LMS) for students in blended and virtual learning programs; and
- Assigned devices for digital learning tasks.

## **Device Expectations**

- Only the assigned student should use the device.
- In the event that a Chromebook needs to be sanitized, a member of the IT department or trained staff will do so.
- Options for Internet access are currently being explored for those students and teachers who have no Internet connectivity.



# Athletics & Extracurricular

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Alexander City Schools is implementing safe and healthy practices for all athletic and extracurricular activities.

- Each school will communicate plans for co- and extracurricular activities.
- Secondary schools will implement strategies adopted by the Alabama High School Athletic Association that will help provide a safer environment for student athletes.
- ACS continues to monitor the AHSAA for guidance regarding athletics, and the most up-to-date information can be found at the [AHSAA website](#).
- Please refer to form linked below for more information.

**All students, regardless of which learning option they choose, will be eligible to participate in extracurricular and athletic activities.**

[Youth  
Sports Fact  
Sheet](#)

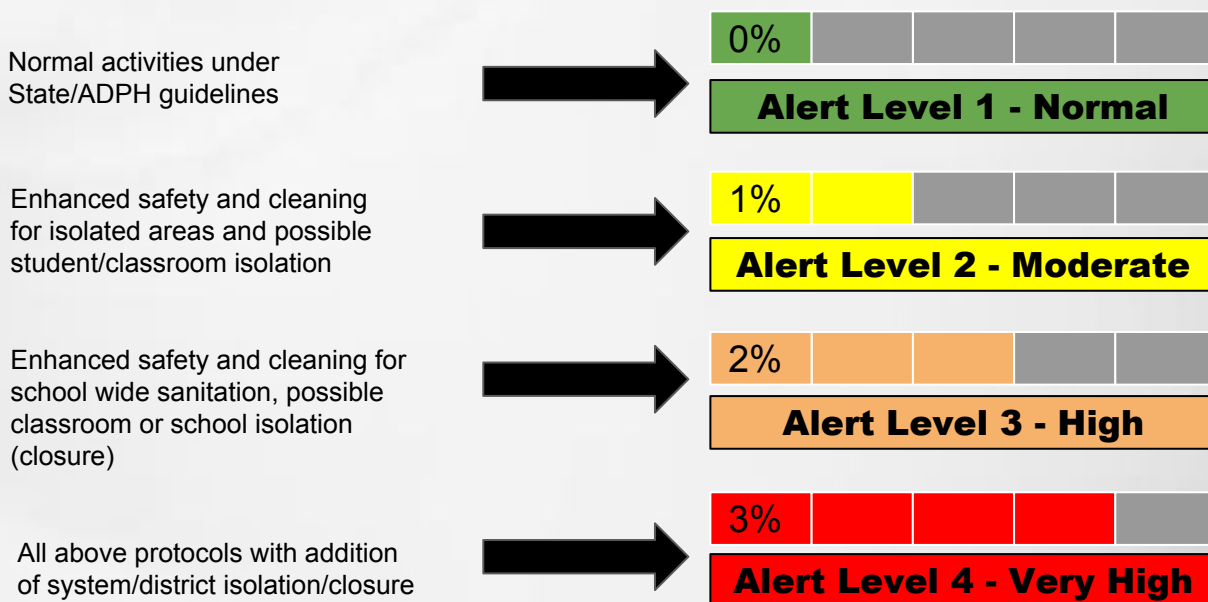


[Youth Sports  
COVID  
Banner](#)

[Alexander City Schools Athletics  
COVID-19 Information Form](#)

**COVID-19 Data Dashboard** -The ACS Return-to-Learn plan will incorporate a COVID-19 Data Dashboard on the District's website (insert link).

- The dashboard will list the number of cases for each school in reference to both teachers and students with positive test of COVID-19.
- Additionally, the dashboard will link the Tallapoosa County information from ADPH.
- The matrix will be developed to guide the decisions for classroom and school closures based on the percentage of positive cases at a given time.
- In consideration of the ALSDE Roadmap to Reopening Schools, the matrix will incorporate four "Alert Levels" (Normal, Moderate Risk, High Risk, and Very High Risk).
- We are awaiting confirmation from health officials for input.



# Individual School Plans

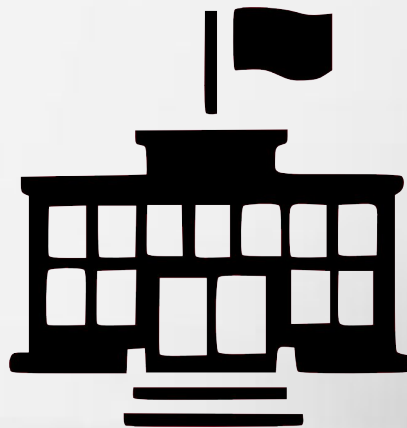
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Each school will provide guidelines and procedures for parents and students to review prior to August 20, 2020. These plans will include arrival and dismissal procedures, check-out/check-in procedures, and many more school driven protocols.

- [Jim Pearson Elementary](#)
- [Stephens Elementary](#)
- [Radney Elementary](#)
- [Alexander City Middle School](#)
- [Benjamin Russell High School](#)

## Attendance for students

- Attendance will be recorded for all students each day in virtual, blended and traditional classes.
- Please refer to the ACS Code of Conduct for accountability measures regarding required attendance.
- Parents are encouraged to provide written notice for all absences. (i.e. Texts and emails are acceptable.)
- COVID-19 related absences should be coded as such from physician's office.



# Need to Know

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## General Info

- School will take place five days each week, Monday through Friday.
- In the event of a single classroom or whole-school closure, distance learning will continue in a virtual capacity for students.
- During a targeted closure, all contaminated areas will undergo an isolated disinfection process which will occur over a 24-hour period during which distance learning will take place for students.
- Students are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school everyday, as water fountains will be turned off on school campuses.
- Any student who exhibits a fever will immediately be sent to the nurse for evaluation, and the parent or emergency contact may be notified immediately to pick up that child.
- Due to an intentional adherence to safety guidelines and protocols, guests will be limited within specific areas of all school buildings.
- Large group assemblies will not be hosted for situations in which social distancing is not possible at 50% capacity.
- Student desks will be strategically placed to accommodate social distancing guidelines in the most reasonable manner.

## Check-In/Check-Out

- Parents are encouraged to make requests for a student check out at least 30 minutes in advance...For a 10:30 checkout, the front office should be notified by 10:00.
- Students will be accompanied to a predetermined location at their specific checkout time.
- We encourage parents not to check students out the last hour of the school day.
- Note that emergencies may affect the check-in/check-out process.



# Need to Know

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## Special Populations (Special Education, 504, ELL)

- Students with individualized education such as IEPs, 504, I-ELPs, will have services provided in educational settings. Such individualized plans were crafted to provide the student with a free, appropriate public education in the traditional settings. For those students whose parents choose the virtual learning platform, a virtual learning plan will be crafted to address students' needs and services.

## Assessment Platform

- State mandated assessments will be administered in modes of instruction: traditional, blended, and virtual.
  - Students in grades 2-8 take the [Alabama Comprehensive Assessment Program \(ACAP\)](#). This assessment measures grade-level academic achievement and academic growth. This assessment is used to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs and instruction and to identify areas students may need additional help to master. Students can practice the assessment [here](#).
  - Students in 10th grade take the [Pre-ACT](#). The PreACT score provides a prediction of student scores on the ACT. A student's performance on the PreACT lays the groundwork for developing a plan for reaching student goals for ACT scores.
  - Students in 11th grade take the [ACT](#). The state of Alabama pays for one administration of this college entrance examination (taken in the spring of the 11th-grade year) so all students have an opportunity to consider all available post-high school options. Students who earn the college-ready benchmark score on any of the subject tests are considered "college-ready" in that area. [Using Your ACT Results](#)
  - Students in 12th grade take the ACT [WorkKeys](#). This assessment measures key skills employers want their workers to have. Students who score at the silver level or above on the WorkKeys are considered "career ready" by the state of Alabama.
  - English Learners (EL) students are administered the [ACCESS](#) test. The assessment annually measures their progress with the acquisition of the English language. They are assessed in four domains: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing.
  - Students in grades 3 - 8 and 10 who have significant cognitive disabilities will participate in the [ACAP Alternative](#) (formerly known as the [Alabama Alternate Assessment \(AAA\)](#) or "AAA"). They are tested in the same curriculum areas as their general education counterparts. The assessment is based upon the Alabama Alternative Standards which allow students to demonstrate mastery through task performance.

## Masks

It is recommended that parents purchase cloth or medical grade masks for their student, as masks are required to be worn

- On buses;
- When entering the building;
- During any transitioning within the building;
- At any time a six-foot distance cannot be maintained; and
- Any other time as deemed appropriate by school staff.
- Alexander City staff will be sensitive to any policies regarding face masks for students or staff with medical conditions that warrant them ***not wearing one*** on a medical basis.
- All ACS staff will follow guidelines for PPE and wear facial masks or shields.



Frequently asked questions will be an additional COVID-19 tab on the district website. It will not be added to the Return-to-Learn plan.

# Credits & Resources:

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[Alabama State Department of Education](#)

[ALSDE Roadmap to Reopening Schools](#)

[Google Suite for Education](#)

[Community for Accredited Online Schools](#)

Alexander City Virtual School Parent Handbook ([link coming soon](#))

Alexander City Virtual School Webpage ([link coming soon](#))

Return to Learn Student/Parent/Teacher Help Desk ([link coming soon](#))

[Alabama Department of Public Health: Isolation & Quarantine Timeframes for COVID-19](#)

[Alabama High School Athletic Association  
COVID-19 Updates & Resources](#)

[Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) Print Resources](#)

[Alabama Literacy Act Implementation Guide](#)