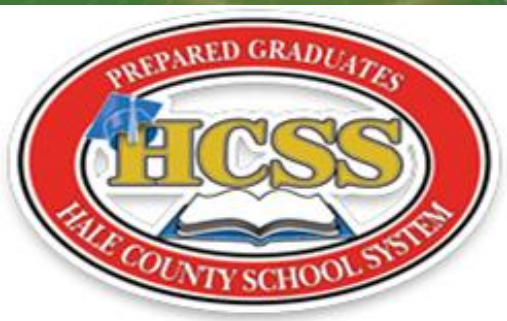# Hale County School System

Stakeholders' Guide
to Reopen Schools
2020-2021 School Year

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The Hale County School System is committed to providing high-quality instruction, emotional support, and a safe learning environment for all students. We are looking forward to the 2020-2021 school year and are working diligently to embrace a plan that meets the needs of students and staff. We know that we cannot anticipate every challenge that may be forth coming in the year ahead, but we will be working closely with health experts, state officials, school leaders, industry specialists, families, and others to be as prepared as possible. We thank you for your continued support, and together we will make this a successful school year!

Michael C. Ryans, Superintendent

Disclaimer

The information provided in this document does not and is not intended to constitute legal advice. Instead, information is for general purposes only and does not constitute the most current legal regulations. All liability with respect to action taken or not taken based on this document's contents are hereby disclaimed. The content in this document is provided "as is." No representations are made that the content is error-free. The document is not an exhaustive list of every action that Hale County Schools will need to return to school or to remain at school. We will follow the guidance of the Alabama Department of Education and hope to meet the needs of our community and be responsive to those needs.

- Note: Due to the unpredictability of COVID-19, this plan is subject to change prior to the opening of school as well as while school is in session.

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General Guidance

ALERT I	ALERT II	ALERT III	ALERT IV

School System Status
The Alabama State Department of Education has recommended using the Alabama Department of Public Health's map to determine the status of schools.

As of July 19, 2020, Hale County is on Alert III (High).

- **Alert Level I** - Cases are rare, and contact tracing can be used to control the virus.
- **Alert Level II** - A moderate number of cases exist with most cases from a known source.
- **Alert Level III** - Many cases exist, including community spread, with undetected cases likely.
- **Alert Level IV** - Widespread outbreak is growing with many undetected cases.

Definitions

Face covering: a cloth or disposable face covering that covers the nose and the mouth. Face coverings should follow the HCSS Code of Student Conduct as it relates to clothing.

Hand sanitizer: A liquid gel or foam that contain at least 60% alcohol and can be used with employees and students to safely clean hands.

Isolation: A process to keep someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.

Quarantine: A process to keep someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others.

Symptomatic: Coronavirus carriers, or those who experience symptoms.

Asymptomatic: Coronavirus carriers, or those who do not experience any symptoms.

Vulnerable populations: People of any age with certain underlying medical conditions.

ACCESS: A distance learning (online) platform that may be utilized by traditional students enrolled in virtual courses.

SchoolsPLP: A distance learning (online) platform that will be utilized by students who choose the virtual option.

Traditional Learning: This option would mean that students would attend school on-campus five days a week under the presumption that HCS would follow all state guidelines and protocols regarding safety, prevention, hygiene, and pandemic response procedures.

Virtual Learning: This option would mean that students would receive ALL coursework and instruction online or in a virtual platform with little to no on-campus experience. This process would be different from the online/virtual experience that students received during the spring closure.

Remote Learning: This option would be provided by the classroom teacher and will be used in the event of school closure.

Students who are in traditional classrooms will transition to digital learning using a virtual platform.

Protocol for Confirmed Positive Covid-19 Diagnosis for Employees

Symptomatic Confirmed Positive Diagnostic COVID-19 Test

Contact immediate supervisor as soon as possible to notify him/her of your condition.

Immediate isolation (Per CDC: Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.)

CDC: Isolate if You are Sick

An employee can return to work when the criteria below have been met:
- Twenty- four hours (24 hrs)with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, and
- Improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and
- Ten (10) days since symptoms first appeared and two consecutive, negative COVID19 tests administered at least 24 hours apart.

- Symptomatic patients who have not tested positive for COVID-19 and have a positive alternative diagnosis (e.g., positive for influenza) will return to work based on their confirmed diagnosis. If you meet any of the criteria above, you may take any available sick, personal, or vacation leave.
- Employees are eligible for emergency paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), although it is limited in duration and amount of compensation. HCSS reserves the right to identify employees who could work remotely.

Protocol for Confirmed Positive Covid-19 Diagnosis for Employees

Asymptomatic Confirmed Positive Diagnostic COVID-19 Test

Contact immediate supervisor as soon as possible to notify him/her of your condition.

Immediate isolation (Per CDC: Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.)

CDC: Isolate if You are Sick

An employee can return to work when the criteria below have been met:

- Two (2) consecutive, negative COVID-19 tests administered at least 24 hours apart. If an employee develops symptoms during the isolation period, then they must meet the return to work criteria for COVID-19 symptomatic patients. If you encounter any of the criteria above, you may take any available sick, personal, or vacation leave.
- Employees are eligible for emergency paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), although it is limited in duration and amount of compensation. Employees are eligible for emergency paid leave under the FFCRA if they are caring for a child under the age of 18. HCSS reserves the right to identify employees who could work remotely.

Protocol for Confirmed Positive Covid-19 Diagnosis for Students

Symptomatic Confirmed Positive Diagnostic COVID-19 Test

Parents should notify school personnel as soon as possible about the student's condition.

Immediate isolation (Per CDC: Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.)

CDC: Isolate if You are Sick

A student can return to school when the criteria below have been met:
- Three (3) days with no fever without using a fever-reducing medication, and Improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), and
- Ten (10) days since symptoms first appeared and two consecutive, negative COVID-19 tests administered at least 24 hours apart.
- Symptomatic patients who have not tested positive for COVID-19 and have a positive alternative diagnosis (e.g., positive for influenza) will return to school based on their confirmed diagnosis.

Attendance* Code as Covid-19 Quarantined Positive (Excused Absences)

Protocol for Confirmed Positive Covid-19 Diagnosis for Students

Asymptomatic Confirmed Positive Diagnostic COVID-19 Test

Parents should notify school personnel as soon as possible about the student's condition.

Immediate isolation (Per CDC: Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.)

CDC: Isolate if You are Sick

A student can return to school when the criteria below have been met:
- Two (2) consecutive, negative COVID-19 tests administered at least 24 hours apart.
- If a student develops symptoms during an isolation period, they must meet the return to school criteria for COVID-19 symptomatic patients.

Attendance* Code as Covid-19 Quarantine (Excused Absence)

Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Isolation and Quarantine Timeframes

According to Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) Isolation and Quarantine Timeframes for COVID-19 Revised 06-02-2020

• "If contact to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 test negative, they need to finish out the 14-day quarantine period. The 14 days should be from the date of the last exposure. Just because they tested negative during the 14 days, it does not mean they will remain negative, and they should finish the full-14-day quarantined period."

• **ADPH Isolation and Quarantine Timeframes for COVID-19 Revised 06-02-2020** states, "Household and close contacts without symptoms No Testing Performed will still require 14-day quarantine."

Special Education Students

• Students with an Individual Education Program who either test positive or are exposed to COVID-19 will receive instructional services, accommodations, and related services as determined by the IEP team until released to return back to traditional school.

• Confirmed Positive (With Symptoms) - Special Education: The IEP team will reconvene to determine services while the student is homebound due to symptomatic confirmed positive with COVID-19.

• Confirmed Positive (Without Symptoms) - Special Education: The IEP team will reconvene to determine services while the student is homebound due to asymptomatic confirmed positive with COVID-19.

Teaching and Learning Guidelines

Standard Practices

Implement standard operating procedures along with the following preventative measures:

- Provide hand sanitizer or hand soap for students/employees.

- Conduct cleaning of classrooms and high-touch surfaces daily.

- Limit sharing of items and other supplies.

- All students will follow the Board approved school year calendar.

- Establish an academic baseline:
    - Administer formative and benchmark assessments throughout the school year.
    - Monitor students' progress and academic plan throughout the school year (IEP, 504, RTI, GEP, IELP, etc.)

- Provide additional instructional supports to at-risk students.

- Conduct meetings (for staff, departments, special services, parent-teacher conferences, etc.) remotely when possible.

Instructional and Technology Services

Virtual Learning

- Parents who select this option will apply via the link available on the halek12.org website.

- Students enrolled in Hale County Schools are assigned coursework that comes completely from a digital platform (SchoolsPLP or Access) and is facilitated and assigned by Hale County Schools with limited support.

- Students enrolled in the virtual program will not attend the school in an on-campus manner.

- Enrollment application date: _____

Traditional Learning

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional learning students may be required to transition to remote learning students not to be confused with virtual learning which is a separate program. Classroom teachers will be responsible for instruction (Schoology).

- Parents who select the traditional learning option will return to school per the staggered entry model (discussed in detail later) and will receive instruction from classroom teachers.

Instructional and Technology Services

Virtual Learning

- Students participating in the virtual program will receive a digital device if needed upon meeting all requirements and completion of the Digital Device Usage Agreement.

- Students will use the digital device to access the online instructional program.

- Students must abide by all policies and procedures when utilizing the digital devices. (See policies.)

Traditional Learning

- Students enrolled in the Traditional Learning option will receive a digital device upon meeting all requirements and completion of the Digital Device Usage Agreement.

- Students will use the digital device to participate in learning at school and in the event of a transition to remote learning to access Schoology or other online platform.

- Students must abide by all policies and procedures when utilizing the digital devices.

Virtual Learning

Due to the increase of positive COVID-19 cases in Hale County, the Hale County School System plans to start school virtually on August 20, 2020.

Note: The Virtual Learning schedule is subject to be extended upon review and recommendations from EMA and Alabama Department of Public Health.

Staggered Entry - Expectations

Expectations of Staggered Start

1. Teachers will invest time in getting to know students.

2. Administer diagnostic tools to determine current skills and knowledge of students following five months of school closure. These diagnostic tools include but not limited to the following: ALA Kids—Kindergarten, aimswebPlus—K-3, Performance Series Express—3-12, Cognia-Pre-test and Post-test.

3. Schools will have a plan for teaching students school procedures during this time. This includes any adjustments made in common areas as well as school arrival or dismissal.

4. Discuss class rules and course syllabus on the first day of all students being together.

Staggered Entry - Schedule

Scheduled for Staggered Entry Start

- Tuesday, September 8, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with A-M will come to campus.
- Wednesday, September 9, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with N-Z will come to campus.
- Thursday, September 10, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with A-M will come to campus.
- Friday, September 11, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with N-Z will come to campus.

- Monday, September 14, 2020 - Virtual Day – Technical Assistance (Students will attend class remotely.)
- Tuesday, September 15, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with A-M will come to campus.
- Wednesday, September 16, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with N-Z will come to campus.
- Thursday, September 17, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with A-M will come to campus.
- Friday, September 18, 2020 - All students with a last name beginning with N-Z will come to campus.

Exemptions will apply for those living in the same households with different last names.

Note: Staggered schedule is subject to be extended upon review and recommendations from EMA and Alabama Department of Public Health.

School Procedures

Each School will have a plan for the following topics. However, typical guidance is as follows:

Morning Arrivals-
- Students will report to the designated areas. No congregating in groups.

Elementary Transitions-
- The local school will develop a transition plan based on their number of students and facility layout that ensures minimal contact with students from other classrooms.

Elementary Snack-
- Elementary students will have break within their classroom or in an assigned area outside the building maintaining social distance guidelines.

Middle and High School Transitions-
- The local school will develop a transition plan based on their number of students and facility layout that ensures minimal contact with students from other classrooms.

Middle and High School Break-
- Middle and High School students will be assigned a specific time (staggered) and location whereby they will order and receive their snack.

Assemblies-
- Given that social distancing guidelines and post-assembly sanitation requirements are maintained, no group shall exceed fifty percent capacity.

Schedules

Standard Practice(s)

Elementary Schools

- Schedules will be created to minimize student movement within buildings. When possible, bring services or adults into homerooms (i.e. library lessons, art, music, etc.).

- Schedule bathroom breaks. Disinfect restrooms and check supplies before and after each class visit.

Middle Schools:

- Existing master schedules are likely to work with minimal modifications.

- Schedules will be created to minimize student movement within buildings. When possible, bring services or adults into homerooms (i.e. library lessons, art, music, etc.).

High Schools:

- Elective classes should meet in person with appropriate distancing protocols.

- Schools should develop advisory plans that avoid regrouping students beyond what daily schedules already require.

- Classes should be allowed to meet outside (without mixing with other classes) as possible.

- Schedules will be created to minimize student movement within buildings. Stagger arrival and dismissal times to avoid overcrowding in the hallway.

Health, Wellness, Safety, and Prevention Guidelines

Standard Practice(s)

Implement standard operating procedures along with the following preventative measures throughout the school day upon entering the building, while in classrooms, and during transitions:

- Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as handwashing, covering coughs, and face coverings.

- Provide hand soap or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in all bathrooms, classrooms, and frequently trafficked areas.

- Provide hand sanitizing stations throughout buildings.

- Post signage to communicate COVID-19 information.

- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared objects after each use.

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

- Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to returning; schedule periodic cleanings during weekends or school holidays/breaks (to the extent feasible).

- Require all employees and students to wear a face covering while inside the school buildings when unable to social distance or have protective barriers. (Per Governor Ivey's state order)

Health, Wellness, Safety, and Prevention Guidelines Continued

- Limit non-essential visitors and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Limit unnecessary congregations of students and employees.
- Monitor arrival/dismissal to keep students moving to their destination.
- Follow protocols for students/employees who experience symptoms while at school.
- Visitors will remain in the lobby upon entering the building.
- Establish a protocol for student arrival/dismissal with staggered entry and release (by grade, class, or bus numbers) and social distance markings for pickup.
- Conduct additional cleaning of hallways and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day.
- Designate areas of the hallway (i.e. lanes) to walk to keep students separated (to the extent feasible).
- Provide additional time for class changes and other transitions throughout the school day.
- Plan staggered class changes (by hall, room numbers, grade, content) to decrease number of students in hallways at one time.
- Organize rooms for maximum social distancing.
- Utilize large spaces (gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) for distancing.
- Student desks should face the same direction.

Child Nutrition Guidelines

Standard Practice(s)

Implement standard operating procedures along with the following preventative measures:

- No visitors

- Provide hand sanitizer or hand soap for students and employees.

- Ensure all students/staff can wash hands before eating and after eating.

- Conduct cleaning of cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day .

- Utilize Plexiglas shields for cashiers.

- Follow serving models that promote distancing:
  - Serve meals in cafeterias with:
    - Serving lines marked on floors for social distancing.
    - Mark spaced lines on floors for distancing to enter the cafeteria; designate entrance and exit flow patterns; stagger use.
    - Adjusted meal periods for more staggered meal delivery.
    - Consider pre-packaged boxes or bags for each student instead of traditional serving lines.
    - Prohibit food and utensils sharing.
    - Utilize disposable plates and utensils.
    - Schedule a rotation of classes eating in the cafeteria.

Child Nutrition Guidelines

Standard Practice(s)

- All CNP staff will complete a course called "Coronavirus Prevention and Control Strategies."

- Occupancy in cafeterias will be reduced by:
  - Spaced seating
  - Rotating schedules

- CNP staff will wear face coverings and gloves at all times when in contact with students and staff per health department regulations.

- Students who bring meals from home will need to pack items that do not require heating or reheating.

- Snacks and food items are limited to each child. No items may be brought from home for a class or group of students.

- Staff and students are strongly encouraged to make prepayments through MySchoolBucks https://www.myschoolbucks.com to limit contact with cash transactions. If cash payments are made, change will not be given. The excess funds will be placed in the student's account.

Transportation

Standard Practice(s)

To safely and timely transport students to school in a manner that adheres to ADPH guidance and current best practices.

- The local school district has provided sanitizing equipment to each local school and will ensure that each bus is thoroughly sanitized by assigned personnel after each trip by an assigned employee.

- Students must wear face coverings on the bus.

- Upon entering the bus, students will apply hand sanitizer.

- Visible signage to communicate COVID-19 information.

- Students should face forward and not lean across seats.

- Eating on the bus is prohibited by federal and state regulations. (Exemptions will be granted for medical related situations.)

- All students will have an assigned seat. Consideration to students in the same household will be given priority.

- Roof hatches or windows will be open when possible to allow fresh air to circulate.

- Each bus driver will also be provided disinfectant for spot cleaning and sanitizing between routes.

- Each bus will have a quarantine seat for students who show symptoms during transition.

- Students who begin to show symptoms during transportation will be assigned a specific seat for the duration of the route. Upon arrival at the local school, the driver will communicate with the school administration and/or school nurse as to the observed or noted symptoms.

Physical Education

Standard Practice(s)

- Students will participate in noncontact, social distanced physical activities.

- Frequently disinfect and sanitize physical education equipment and spaces.

- Virtual opportunities for physical education will be available.

- Teachers will facilitate calisthenics and other engaging activities when possible.

Counseling

Standard Practice(s)

- Social distancing will be practiced at onsite traditional classrooms.

- Deliver classroom guidance lessons virtually or pre-taped lessons as needed to support social distancing.

- Develop means for students to electronically provide the counselor with how they are feeling.

- Deliver individual academic guidance ad planning with students virtually as needed to support social distancing.

- Additional Counseling Resources – see attachment (link to American School Counseling Association)

SEL (Social Emotional Learning)

Standard Practice(s)

- Provide resources for staff self-care.

- Provide professional learning for integrating Social Emotional Learning routines and activities into learning environments.

- Leverage staff to offer support ways that demonstrate empathy, respect, and curiosity about the child's learning and social-emotional needs.

Special Populations

<u>Evaluation Services</u>

- Referrals for Evaluations - Hale County School System will continue to accept referrals for evaluations. All evaluations will be conducted in a timely manner with the safety and wellness of students and staff being a priority.

- Evaluations for students enrolled in virtual school will be conducted at the Hale County Board of Education in a designated area. Evaluations for students enrolled in traditional schools will be conducted at their school in a designated area. The designated area and materials utilized for evaluations will be sanitized after each use.

- Response to Instruction Services - RtI services will be offered by students before or during the evaluation timeline. RtI services will be offered and documented via Remote Learning for students who are not attending in a traditional setting. Work samples can be documented via Schoology and SchoolsPLP.

Special Populations

Special Education Services

- Special Education Teachers will provide individualized instruction to students who are not attending in a traditional setting via a teleconference platform based on the student's IEP goals. Work samples will be documented via Schoology.

- Students enrolled in the virtual setting will receive speech, OT, and PT services via teleconference.

- Virtual and Remote Accommodations and Modifications

- Students with disabilities will receive accommodations via SchoolsPLP, Schoology, and teleconference.

- Students requiring modifications will receive services via Schoology and teleconference.

Athletics and other Extracurricular Activities

Standard Practice(s)

- Practices and competitions follow AHSAA guidelines in all regards.
  - AHSAA Screening Document
  - AHSAA Athlete Coach Monitoring Document
- Spectators are allowed to attend events if social distancing guidelines are possible (Based on capacity guidelines and recommendations from Alabama Department of Health)
- Schools are advised to clearly indicate spacing expectations and guidelines.
- Face coverings recommended (Per Governor Ivey's state order)
- Concession sales will be limited to pre-packaged items.

Career Technical Education

Standard Practice(s)

- Teachers identify priority standards for course mastery, credentialing, CTE lab expectations.

- Students will travel to the Hale County College and Career Academy daily for scheduled classes.

- College and Career Academy office will work to identify and address any needs that may be associated with CTE credentialing.

- Continuous partnership with local community colleges for dual tech courses.

- Instructors will be responsible for:
    - cleaning and sanitizing the lab and classroom workspace after utilization.
    - cleaning any equipment used by students after utilization.
    - documenting equipment and the workspace area used.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools

Q: Will staff be trained in safety and wellness measures?

A: Yes. Staff members will be presented Standard Precaution Training as a preventative measure to support student knowledge on how to prevent the spreading of viruses and other airborne illnesses.

Staff will encourage handwashing and basic respiratory hygiene, such as covering the mouth when coughing.

Each school nurse will be a resource person for student educational activities, such as age-appropriate educational videos on hand-washing, covering one's mouth when coughing or sneezing, and how to wear a mask if needed.

Posters will also be made available for classrooms and school hallways.

Health tips regarding hygiene will be shared on social media and websites.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: What are the three steps in the COVID-19 screening process?

Parents (First Screening)

If a child has a pre-existing condition, parents are advised to speak with their child's primary care physician about returning to school.

Parents will be encouraged to take students' temperatures and assess students before sending them to school. Students who have an elevated temperature higher than 100°F and/or are exhibiting symptoms should stay at home.

Parents will be encouraged to give appropriate contact information and make plans to ensure someone could check students out if needed.

Transportation (Second Screening)

Transportation is the second point on the screening continuum. Bus drivers, upon entrance to the bus, will visibly check for any symptoms or signs of COVID-19 or other visible illnesses. School systems will use clearly visible signage that will outline COVID-19 symptoms as an educational tool.

The school (Third Screening)

School is the final point on the screening continuum. School system staff will visually check for symptoms (which <u>may</u> include temperature checks and confirmation with families that the students are COVID-19 symptom-free.)

Faculty will limit the items sent home with students that need to be returned. Items sent home will be sanitized as feasibly as possible.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: What are the expectations for student attendance during the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Students who attend traditional school will be expected to attend on a regular basis in accordance with the board-approved attendance policy. The local school administration will consider extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19.

If traditional school transitions to a remote learning environment, attendance will be taken through participation in the assigned remote learning activities.

Remote students will utilize activity and participation through the remote learning curriculum as attendance.

Absent students should timely submit a note for their absence to the school administrator per board policy.

In the case of COVID-related absence, the student is strongly encouraged to notify the school administrator and promptly submit a physician's note to the school.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: Will visitors be allowed on campus for events, eat lunch with students, walk students to class, etc.?

A: Visitors should have minimal access to the campus during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that visitors will only be allowed in the lobby area of the school. Visitors will be unable to eat lunch with their children in the cafeteria or visit for other non-essential activities. While we strongly desire parent and community engagement, we will work to collaborate and engage our community and family partners in new and innovative ways.

Q. With the minimization of library book checkouts and the support of online literary options through a virtual online library, how will librarian's/media specialist support the classroom teachers?

A: Each school's media specialist/librarian will work closely with the school administrator to develop a schedule whereby they can support the literary engagement of students and classroom teachers while providing and incorporating engaging literature into the classrooms. The library media specialist will also support teachers and students by ensuring students/teachers have the proper login credentials.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: If a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19, will the entire class be asked to quarantine?

A: If a student or employee tests positive, persons within that class setting will be notified to the greatest extent possible without revealing any confidential student information. Student information will remain confidential as required by law.

While it is possible the class may be required to quarantine, the class may not necessarily be required to quarantine. If a faculty member tests positive for COVID-19, he or she will notify a supervisor and follow the directions of a medical provider. Faculty members who test positive must obtain two negative COVID-19 test results before returning to work.

The ADPH has defined direct exposure as being in contact closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes. The local school administration will work closely with parents and students to be flexible and work with parents as it relates to individual exposure and school absences. However, based on consultation with the classroom teacher to identify any potential exposure location, duration of infection, etc., the school could potentially ask the classroom to quarantine and transition to remote learning.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: When will students be able to return to school if they are sick?

A: Not all students that are sick will be diagnosed with COVID-19. Students that are diagnosed with COVID-19 may return to school with two negative tests result and **after meeting with the school nurse the day prior to returning**. As with any typically sick student, they are not to return to school until they are asymptomatic.

Q: Who will make decisions about whether the school will be opened or closed:

A: The decision to close a school(s) will be made in conjunction with the Public Health Department, Alabama Department of Education, and the local school district.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: Will students and teachers be required to wear masks?

A: All district employees are required to wear masks governed by the Alabama Health Order, as directed by Governor Kay Ivey.

During times of transition outside of the classroom, masks will be worn by both students and teachers. Students may choose to wear their masks all day. Masks must be worn in instances where social distancing is not feasible.

Q: Will students/teachers practice social distancing?

A: Teachers will maximize the distance between desks as much as possible. Unnecessary furniture should be removed from rooms to create more space between desks. Classrooms that utilize tables for student and group seating will need to evaluate their ability to distance students with the tables and discuss, in collaboration with their school administrator, the feasibility and availability of desks, dividers, etc. and their ability to use tables.

Desks will be in rows and columns facing the front of the room.

Students will have assigned seats. At the secondary level, where students change classes, desks will be cleaned and sanitized at each class's end. When possible, teachers will change rooms instead of students.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: Will classes be allowed to take field trips?

A: Currently, classes will not be allowed to take off-campus field trips. The updated guidance will be provided once field trips are deemed allowable.

Q: Will I be notified if a classmate of my child has tested positive for COVID-19?

A: It is the Alabama Department of Public Health's responsibility and duty to notify individuals of possible exposure to COVID-19. However, if a student or employee tests positive, persons within that class setting will be notified to the greatest extent possible without revealing any confidential information. Student and employee information will remain confidential as required by law.

Q: Will students eat in the lunchroom?

A: Generally speaking, students may not eat in the lunchroom on a particular day. However, principals may be able to schedule small groups with social distancing practices in place. Grab and Go lunches will be picked up from the cafeteria and eaten in the classroom. Food may not be dropped off from home.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: What is the State's Virtual Learning Plan?

A: The State has purchased a remote learning program called **SchoolsPLP** for grades K-12, and the state still provides ACCESS for grades 9-12.

SchoolsPLP is a virtual program provided by the Alabama State Department of Education. In SchoolsPLP, **instruction is not delivered by our teachers.** Some physical attendance will be necessary for taking the required State Assessments. Students are still enrolled in the Hale County Schools and may participate in extracurricular after school activities. However, students enrolled in SchoolsPLP will not attend the Hale County College and Career Academy for their course work, as many of the technical classes are offered virtually. Students will be expected to "attend" classes everyday and complete assignments on the same schedule as their peers who are physically on campus.

The state is still providing ACCESS for students in grades 9-12. A teacher is assigned to teach the class remotely (not a HCSS employee) and the teacher is available for instructional assistance. Students are still enrolled in the Hale County Schools and may participate in after school extracurricular activities.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: How will attendance be taken through SchoolsPLP and ACCESS (remote learning)?

A: Attendance through SchoolsPLP will be taken through daily participation in the assigned remote learning activities through the remote learning curriculum as attendance. ACCESS attendance will be taken through completed work assignments.

Q: If a student chooses the Virtual learning option, can the student choose the traditional option at a later date?

A: Once school starts, students may return to school at the end of any nine-week grading period. Students who wish to return to the traditional setting must give notice to the school by the six week progress report date.

Q: Are students participating in the virtual option still required to take state assessments?

A: Yes, all state assessments are required. Physical attendance at school will be required during testing times. For grades K-3, the Alabama Literacy Act requirements are still in effect and will be followed.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: If the school closes and teachers transition to remote learning, can teachers still come to the school to work?

A: Remote learning will occur should the school be closed for two or more weeks. We hope that teachers will be able to use classroom resources to teach, but health orders and the spread of COVID-19 will determine access to the school. If we transition to blended learning, further information will be shared.

Q: Will teachers be responsible for cleaning or sanitizing classrooms?

A: Teachers should support the school's cleanliness for the safety and health of all staff and students and follow the principal's directions for specific instructions. Cleaning supplies will be provided.

Q: Do employees have to wear a mask?

A: Teachers and students will wear masks when feasible. Educators are under the Public Health Order that states, "employees will wear masks as feasible." Masks should be worn in hallways and when going to classrooms. The required use of masks will be governed by the Alabama Health Order, as directed by Governor Kay Ivey and other applicable laws.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q: Will teachers be expected to rearrange the desks to maintain a six-foot distance between all students?

A: Teachers should maximize the distance between desks as much as possible. Unnecessary furniture should be removed from rooms to create more space between desks. Classrooms that utilize tables for student and group seating will need to evaluate their ability to distance students with the tables and discuss, in collaboration with their school administrator, about the feasibility and availability of desks, dividers, etc., and their ability to use tables. Administrators should work with teachers to remove flexible seating options that do not allow for social distancing.

Q: How will the school system identify and address learning gaps created by the March-May 2020 school closure?

A: Teachers are expected to provide formative assessments during the first week of school to all students. Teachers will collaborate with fellow teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators to plan for addressing the gaps in learning.

Q: How will the school system support students without internet access and computers in their homes?

A: Digital devices and hotspots have been purchased for students to use in their homes. Buses have been equipped with Wi-Fi devices and will be placed throughout the communities for internet access.

FAQs for HCSS's Plan For Reopening Schools Continued

Q. What will determine if a transition to remote learning is necessary?

 A. Currently, decisions will be made regarding the transition from traditional learning to remote learning as a local decision based on consultation and guidance from ADPH, ALSDE, and CDC. We have asked the state to provide a percentage or number of absences for students or staff to determine when to close the school. They have not provided any direction at this time.

Q. My classroom uses mostly hands-on materials and equipment. How should I adjust my activities to ensure proper learning takes place while ensuring student safety?

 A: We always have and will continue to encourage students to participate in their learning actively. However, due diligence must be made in the current pandemic climate to ensure items are sanitized before used or passed among and between students.