HOUSTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Building Excellence & Success Together

CONTINUITY OF SAFE IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION PLAN 2023-24

This document is subject to change based on fluctuations in our community's COVID-19 data as well as local, state, and federal guidelines.

Rev 07/2023

Community Engagement Committee

Name	Role
Andrea Martin	Building Admin
Channy Quinn	6-12 Instruction
Cindy Ryan	K-5 Instruction
Jessica Lyle	Building Admin
Kelly Brown	Special Programs
Kris McAskill	Director of Schools
Mark Beal	Title Director
Nicole Douglass	Technology/SMS
Josh Rutherford	Building Admin
Rachel Shelton	Child Nutrition
Rickey Chadwick	Transportation
Erin Roselli	Building Admin
Scott Moore	Building Admin
Jessica Hawks	Building Admin
Delissa Roby	Building Admin
Terri Mathis	BOE Support
Chris Ross	BOE Support
Teresa Roby	BOE Support
Jonna Moore	BOE Support
Norma Cherry	BOE Support
Keli Rutherford	School Psych
Jeff Mathis	Board Member
Travis Mitchell	Board Member
Miller Moore	Board Member
Amanda Popp	Board Member
Charlie Ligon	Board Member
Amanda Fansler	Board Member
Courtney Chatham	School Nurse

Name	Role
Karen Anderson	Health Dept.
Dale Popp	EMS
Joey Brake	County Mayor
Paul Bailey	City Mayor
Ginger Lyle	Health Dept.
Stony Odom	TR Mayor
Michael Carter, MD	Medical Provider
Kevin Sugg	Sheriff
Olivia Hutcheson	Medical Provider
Elise Hinson	Children's Ministry
Tammy Smith	Youth Ministry
Jessica Byler	Children's Ministry
Jeremy Byler	Youth Ministry
Charles Thornburg	Director Bethesda Mission
Mark T. Moore	Police Chief
Debbie McClain	Children & Youth Ministries
Jasmine Atkins	Children's Ministry
Karra Kirk	Children & Youth Ministries
Clay Larson	Rotary President
Lisa Moore	Chamber President
Vickie Hutchinson	BOE Support
Margaret Gilliam	At-Risk Population Rep.
Robin Fairclough	At-Risk Admin
Chelsea Clack	Building Admin
Miranda Roby	School Counselor
Jacob Booth	School Resource Officer
Randall Garringer	Technology Support
Tiffany Singleton	Family Resource

As we have worked to develop plans for 2023-24, our students have remained at the center of every decision. Below is the framework that Houston County School District (HCSD) will continue to use to help with decision-making related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the following pages, protocols are provided for various areas of operation for the Houston County School District. Additional guidance will be added as more information is made available and more protocols are created.

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Universal and Correct Wearing of Masks

- Staff are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building or on buses in proximity with others when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- All students are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building or on buses in settings where social distancing is not possible. When outdoors, face coverings may be removed as long as social distancing can be maintained.
- Information will be provided to staff, students, and students' families on proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings. Proper use will be taught and reinforced in schools.
- Face coverings will not be expected for anyone who has trouble breathing or who is unable to remove the covering without assistance.
- School dress code standards will apply to any designs/logos on face coverings.
- Information will be provided regarding new guidelines for mask use and quarantine prevention.

Physical Distancing/Cohorting

- Student and staff groupings will be as static as possible by having the same group of children stay with the same staff to the extent feasible.
- Staff will be discouraged from congregating in lounge areas or other shared spaces.
- Communal use of shared spaces such as cafeterias, gymnasiums, and playgrounds will be staggered, with increased cleaning and disinfection of materials as feasible.
- Visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations will be limited.
- If permitted access, visitors, volunteers, and external groups are encouraged to wear a face covering while in the school building in proximity with others when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Outside agency representatives providing individual student support (i.e. counseling services, behavioral supports, etc.) must be approved at the district and building level consistent with school board policy 1.501 and will be required to follow district protocols for social distancing and mitigation strategies.
- Parents/guardians and external group representatives participating in official school business will be required to follow all screening protocols.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- School staff will teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol will be used.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Used tissues will be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Healthy hygiene behaviors will be supported by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch trash cans.

- Regular announcements will be made in schools on mitigation strategies shown to be helpful in reducing the spread of COVID-19.
- Video recordings will be shared with staff, students, and families that include proper hand washing technique, sneezing and coughing technique, face covering use, and other behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Cleaning/Maintaining Healthy Facilities

- A daily cleaning schedule will be followed for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection of all school buildings/classrooms.
- School staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., playground equipment, door handles, sink handles) within the school at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., gym or physical education equipment, art supplies, toys, games) will be limited when possible, or cleaned between uses.
- Signs will be posted in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face covering).
- Staff will discourage sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect.
- Each child's belongings will be separated from others' and kept in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Staff will ensure there are adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (e.g., assigning each student their own art supplies, equipment) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- Staff will avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids as much as possible. If these items are shared they will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Drinking fountains will not be utilized, and staff and students will be encouraged to bring their own water.
- Water-filling stations will be utilized with adult supervision.

Communal Spaces/Improving Ventilation

- Seating/desks will be spaced at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
- Desks will be turned to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other), or students will sit on only one side of tables, spaced apart when feasible.
- Physical barriers will be utilized, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart (e.g., reception desks).
- Physical guides will be posted at schools, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to encourage staff and children to remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating one-way routes in hallways).
- Additional non-traditional learning spaces will be utilized to allow for greater social distancing (i.e. cafeterias, gymnasiums, outdoor areas etc.), with improvements made to ventilation in these spaces made as necessary.

Contact Tracing/Quarantining

- Staff and families of sick students will be advised to follow the CDC's criteria and home isolation guidance. Staff and students should stay home if they are sick, showing symptoms of COVID-19, tested

positive for COVID-19, or are running a fever of 100.4°F or above. Staff and students should also stay home if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. Attendance procedures for determining excused absences will be modified.

- Staff and families of students should notify school officials if they or students become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.
- Staff or students who have COVID-19 symptoms will be separated from other staff and students immediately. The school nurse or designated staff members will care for them using Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions. These individuals will be sent home or to a healthcare facility, following established procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick, depending on the severity of their symptoms.
- If an individual (teachers, staff members, students) who has been in school has tested and been confirmed to have Covid-19:
    - The school will request that students/staff not return to school until the determined quarantine is complete and the case has been fever-free for 24 hours with improved symptoms.
- If an individual (teachers, staff members, students) displays Covid-19 symptoms:
    - Individuals with fever or 2 or more Covid-19 symptoms will be sent home for 24 hours.
    - Students with fever/symptoms of Covid-19 will remain in the quarantine room until they are sent home.

Diagnostic and Screening of Staff/Students

- Staff and students with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be isolated and re-checked within 30 minutes prior to being sent home.

Vaccination Efforts

- The district office will coordinate and communicate vaccination information and opportunities shared from the local Department of Health with all school employees.
- Updated CDC guidance and DOH guidelines will be shared in a timely manner with families through a variety of methods including flyers sent home, school and district social media platforms, and district automated calls.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

- Students with health needs which place them at high risk will be provided appropriate accommodations as outlined in their 504 Plan, IEP, and/or Health Care Plan.
- Houston County School District staff, specifically guidance counselors, Family Resource Center, Coordinated School Health, and school health personnel will review the Well-Being/Mental Health and Counseling toolkits as well as the Tennessee Schools: PREPARE (**P**roviding Support **R**eaching **E**ducators **P**arents/Students **A**nd **R**estoring Community with **E**ffective Interventions) developed by TN Department of Education (TDOE) in order to develop local tools for classroom staff to use as they support students' return to school.
- School counseling staff will facilitate the compiling of a list of school-based and community resources that can be shared with school staff and families.

- Building administrators will work with school staff to develop schedules and routines that provide a sense of safety while allowing for a structured means of communication to identify students and families in need of additional resources and follow-up.
- School staff will prioritize social-emotional support for the most at-risk students (those who are highly mobile, in foster care, homeless, have disabilities, and/or live in a low-income household) with services provided by school counselors, Centerstone, the school psychologist, the school social worker, and other agency providers as necessary.
- Students with disabilities who must be quarantined will continue to receive educational services remotely to the maximum extent possible, with casemanagers monitoring their progress and documenting their services even when not physically attending school. Services unable to be provided remotely will be made up upon return to school, and IEP teams will determine the need for any compensatory services as warranted.