

IN THE LOOP



August 2020

Update From the Superintendent

Welcome to the 2020-2021 School Year

Dear CCS Families,

"Welcome back!" takes on a new meaning this fall. I shared with our staff, that we have all experienced the trauma of a pandemic for almost six months now with the changing tides of information, guidance, and uncertainty. We have learned it is hard to fight an enemy you cannot see and planning for the unknown is now our daily challenge. I know we all long for the predictable, traditional start of school, but this year is just different.

I am extremely proud and thankful for the extraordinary effort teams from all across the district have given to build two educational programs in every school, run simultaneously, so our families could choose the best option for their children.

A person asked me this summer if I thought teachers and school staff were "essential" workers. My answer was that after parents, I believe educators are the most influential people in children's lives. This year educators may be even more essential because our kids need to be academically challenged, they need social interaction, and they need to be known and loved by their teachers and school staff.

I do not know if our current reopening plan will last weeks, months, or the whole year, but I do know that every minute a student spends in contact with our teachers and staff, either virtually or in person, is worth the hundreds of hours our team has worked to find ways to connect our students with their teachers.

Finally, one of the unique attributes of this pandemic season is that it has divided so many people. There are strong arguments on every side of every detail as we have moved forward. We have done our best to follow the guidance of the medical community at the local, county, and state levels. Then, we worked within those guidelines to design and provide the best educational programming possible in this environment, but it can only be successful if we all work together. One thing we all have in common is that we want our students to have a quality educational experience and we appreciate your partnership in making that happen.

Thank you for your support, patience, and partnership in this journey,

Dr. B

Michael J. Beresford, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Carmel Clay Schools

Together We Achieve



#MASKUPCCS



STOP THE SPREAD

Safety Precautions

About everyone in the medical community agrees that the four safety measures noted below are very effective in stopping the spread of COVID-19. While none are 100% effective on their own, when used together, these layers create a strong mitigation strategy that reduces the likelihood of spreading infection. If we all follow this guidance, we can make a positive difference in our schools and community. So let's mask-up and follow these four safety measures to the highest degree possible.

- **Screening-** Use the three screener questions each morning to check your children. Keep students home who have symptoms or feel ill. If your health provider recommends a COVID-19 test for anyone in your family, keep your students home until you have the results.
- **Face Covering –** Everyone must wear a face covering in school and on the bus. Our guidance from the medical community recommends either masks or face shields. Most medical guidance report masks are more effective than shields in preventing infection. The combination of a mask and shield is most effective.
- **Handwashing/Hand Sanitizer –** regular hand washing throughout the day for 20 seconds or more is recommended. Hand sanitizer is recommended when soap and water is not available.
- **Social Distancing –** Medical guidance is to stay 6 feet or more from other people who are not from your household to the highest degree possible. Guidance also recommends social distancing should be practiced in combination with other preventative actions such as wearing masks and frequent handwashing.

Quarantine

Throughout this pandemic season it is likely that students and staff will be placed in quarantine for having symptoms, a positive test result, or for an exposure, or secondary exposure to someone who tested positive.

Students/parents should report absences due to quarantine or exposure to their attendance line (during the school day), or use the CCS COVID phone line after hours: 317-571-4630 This phone line will send an automated notification to the Director of Student Services.

CCS will report any possible or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the Hamilton County Health Department (HCHD). CCS will also assist with contact tracing to identify individuals who may have been exposed. The HCHD will determine what actions need to be taken, including quarantine, on a case by case basis. CCS will assist with contacting families of students who may have been exposed and communicating HCHD guidance.

There should be no stigma associated with a student or other person in quarantine. CCS will not identify any person with symptoms, a positive test, or in quarantine in compliance with privacy laws. Aggregate numbers of cases, exposures, may be shared as allowed by law.



Protect yourself and others:



**STAY HOME
IF YOU
FEEL SICK**



Screeners Questions

- In the last 72 hours have you had a fever or chills and/or taken medication for a fever? (If you are unsure, please utilize a thermometer for an accurate reading. A temperature of 100.4 or higher constitutes a fever according to medical professionals.
- Do you have COVID-19 symptoms such as new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
- In the past 14 days have you been in close contact (within 6 feet for longer than 15 minutes without protective equipment) with a person known/suspected to have COVID-19 and/or have you been diagnosed with COVID-19?

Buses

Information regarding your student's bus stop, pick-up/drop-off times, bus # and bus driver can be found in your [PowerSchool Parent Portal](#).



The CCS COVID-19 Reopening Plan for transportation is as follows:

- Face coverings will be required on school buses for both students and staff.
- Students will have assigned seats for contact tracing purposes.
- Students will be allowed to sit 2 per seat. Siblings will be encouraged to sit together. Further spacing of students will occur as much as possible.
- Buses will be disinfected after both the morning and afternoon routes.
- A regular ridership schedule is requested for each address in order to support our capacity and contact tracing efforts.
- Due to restricted seating capacities as well as assigned seating to allow for contact tracing, students will only be allowed to ride their own bus to which they have been assigned for home-to-school/school-to-home transport. Students will not be permitted to ride with another student on a different bus.

Virtual Attendance for Secondary Schools

An important part of the school day is attendance. Secondary students who are attending school virtually, will receive a prompt on Canvas from their teacher daily. The prompt will need to be completed each day and will be used by the teacher to report attendance.

Drop Off/Pick Up

If you are transporting your student(s) by car this school year, please be aware that each school has a plan for their drop off and pick up lines. We do expect the drop off and pick up lines to be longer than in the past so we ask for your patience with our staff as they work to make sure all our students arrive safely.

And don't forget to have your student MASK UP as they exit the car.



Start Date for CHS & Elementary Schools

August 13, 2020

The start date for both in-person and virtual students at the high school and all CCS elementary schools is Thursday, August 13th, for both virtual and in-person students.

Students attending both in-person and virtually at the elementary schools will begin their day at 7:50 a.m. and end their day at 2:35 p.m.

Students attending both in-person and virtually at the high school will begin their day at 8:45 a.m. and end their day at 3:45 p.m.

New Start Date for Middle School Students

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**Wednesday
August 19, 2020**

All Carmel Clay Schools will have a 40 minute district-wide late start twice a month for the purpose of teacher professional development.

[View the late start schedule](#)

Change to Hybrid at the Middle Schools

Our middle school administrative teams worked diligently around the clock on scheduling once the deadline passed for parents to choose in-person or virtual learning. Through that process, we determined that we could not achieve the class sizes necessary to meet the recommended safety guidelines from the medical community.

In order to meet those recommendations, we pivoted the middle schools to a hybrid in-person schedule. Again, the middle school teams have worked through the complex process of scheduling the Hybrid program. The program will mirror the CHS schedule so that families with students in both the middle school and CHS will be at home doing virtual learning and at school in person on the same days.

The Middle School Orientation Programs have been expanded and will be offered to students in both virtual and Hybrid programs on Thursday August 13th, Friday, August 14th, Monday, August 17th and Tuesday, August 18th. There will also be drive-through options for families who choose not to go into the buildings.

The first full day of both Virtual and Hybrid options at each middle school will be **Wednesday, August 19th**. This shift will not affect the school calendar moving forward. The start and end time for middle school students attending both in-person and virtually is 8:45 a.m. and 3:45 p.m.

Mental Health Update

As we transition back to school and acclimate to our new normal, we understand that there will be significant need for students and staff to feel physiologically and psychologically safe and well. Our staff will be working at the district and building level to establish positive and predictable learning environments while connecting to students and creating a sense of belonging.

As a district, we continue to focus on mental wellness and social-emotional learning supports to assist our students regulate their emotions so that they are ready to learn. Please follow this [link](#), for an excellent resource created for school staff to support the promotion of physiological and psychological safety, provide self-care and development tools for teachers, and support SEL activities as they welcome students back. We also encourage parents and caretakers to check out our [Resources for Parents](#) on our [CCS Covid-19 Information Page](#). As students begin to acclimate to their new routines, these resources will help to support student growth and resilience.

We are also excited to announce our intent to expand our partnership with Ascension St. Vincent in order to provide school-based mental health services for our students. Through our partnership Ascension, parents will have the option to choose in-school mental health services to support their students. As you may recall, this was a major piece of our school safety referendum last fall. We look forward to providing this important service for our students and families in every school across the district.

Food & Nutrition Services

Virtual Learners Meal Program – Starting Friday, August 21, our Food Service Department will be providing a [Virtual Learners Meal Program - School Year 2020-2021](#) this fall. Follow the link to find out more about this Friday, drive-through opportunity for our families of virtual students.

CHS Grab and Go Meal Service at Carmel High School - Starting the week of August 17, Carmel Clay Food Services is offering an optional Grab & Go Meal Service to all high school students participating in the hybrid schedule! The Grab & Go Service provides breakfast and lunch meals for virtual at-home learning. Meal bags are sent home with your student at the end of the first school day of their cohort rotation, allowing meals to be readily available on the days they are learning from home. Meal service in the cafeterias will continue to be offered during students' in-person days. Families must submit one form per student to receive this service. Further information will be provided prior to your student(s) scheduled meal pick-up day. CHS [Grab & Go Flyer](#).

- Healthy Meals for At-Home Learning
- Available to All Students
- Convenient Pickup At School
- Meal Bags includes Two Days of Meals
- Easy Student Checkout using ID Card
- See Order Form for Pricing

[Click Here](#) to Order Today!

Remember Parents are encouraged to pre-pay student lunch accounts online using the [EZSchoolPay](#) system to reduce the handing of money/checks. (You will need your student's ID number found in your [PowerSchool](#) account.) Cash will only be accepted in one serving line per cafeteria.