

Dear HCS Parents/Guardians,

We have had an interesting start to our school year here in Hawkins County. We have dealt with the viable threat at VHS, the loss of electricity at JRP, and ongoing COVID concerns. Please know we will always keep the safety of our students and staff as priority. Please see below regarding our current, updated COVID protocols.

1. **Masks:** HCS strongly encourages masks, but will leave this decision to you as their parent/guardian. Governor Lee signed an executive order stating any system that mandates masks will also need to provide waivers for those opting out. We feel our decision to leave this important decision to our parents and students is the correct way to deal with this matter.
2. **COVID symptoms at school:** When a student demonstrates or complains of possible COVID symptoms, you will be contacted by our school nurse staff to have your child picked up from school for recommended COVID testing. The health department will give guidance regarding close contacts to an identified positive case. All contact tracing will occur through the Health Department. HCS will work directly with the health department in identifying possible close contacts in the school setting for quarantine. Current COVID verified positive cases by school site is listed here:  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1NvZJOMzXnlvZTITcqd5CDwWWVnVPLusl1XwPIA5oRz0/edit#gid=0>
3. **Continuing Education:** Any student who is quarantined due to a positive test or deemed close contact, will have access to appropriate instructional materials while they are out. Please ensure students have their Chromebook or home device available to them to access these resources. If you do not have Internet connectivity, please request alternate materials from your school site. Please maintain communication with your student's teacher and with school office staff.
4. **Returning to School:** Any student testing positive, upon return to school, will need to be readmitted by the school nurse.
5. **Communication:** It is very important to maintain consistent communication with your school site through this process. Any updates, developments, or questions regarding your child's health, should be relayed to the school nurse.

Matt Hixson