



Putnam County Charter School System

Return to School Plan

2023-2024

In collaboration with stakeholders, the Putnam County Charter School System has established the 2023-2024 Return to School Plan to provide guidance regarding expectations, recommended best practices and strategies.

The school system has implemented enhanced safety and health practices to provide an environment that is conducive to learning while also putting mechanisms in place that mitigate the risks of communicable diseases. Individual schools may provide additional information and guidance regarding practices and activities within their building.

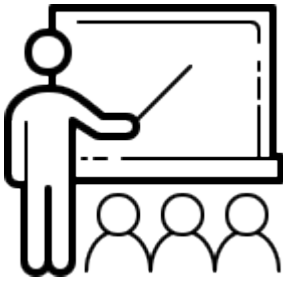
The information contained in the 2023-2024 Return to School Plan is subject to change based on additional guidance received from the local health department, Georgia Department of Education, and the Georgia Department of Public Health. Putnam County Charter School System will continue to implement strategies to ensure that the safety of staff and students remains the primary focus and priority.

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Academic Learning Options

The Putnam County Charter School System will continue to inspire, innovate and excel by offering families options for student learning during the 2023-2024 school year.

<p>Traditional, In-person instruction</p> 	<p>School buildings are open and implementing intensive prevention strategies to curb the COVID-19 virus. All students will be scheduled for face-to-face instruction for the 2023-2024 school year. We will continue to offer summer programs, after school programs and in school remediation for learning loss resulting from the pandemic. Schools will work with families and keep you informed as to what programs and additional assistance your student may receive. Each student (Grades K – 12th) will have access to a system-issued laptop should the need arise for virtual learning. Should a student have to quarantine, the student will remain at home to learn remotely via our Learning Management Systems.</p>
<p>Digital Learning</p>	<p>Parents wishing for their student to be virtual for the 2023-2024 school year will need to schedule an appointment with their child's principal and discuss what options may be available for the student. This will only be granted in rare circumstances.</p> <p>Primary School: Fancia Rogers Elementary School: Scott Sauls Middle School: Monica Macklin High School: Andrew Cooper</p>



Cleaning and Hygiene

Putnam County Charter School System will continue to take the following actions to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 at all facilities:

- Staff will clean classrooms, restrooms, cafeterias, sitting/assembly areas and other workspaces.
- Staff will use sanitizing machines to disinfect on a regular basis.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at each building.
- Cleaning supplies will be available to support healthy hygiene behaviors.
- Approved cleaners will be available to clean and sanitize desks and tables.
- Signage regarding proper hygiene will be posted throughout the school.

PCCSS (Putnam County Charter School System) employees and students are encouraged to take the following [preventative actions](#) recommended by the CDC to protect themselves and others from getting sick with COVID-19 and other communicable diseases:

- Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own personal hand sanitizer for use on the bus and during school.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your coughs/sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow, throw the tissue away and then wash your hands.
- Avoid close contact with others and practice physical distancing whenever it is feasible.
- Clean AND disinfect [frequently touched surfaces](#) daily.
- Monitor Your Health for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.



Clinics and Student Health

According to CDC (Centers for Disease Control) guidelines, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever (100 or higher) or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Headache

All parents/guardians must complete a PCCSS School Nursing Information Form as this is a requirement for a student to be seen in the school clinic. The following steps will be taken in our school clinics:

- Students who are sick at school and have completed a PCCSS School Nursing Form will be sent to the school nursing clinic. Students who are sick will be assessed by the school nurse. The decision to be sent home will be made by the school nurse based on clinic protocols. Both students and staff are subject to the **Return to School Guidelines for COVID-19 and Symptoms** (see Appendix).
- Students and staff who become ill will be instructed to follow the Department of Public Health guidance prior to returning to school. Staff and parents should self-report positive tests or potential exposure to the school administration.

Communication

PCCSS is focused on maintaining clear lines of communication. Effective two-way communication is critical between parents and their child's school.

Please confirm your contact information is up to date for your child(ren) by reviewing your current date in Parent Portal/SIS.

- For change of address, you will need to bring proof of your new residence. The following items are acceptable for proof of insurance. Each item must indicate physical address:
 - Mortgage documents
 - Apartment or home lease and/or Rent receipt (receipt must show address)
 - Current month utility bill (please bring entire bill and/or new service agreement)
*Utility bill must be within 30 days of current bill.

- Changes in phone numbers and/or email addresses can be changed by parents via our parent/student portal or can be submitted to the student's school.
 - You may want to download the Parent Portal/SIS app for your smartphone. Available for IOS and Android.

- Updates will be shared on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#). Make sure you are following the District Facebook page as well as your child(ren)'s schools' Facebook page(s).

- Signs provided by the Department of Public Health will be posted reminding students and staff of recommended healthy hygiene practices.



Coping and Resilience

Putnam County Charter School System recognizes the impact COVID has on families emotionally. Therefore, mental health support will be provided to support the emotional wellbeing of students and staff.

- Counselors, teachers, and social workers will establish processes to determine individual student needs.
- Social workers and counselors will provide services including access to mental health support. Counselors will provide guidance lessons on a range of mental health topics. Please contact your child's school counselor for more information.
- School staff will coordinate with APEX services regarding in-school mental health services. An APEX counselor, a school-based counseling person from River's Edge, is in our school buildings five days a week and does intakes for students that are needing more in-depth counseling services. Please work through your school counselor for a referral to the APEX counselor.

Student support staff will work with community partners to establish support services available to students following CDC guidance.

- [Covid-19 Toolbox for Students, Parents & Professionals](#)
- [Coronavirus Tips for Families](#)
- [Back to School – Ideas for Parents \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- [Youth Mental Health | Mental Health America \(mhanational.org\)](#)

The Georgia Department of Education has included mental health services for staff and can be accessed with the following link.

[EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM](#)



Extracurricular Activities and Athletics

PCCSS administrators have communicated with state and local health officials regarding preventative measures to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 as students participate in extracurricular activities and athletics. Coaches and sponsors will implement strategies to promote health & safety including:

For questions regarding PCCSS athletics, contact:

- Paul Stokes, PCHS Athletic Director, at paul_stokes@putnam.k12.ga.us.

For questions regarding PCMS athletics, you may contact:

- Cameron Hinz, PCMS Athletic Director, at Cameron.Hinz@putnam.k12.ga.us.



Face Coverings

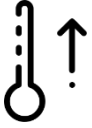
Face coverings will be permitted at the discretion of anyone who wishes to wear one. Face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not yet have symptoms. Individuals should be reminded frequently not to touch the face covering and to wash their hands. Attaching the face covering to a lanyard will help the student keep up with the mask and reduce cross contamination.

Immunizations

The Georgia state requirement of up-to-date immunizations and ear, eye, dental, nutrition (EEDN) forms remain in effect. The Georgia Forms 3231 and 3300 are required to enroll. The need for all students to be fully immunized is greater during the pandemic. Putnam County Charter School System cannot waive state and federal requirements that students be up-to-date on immunizations to be enrolled in school and to prevent the occurrence of diseases.

Please note the state is requiring the Meningococcal booster shot for 11th graders for the 2023-2024 school year. Effective July 1, 2021, children 16 years of age and older, who are entering the 11th grade (including new entrants), must have received one booster dose of the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), unless their initial dose was administered on or after their 16th birthday.





Monitoring for Symptoms

Any student or staff member who is ill or has a temperature of 100 or higher is encouraged not to attend school. By returning to work or to school, the ill individual must be fever-free for 24 hours.



New Student Registration

The PCCSS New Student Registration process has been modified to include the following regulations and guidelines for getting children (PK-12) enrolled for the 2023-2024 school year. Please contact the schools for detailed information or visit the Putnam County Charter School System [website](#). The link for Registration information is on the Home page under Helpful Information.

Putnam County Primary School (PreK thru 2nd) – (706) 485-5141 (Soranda Jarrett)
Putnam County Elementary School (3rd thru 5th) – (706) 485-5312 (Nichole Crawford)
Putnam County Middle School (6th thru 8th) – (706) 485-8547 (Tanja Moreland)
Putnam County High School (9th thru 12th) – (706) 485-9971 (Paula Roberts)

New Student Registration will take place by appointment only. Parents/guardians can schedule an appointment to meet with the Data Specialist by calling the schools at the above numbers and speaking with the names mentioned alongside the phone numbers. Only the Primary Custodial Parent or Guardian will be allowed to enter the building and complete the registration process. No children or other family members may enter the building.

Parents are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to check the websites of the school of choice and gather ALL the required documents prior to making an appointment. In addition, please download the registration forms from the school's website and complete them prior to coming to your appointment.

All required documentation must be provided at the appointment time.



Physical Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

Putnam County Charter School System has reviewed CDC Guidance in the effort to develop plans to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for students, staff and employees. Students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to practice physical distancing, staying at least 3 feet from other people, whenever possible.

The following actions will be implemented to promote physical distancing and minimize risks:

- School administrators will plan entry and exit points for their buildings with a focus on physical distancing to the extent practicable.
- Outside visitors to schools will be limited.
- Class changes and other transition routines will be determined by individual school administrators.
 - Schools will work with their specific layouts to structure crowd flow.



School Nutrition and Serving Meals

The following practices will be implemented across the district:

- Schools will provide the opportunity for hand washing or sanitizer before eating.
- Various mitigation measures will be used as much as possible, including:
 - Staggered mealtimes to allow more time between groups
 - Additional cleaning and sanitizing of tables and serving lines.
- Students will pick up breakfast or lunch and eat in specified areas.

Any visitors must be approved by the school administration.

Student Attendance

Putnam County Charter School System will still be required to take student attendance and report student attendance data to the Georgia Department of Education. Daily attendance will be taken. All students should be aware that excessive absences could be a violation of the Georgia Compulsory School Attendance Statute.



Transportation

The configuration of a school bus presents challenges to physical distancing. To reduce the number of students on a bus, parents are encouraged to transport their students to and from school when possible.

PCCSS Transportation Department is also taking the following steps:

- Students will have assigned seats.
- Buses will be electrostatically sprayed.
- To maximize air circulation, windows may be opened to allow increased air flow inside of the bus.
- Children who become sick during the day may not ride the bus home.



Water and Ventilation Systems

Students, teachers, and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles for personal use.

Ventilation systems throughout the district are set up to maintain the appropriate circulation of outdoor air. In addition, Ionization technology has been installed throughout the district to clean and sterilize the air. The PCCSS Maintenance Department will continue to monitor all units to ensure that air exchanges are operating according to design specifications and industry standards.

Return to School Guidance for Illness

Student or Staff Member	ACTION STEPS	RETURN TO SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS
Illness including COVID 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stay home at least one day ○ Seek medical care as needed ○ Monitor your symptoms ○ Should be symptom-free for at least 24 hours ○ Update school officials 	<p>Must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fever-free (temperature less than 100) and symptom-free without the use of medications for at least 24 hours prior to return to school.