EMANUEL COUNTY SCHOOLS
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Guidelines for Emanuel County School System's "Return to Learn Plan" for August 1, 2023

Emanuel County Schools (ECS) has adopted the following guidelines to reopen our schools based on the latest CDC, Georgia Department of Public Health, and the Georgia Department of Education recommendations:

- All students and employees will be going back to in-person learning.
- This decision takes into account students' academic and social-emotional needs, the improving pandemic conditions (lower rates of infection), the availability of vaccinations for teachers and other school staff, and guidance from health experts and organizations.
- These plans for the fall reflect the district's commitment to safety for its students and staff, with continued mitigation efforts such as the recommendation of wearing masks and strict cleaning regimens. ECS will continue to rely on guidance from the CDC and other health partners in the continual implementation for a safe return to in-person learning in the fall.
- Employees will still be encouraged to wear masks when social distancing is not possible - for example, helping a student with an assignment at their desk. Students are not required - but are encouraged to wear a mask, especially in common areas such as hallways, bathrooms, and buses. Counselors and administrators will support the recommendation of mask-wearing efforts at each school. The school nor the district will provide masks.
- The school nurse will be the school's main COVID-19 point of contact.
- Frequent hand washing breaks will be encouraged daily in all elementary schools, where students will be encouraged to wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds. Middle and high school students and employees will be reminded to wash their hands throughout the day for the recommended same length of time.
- All will be reminded to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, place the tissue in the trash, and immediately wash their hands.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be located throughout each building. Locations include hallways, lunchroom, media center, office areas, etc. Students and staff are also encouraged to bring hand sanitizer from home.
- To promote COVID-19 protective measures, signs will remain posted in highly visible locations, and schools will broadcast daily messages.
- Schools and departments will develop a schedule for increased cleaning and disinfection. The custodial staff has been trained on the safe and correct application of all disinfectants. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day (door handles, sink handles, light switches, etc.).
- Ventilation systems will be monitored regularly to ensure proper operation and

increased circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

- Based upon classroom configuration and to the extent possible, student desks will face in the same direction, and students seated at tables will sit on the same side. Excess furniture will be removed from classrooms to allow teachers more room to separate students.
- The sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect will be discouraged.
- Schools will promote social distancing when feasible.
- Outdoor recess will be continued, but the number of students gathered in one area will be limited. Some playground equipment that cannot be sanitized may be prohibited for student use.
- While ensuring the safety of children, to the fullest extent possible, students will eat in lunchrooms.
- Traditional water fountains will be closed; water fill stations will be open. Students and staff are encouraged to bring plastic water bottles from home (no carbonated or sugar drinks allowed).
- No parent walk-up for dismissal. All afternoon car dismissals must stay in the car line.
- Non-essential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations will be limited.
- Parent/guardian teacher conferences will be held in-person.
- Guidance from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) will be followed for school athletics.
- Transportation of Students on Buses:
    - We encourage all parents that can transport their children to and from school to please do so. This will minimize the number of riders we have on a bus route.
    - Students will be asked to keep their hands to themselves and face forward throughout the trip to school and home. Parents need to help us by encouraging their students to abide by these guidelines.
    - All buses will be deep cleaned before the school year starts. Ecovasive sprayed our schools and buses last year on a quarterly basis. This would be done in July prior to the start of school.
    - Every bus will be equipped with disinfectant and will be disinfected after each week.
    - Each bus will have hand sanitizer stations located at the entrance for students to use as they enter and leave the bus.
    - Although many buses have air conditioning, drivers will partially open select windows of all buses to allow free flow of fresh air.
    - The bus driver will utilize spaced seating (to the greatest extent practicable).
    - To the greatest extent practicable, siblings will sit together on the same seats.

If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID -19:

- Schools and Districts will follow the Screening for and Responding to COVID-19 in K 12 Schools.

Emanuel County Schools believes that in-person learning is best for students and we are looking forward to Emanuel County students and staff returning to in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school term. We understand some students, in very limited circumstances, may have a documented health or medical need for virtual instruction. With that in mind, enrollment in Emanuel County Schools Virtual COVID-19 Hardship Program will be **LIMITED** to students with documented COVID-19 related health/medical needs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Information on Emanuel County Schools Virtual COVID-19 Hardship Program can be found here.

The "Return to Learn" plan is subject to change pending COVID trends and guidance provided by the Emanuel County Public Health and Georgia Department of Public Health. Please monitor our system website and social media for any updates.