

School Reopening  
and  
COVID Contingency Plan  
for  
Clarke County Schools  
2020-2021



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July 21, 2020

Dear Stakeholders:

As all of you are aware, schools closed in Alabama on March 16, 2020, and remained closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year. Education, as we knew it, ceased to be during this time. The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed every aspect of our daily lives, and education has not been excluded. This new normal has caused educators all across our nation to totally reimagine even the smallest detail of the school day.

The time to reopen schools is drawing near. Most of the summer has been spent diligently seeking answers to the multitude of questions posed by parents and educators alike. Our number one priority in returning to school is maintaining the health and safety of students and staff, while still providing optimal educational opportunities for all students.

I have no doubt that the information contained in this plan will evolve over time. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) are constantly releasing new information. Our plan will change in order to remain aligned with their recommendations.

I want to personally thank all the employees of the Clarke County Board of Education for their commitment to students. This year will be challenging for all of us, and I have every confidence that our employees will rise to that challenge. I also appreciate the people of Clarke County for their commitment to education and everything they are doing to support families and schools alike.

Sincerely,

Larry Bagley  
Superintendent, Clarke County Schools

### **Guiding Principles:**

- ❖ We will be transparent about what we know and what we do not know yet. We will offer clear communication about what we can control and what is beyond our control.
- ❖ We will strive to keep the student at the heart of every decision.
- ❖ We will listen to stakeholders' concerns and attempt to assist in problem solving.
- ❖ We will utilize all of the best scientific data to make informed decisions.

### **Communication:**

We will communicate with parents utilizing our website, [clarkecountyschools.org](http://clarkecountyschools.org). We will also communicate through our Clarke County Schools app, Facebook, and local media.



### **Safety Measures for the Home: (First Screening)**

- We encourage parents to speak with pediatricians about their child's best option for returning to school.
- Parents are the front line of defense against spreading any contagious illness. Please make sure your child does not have a temperature each morning

before sending them to school. Students should not board buses if they have fever or are exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19, or any other contagious condition. Students with a fever of 100 or higher should not attend school.

- Parents should teach and reinforce proper handwashing, coughing in elbow, not sharing personal items, and self-reporting any symptoms to the teacher or the nurse.
- Parents will be encouraged to maintain appropriate contact information for themselves as well as all the emergency contacts for the student.

### **Safety Measures for the Bus: (Second Screening)**

- Bus drivers and students will wear masks.
- Buses will display signage detailing safety protocols related to COVID.
- Students from the same family will sit together on the bus.
- Social distancing will be practiced as much as is possible on a school bus. Markings will be made on all buses to help students identify six feet of separation.
- Hand sanitizer will be available to students on the bus.
- Buses will be sanitized before each route.
- Each bus will have a quarantine seat for students who show symptoms en route.

### **Safety Measures for the School: (Third Screening)**

Every student's temperature will be checked with a thermal scanning thermometer upon the student's arrival to campus. Students found to have fever will be isolated until such time as they can leave campus.

**Covid-19 Positive Student Protocol:**

- If a student or staff member has a temperature of 99.5, they may go to class, but will need to be rechecked by the nurse hourly.
- If a student becomes ill after arriving to class, the teacher should call and inform the nurse.
- Teacher should have someone (administrator, office personnel, or another available staff member) escort the student to the nurse's office.
- The nurse will hold the student in quarantine until the parent arrives.
- The student or staff member that is sent home WILL NOT be able to return to school without proof that they have been tested for COVID 19 and the result is negative. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES can the student or staff return to school without proof from the doctor.
- If a student or staff member has been exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID, they will be required to stay home under quarantine for 14 days and will be required to submit a negative COVID test. The CDC defines exposure as closer than 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.
- The teacher should notify the custodian so that the area can be sanitized properly.
- The student will not be allowed to return to school until he/she has been tested for COVID-19 and can produce written documentation of a negative result.
- It is the responsibility and duty of the Alabama Department of Public Health to notify individuals of possible exposure to COVID-19.

### **Nurse Office Visits:**

- Teachers/Staff should notify the school nurse before sending a student to them to limit the number of students in the nurse's office and limit exposure.
- The school nurse will work closely with administrators in developing a plan to isolate sick children until someone comes to get them.
- Each school will have an identified quarantine area for students or staff suspected of possible COVID contamination.
- The school nurse will continue to develop Individual Health Plans for students with chronic health problems.
- School Nurses will sanitize and disinfect as needed.

### **Children and Youth with Underlying Conditions in Schools:**

Nearly one out of every five children in the United States has a special healthcare need. Their care is often complex and warrants extra vigilance and care on the part of school health staff. Technical assistance, training, case-by-case consultation, and referrals to community and health resources provide school staff the information and skills training they might need. The school nurse provides health care services for students with underlying conditions through monitoring and triaging and oversees the health care plans for these vulnerable children.

All health guidelines for management of COVID-19 should and will be reinforced, including hand washing techniques, proper respiratory etiquette, use of hand sanitizer, temperature monitoring, social distancing, daily cleaning of the building and routine cleaning of high touch surfaces, the use of masks, and other emerging guidelines in order to protect all students.

Parents of students with pre-existing conditions may have heightened fears about their child's return to school. The school nurse will maintain contact with parents and doctors, consult with the student's health care provider, and consider the

special needs of students with underlying conditions to determine options for virtual learning or home and hospital instruction.

Preparation of the nurse's office is especially important to safeguard the needs of all students, including students with underlying conditions. Working with parents to provide any additional protective gear that might be needed, extra medication, and information about their child's current condition, are all vital to the successful return of students to their schools.

### **Student Mental Health:**

- Students will have access to school guidance counselors to assist them in maintaining positive mental health.
- Schools will work in conjunction with Southwest Alabama Mental Health to make sure students' mental health needs are met.



### **Healthy Hygiene Practices:**

- Employees will be required to wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Student masks are required both in school and on the bus per ALSDE recommendations. Exceptions will be made when social distancing is possible.

- School visitors will be required to wear masks upon entering the school. If guests do not have a mask, one will be provided.
- Students will have multiple opportunities to wash their hands each day using soap and water.
- Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school. These bottles may be refilled in the water fountains.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be installed at designated locations on each campus and in each classroom.
- Hand sanitizer will be available to students on the bus.

#### **Intensified Cleaning and Disinfecting:**

- Janitorial staff will increase the frequency and intensity of the cleaning and disinfecting of restrooms and common areas.
- A private company has been employed to perform deep cleaning on a rotational basis.
- Industrial cleaning machines are being purchased for schools who do not already have them.
- Buses will be sanitized before each route.

#### **Social Distancing Practices:**

Clarke County School staff and students will employ social distancing strategies as much as possible.

#### **Ongoing Monitoring Practices:**



Clarke County Schools will collaborate with local and state health departments to monitor cases, exposures, hospitalizations and any other pertinent data. In the event of an elevated number of cases in local health data or in the event of presumed or confirmed cases directly impacting schools or central offices, Clarke County will collaborate with the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) authorities to implement all necessary health and safety protocols. This could include short-term closure of one or more Clarke County facilities until health officials deem it safe to reopen. More information on preparations for future closures will be discussed as needed.

### **Outside Visitors and Groups:**

Visitors will not be admitted beyond the school office. Schools may offer more specific guidance. There will be no large gatherings inside the school (PTO Programs, Grandparents' Day, Thanksgiving Lunch, etc.)

### **Field Trips:**

There will be no field trips until further notice.



### **Academic Instruction:**

A survey was made available to parents concerning their learning preference for their child.

Students may attend Clarke County Schools in one of two ways:

- **Traditional School Instruction**

- ❖ Instruction will be provided Monday-Friday on campus.
- ❖ Students will continue to adhere to the established uniform policy.
- ❖ Social distancing will be practiced as much as possible.
- ❖ Classrooms will be arranged to facilitate social distancing as much as possible.
- ❖ There will be an increase in technology usage in the regular classroom in preparation for a possible COVID shutdown.

- **Full Time Virtual Instruction-** Target date for beginning August 24<sup>th</sup>

*Parents should understand both the responsibility and commitment of choosing the virtual classroom option.*

- *A child's age and developmental level should be considered before embarking on virtual learning.*
- *If virtual learning is selected, students have two weeks at the beginning of the semester to opt out and return to traditional learning. After that time, students are committed to virtual learning for a semester. (Fall deadline is September 8<sup>th</sup>)*
- *Students will be responsible for providing their own device until such time as CCBOE receives the Chrome Books which have been ordered.*
- *It is the responsibility of the parent to provide adequate Internet access, either at home or through public Wi-Fi.*

- *An adult at home to support student learning will be critical to student success.*
  - *Assignments with deadlines will be given. It is the responsibility of students and parents to meet those deadlines.*
  - *Virtual learning will require students to practice self-discipline and possess self-motivation.*
  - *Students may need access to a printer, scanner, headphones, microphones, and a webcam. These additional items will not be provided by the Clarke County Board of Education.*
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- ❖ In grades K-8, certified teachers employed by Clarke County Schools, will provide daily instruction via Schoology, the virtual learning management system purchased by the Alabama State Department of Education. Schools PLP, also provided by the ALSDE, will serve as the curriculum.
  - ❖ Students in grades 9-12 will participate in ACCESS learning.
  - ❖ Students have a two-week window at the beginning of the semester to opt out of virtual or traditional learning. After that deadline, the student must remain until the end of the semester.
  - ❖ Students will complete assignments and submit them through the virtual platforms.
  - ❖ If needed, flash drives will also be available for the transfer of student work between home and school.
  - ❖ There may be times students are required to attend campus to take state assessments.
  - ❖ Virtual students will meet attendance requirements by logging in to complete assignments.
  - ❖ Virtual students will observe the same school calendar.

- ❖ Virtual students will be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities.



### **Athletics and Activities:**

Athletics and extracurricular activities support the goal of providing a well-rounded educational experience for students. Clarke County Schools will follow all Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for physical and social distancing, restricting the size of gatherings for indoor and outdoor spaces, disinfecting equipment, and other health and safety precautions. Guidance will be applied throughout reopening.

### **Athletic Facilities**

- Employees shall not knowingly allow patrons or guests to congregate within six feet of a person from another household.
- Employees shall not knowingly allow patrons or guests to participate in athletic activities in violation.
- Employees shall take reasonable steps to prevent people from congregating in lobby areas, break rooms, and other common areas.
- An athletic facility shall limit facility occupancy as determined by the ALSDE, Alabama Department of Health, and school officials.

- Each employee shall wear a mask or other facial covering that covers his or her nostrils and mouth at all times while in regular interaction with students or guests.
- All surfaces including, but not limited to, door handles, sinks, faucets, knobs, toilets, tables, soap dispensers, locker handles etc., should be cleaned and sanitized thoroughly before groups arrive and once groups have left the area.
- Maintain recommended spacing based on ADPH and ALSDE guidelines. (When possible, mark off or outline areas for the correct spacing.)
- In the weight room, when athletes end a set, all equipment should be wiped down before the next athlete begins. (Ex: Once Player A finishes a set of bench presses, the bar, bench, and any weights that were changed out should be adequately sanitized before allowing another student/group to use.)
- After one group leaves the weight room and before the next group enters, the room should be completely cleaned and sanitized.

### **Athletic Hygiene**

- Upon arrival, students should wash hands before starting any workout/practice session. In accordance with ALSDE/ADPH guidelines, if a sink with soap and water is not available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol and supervise its use.
- Players, coaches, and officials shall not share water coolers, drinking stations, water bottles, cups, or other drinking devices. Organizers of athletic activities shall take reasonable steps, where practicable, to regularly disinfect frequently used items and surfaces.

- ALL equipment including balls, bats, helmets, gloves, etc. should be wiped down and cleaned after each group activity, workout, skill development session, etc. Avoid sharing equipment whenever possible.
- As soon as the workouts are complete, all student-athletes should leave the facility immediately. Students are encouraged to shower and wash all clothing that was worn during activities as soon as possible after returning home.
- Players, coaches, officials, and spectators shall refrain from high fives, handshakes, and other physical contact except to the extent necessary—and only to the extent necessary—for players, coaches, and officials to directly participate in the athletic activity.



### **Student Transportation:**

- Signage has been developed and will be placed on buses indicating the COVID-19 symptoms students should be aware of and when they should not ride the bus.
- Parents and students will be required to sign a notice emphasizing their responsibility to pre-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the school bus.
- Students will be required to wear a mask on the bus until further notice.
- School personnel will notify the transportation department of any bus riding student who exhibits COVID symptoms while at school. Extra cleaning precautions will be taken with any bus which has transported a

COVID positive student.

- Students who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will be asked not to ride the school bus until cleared by a physician.
- Windows and roof hatches will be kept open to allow for fresh air to circulate through the bus while transporting students.
- Parents and students will be instructed to maintain 6-foot distancing at the bus stop, and while loading and unloading students.
- Parents, students, and staff will be instructed to wear face coverings at bus stops, on buses where a 6-foot distance cannot be maintained, and for as long as the identified threat level indicates it is necessary.
- Students will load back to front, unload front to back, and have assigned seating in order to limit contact and promote social distancing.
- Students will be required to sit in their assigned seat, face forward, and keep their hands within the confines of the seat in order to combat the spread of COVID-19.
- The Transportation Supervisor will work closely with School Administration and parents to ensure students adhere to the bus rules.
- Family members and students from the same household will sit together when being transported.
- Students will be encouraged to sanitize their hands upon entry into the buses.
- Students will be required to sit in the same seat when traveling to and

from athletic events and extracurricular activities.

- The seat adjacent to the driver will be left vacant and used as an isolation area for students exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Students will not be returned home on their regular bus route if they are exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at school. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for transportation.

**Driver Considerations:**

- Drivers will be trained in all necessary cleaning, sanitation and management procedures.
- The seat immediately behind the driver will remain vacant to provide the driver the recommended protection.
- Drivers will be provided the following appropriate personal protective equipment; masks, sanitizer, and gloves.

**Cleaning the Buses:**

- All drivers and shop personnel will be trained and will assist with the cleaning and sanitizing of the buses.
- All buses will be cleaned and sanitized with a CDC approved antiviral cleaner.
- Buses will be cleaned and sanitized after each route.
- Special attention will be given to sanitation of high touch areas of the bus.



- A bus that has been determined to have been transporting individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 will undergo a 24-hour quarantine and deep cleaning prior to transporting students again. A spare bus will be used until the cleaning process can be completed.
- Cleaning and sanitation of buses will be monitored by bus shop staff.

### **Supplies Available on all Buses:**

- Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses.
- Masks will be available for students who need a mask.
- Masks and gloves will be provided to all drivers and bus aides.
- Spray bottles, microfiber cloths, and CDC approved sanitizer will be provided for the cleaning of buses.



### **Child Nutrition Program:**

- Child Nutrition staff will implement enhanced cleaning protocols and perform all duties in compliance with ALSDE and ADPH guidelines.
- Lunch schedules will be developed to aid in social distancing.
- Child Nutrition Personnel will enter in each student's unique identification number. Students will not touch the keypad in the lunchroom.

- Students will have access to hand sanitizer before each meal.
- As much as is possible, students will practice social distancing in the cafeteria.