

Columbia School District's Safe Return to School Guidelines for the 2021-2022 School Year






The Columbia School District has developed Safe Return to School Guidelines utilizing the guidance and recommendations of health officials and addressing public comments/input. CSD's guidelines align with the reopening guidelines and district guidance on the development of a safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services plan provided by our state and/or federal leaders. CSD's purpose is to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff as we return to face-to-face instruction for the 2021-2022 School year. CSD's recovery focuses heavily on the health and physical requirements necessary for returning safely to school. Each school has created a clear and precise reentry plan to navigate the academic, social, and emotional effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our focus remains on our students, staff, and families. CSD supports COVID-19 vaccinations for educators, staff, and students, if eligible.

CDC Information and Definitions for Addressing Community Spread in Our Schools

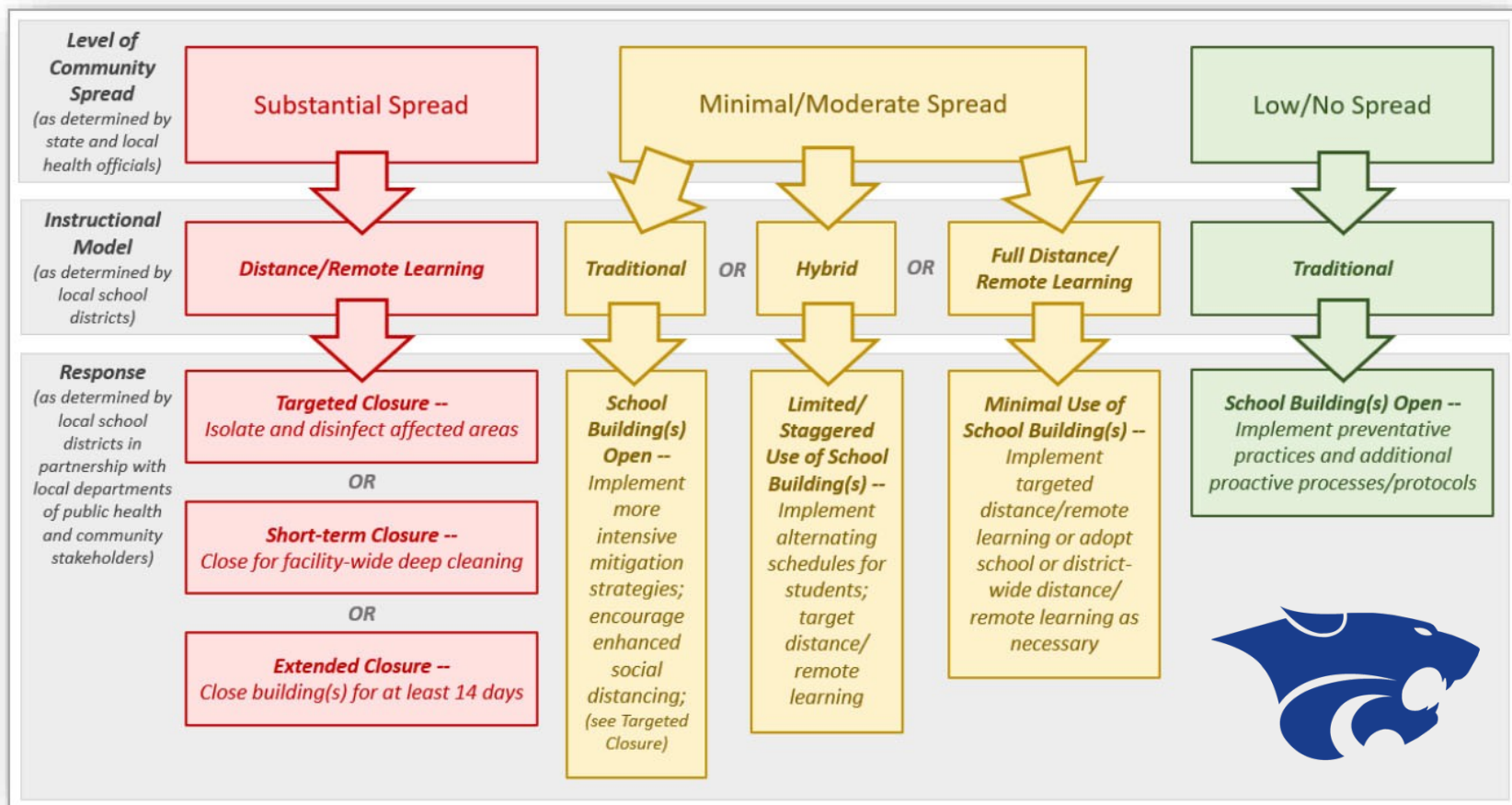
LEVEL OF COMMUNITY SPREAD (AS DETERMINED BY STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH OFFICIALS)

Substantial Spread	Minimal/Moderate Spread	Low/No Spread
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with local and state health officials Participate in contact tracing efforts and specimen collection efforts as directed by local health officials (to the extent feasible) Schools that are closed, remain closed. Implement distance/remote learning (see <i>Serving School Meals and Supporting Teaching and Learning</i>). Close off affected areas and if possible, wait 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. Consider ways to accommodate needs of children, teachers/staff, and families at higher risk for severe illness (see <i>Protecting Vulnerable Populations</i> for considerations) <p>For additional guidance on addressing community spread, see the CDC's Considerations for Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain communication with local and state health officials Participate in contact tracing efforts as directed by local health officials (to the extent feasible) Implement enhanced social distancing measures Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols Establish a protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they come to school (see <i>When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School</i>) Isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces Consider ways to accommodate needs of children, teachers/staff, and families at higher risk for severe illness (see <i>Protecting Vulnerable Populations</i> for considerations) <p><i>The District has the authority and flexibility to close school buildings and utilize distance/remote learning as needed.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain communication with local and state health officials Participate in contact tracing efforts and specimen collection efforts as directed by local health officials (to the extent feasible) Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols Establish a protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they come to school (see <i>When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School</i>) Consider ways to accommodate needs of children, teachers/staff, and families at higher risk for severe illness (see <i>Protecting Vulnerable Populations</i> for considerations)

Definitions

	<p>Recommendations regarding face coverings differ based on the level of community spread and can be found throughout this document. Information should be provided to staff, students, and families on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. Any policy regarding face coverings should be sensitive to the needs of students and staff with medical issues that make the wearing of a face covering inadvisable.</p> <p>> CDC Guidance</p>		<p>Hand sanitizers should contain at least 60% alcohol and only used with staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer. Hand soap should be used for younger children.</p> <p>> CDC Guidance</p>		<p>Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep out of reach of children.</p> <p>> CDC Guidance</p>
---	---	---	---	---	---


CSD's Path to Safely Return to School







Columbia School District Decision Tree



CSD's *Path to Reopening our Schools* provides a flexible framework to address the challenges that may emerge during the 2021-2022 school year. In place of a one-size-fits-all method, the above *District Decision Tree* contains a list of instructional models our District/ Schools can utilize to ensure the continued achievement and protection of students and staff.

CSD's Path to Safely Return to School

<p>Level of Community Spread (as determined by state and local health officials)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Substantial Spread</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Minimal/Moderate Spread</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Low/No Spread</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Practicing Prevention</p> 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use social media and other communications to inform parents, students, and staff about COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures, good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols Encourage COVID-19 testing <p>CDC Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to Protect Yourself and Others COVID-19 Symptoms COVID-19 and Children Communication Tools <p>CDC COVID-19 Self-Checker</p> <p>Mississippi's COVID-19 Hotline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call: 877-978-6453 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as handwashing, covering coughs, and face coverings Provide hand soap and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in all bathrooms, classrooms, and frequently trafficked areas Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols. Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use Provide masks and other appropriate PPE to staff Allow students and staff to bring hand sanitizer and face masks/coverings to use from home Take steps to ensure all water systems and features are safe Turn off water fountains and provide bottled water or allow students and staff to bring water bottles from home Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, as long as this does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning; schedule additional cleanings during weekends or school holidays/breaks <p>CDC Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Schools Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures such as handwashing, covering coughs, and face coverings (optional) Provide hand soap and hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, paper towels, and no-touch trash cans in all bathrooms, classrooms, and frequently trafficked areas Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols. Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily and shared objects after each use Allow students and staff to bring hand sanitizer and face masks/coverings to use from home Allow staff to wear face masks/covering, and other appropriate PPE as desired Take steps to ensure all water systems and features are safe Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, as long as this does not pose a safety or health risk to students or staff Conduct deep cleaning of schools prior to students/staff returning; schedule periodic cleanings during weekends or school holidays/breaks (to the extent practicable) <p>CDC Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown

<p>Transporting Students</p> 	<p>School buildings are closed; buses are used to deliver meals to students and families</p> <p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce contact by delivering a schedule of meals during a designated time (ex: delivering two days' worth of meals every other day) 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hand sanitizer for students and bus drivers Provide face masks for bus drivers; require students to wear face masks/coverings Students will screen at home for symptoms of illness prior to arrival at the bus stop and utilize spaced seating (to the extent practicable) Eliminate field trips Clean and disinfect the bus after each route Establish protocols for bus stops, loading/unloading students to minimize congregation of children from different households <p>CDC Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What Bus Operators Need to Know 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing hand sanitizer for students and bus drivers Allowing bus drivers and students to wear facemasks/coverings Limiting field trips (to areas of limited/low transmission) Inspecting buses prior to students returning and as part of a regular rotation Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces on the bus at least daily Airing out buses when not in use
<p>Entering School Buildings</p> 	<p>School buildings are closed; require only <i>essential staff</i> report in-person to carry out functions that are <i>absolutely necessary</i>.</p> <p>District/School Considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> District/school leaders will determine roles, responsibilities, and reporting requirements for staff. District/school leaders will utilize virtual platforms wherever possible to conduct essential business and keep in-person reporting to an absolute minimum during school closures. 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols. Establish a protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they come to school (see <i>When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School</i>) Mark spaced lines to enter the building and designate entrance and exit flow paths Screen students and staff (to the extent practicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate and send home if internal temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) Consider safety and privacy concerns (confidentiality should be maintained) Establish a protocol for visitors: calling front office before entering, screening visitors, require use of face coverings/masks, etc. Restrict nonessential visitors and volunteers. Establish a protocol for student pick/drop up: staggered entry and release (by grade, class, or bus numbers), marked spacing for pickup 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff Limit unnecessary congregations of students and staff Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread. COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures (including staying home when sick), good hygiene, and school/district specific protocols Establish a protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when they come to school (see <i>When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School</i>) Establish a protocol for visitors: calling front office before entering, screening visitors, requesting use of face coverings/masks, etc.

<p>Serving Meals</p> 	<p>School buildings are closed.</p> <p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice established social distancing protocols to the greatest extent practicable Reduce contact by delivering a week's worth of meals during a designated time (ex: delivering a week's worth of meals every Monday) 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving meals in classrooms Student hand washing before and after meal service Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff Use disposable plates, utensils, etc. Cafeteria Staff will gather all trash at the end of lunch periods 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing hand sanitizer for students and staff Allowing students and staff to wear face masks/coverings while in large group gatherings Conducting cleaning of cafeterias and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day
<p>Transitioning</p> 	<p>School buildings are closed.</p>	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit mixing between groups (to the extent practicable) For class changes and other transitions throughout the school day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional time for transitions Designate areas of the hallway (i.e. lanes) as flow paths to keep students separated students to minimize congregation of students Plan staggered class (ex: by hall, odd/even room numbers, grade/discipline) changes to decrease number of students in hallways at one time Have the same group of students stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as feasible for older children) 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing students and staff to wear face masks/coverings while in large group gatherings Conducting cleaning of hallways and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day Designating areas of the hallway (i.e. lanes) to walk to keep students separated (to the extent practicable)

<p>Conducting Large Group Gatherings</p> 	<p>School building are closed. Abide by the maximum number of people allowed to congregate as defined by the Governor’s current statewide Executive Order</p>	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abide by the maximum number of people allowed to congregate as defined by the Governor’s current statewide Executive Order Discourage the congregation of students in parking lots and common areas Stagger the schedule for large group gatherings (i.e. recess and school meals) Identify and utilize large spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces – as weather permits) for social distancing Follow <i>Mississippi High School Activities Association</i> guidelines for sporting events and practices 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing hand sanitizer for students and staff Allowing students and staff to wear face masks/coverings Limiting unnecessary congregations of students and staff Follow <i>Mississippi High School Activities Association</i> guidelines for sporting events and practices
<p>Teaching and Learning</p> 	<p>School buildings are closed.</p> <p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Distance Learning Plan 	<p>District/School Plan: Offer two options for Parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Instructional Model Online Instructional Model Establish an academic baseline: Administer formative assessments toward the start of the school year Target interventions and supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional instructional supports to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> students at-risk of not graduating on time students with disabilities (compensatory services) students who struggled in the prior distance/remote learning environment (i.e. early grades, English Learners, etc.) other students identified as being behind academically by teachers and parents. Address learning loss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide extended learning opportunities through before/after school programs, Saturday school, etc. Prepare for potential future distance/remote learning by increasing current blended learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a digital learning plan Integrate virtual learning practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> digitizing lessons requiring a certain number of on-line assignments for each grading period 	<p>District/School Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing hand sanitizer for students and staff Conducting cleaning of classrooms and high-touch surfaces each day Limiting physical interaction through partner or group work

Protecting Vulnerable Populations¹



¹ **Vulnerable Populations** -- Elderly individuals and/or individuals with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

School buildings are closed.

See *Entering School Buildings* for district/school staff guidance.

District/School Plan:

- Provide remote/distance learning opportunities for vulnerable student populations in consultation with parents and public health officials
- Adhere to FERPA and HIPPA requirements
- Adhere to state and federal employment law and extended leave allowances
- Offer an Employee Assistance Program to all staff members

District/School Plan:

- Implement standard operating procedures while taking preventative measures such as:
 - Provide hand sanitizer for students and staff
 - Provide PPE to vulnerable students and staff as appropriate
 - Allow vulnerable students to complete their coursework virtually
 - Allow vulnerable students and staff to wear PPE throughout the school day (to the extent practicable)
 - Limit large group gatherings/ Interactions for vulnerable students and staff



When a Child, Staff Member, or Visitor Becomes Sick at School



District/School Plan:

- Create an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms.
- School nurses will utilize *Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions* when caring for sick people.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick home or to a healthcare facility.
- Notify local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable federal and state privacy laws.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection.
- Inform sick staff members and children not to return until they have met CDC/MSDH criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- Inform those who have had close contact to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and follow state CDC/MSDH guidance if symptoms develop. If a person does not have symptoms, follow appropriate state guidance for home quarantine.

CDC Guidance

- [Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
- [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#)
- [Standard Precautions](#)
- [Transmission-based Precautions](#)



Columbia School District's Safe Return to School Guidelines for the 2021-22 School Year provide our community with an outlined blueprint for safely returning to school. CSD's plan offers our parents and students flexibility during these unusual times. Our School District has a responsibility to keep our students, teachers, school staff, and families safe and also to provide the best possible education for our students.

Dr. Jason Harris, *Superintendent*

