

INTRODUCTION

On March 14, 2020, the Governor of the State of Mississippi issued a Proclamation declaring that a State of Emergency exists in the State of Mississippi due to the outbreak of a new virus called COVID-19. Since then, the faculty, staff and Board of Education of the Itawamba County School District (“ICSD”) have been continually working to help ensure the health, wellness, and safety of our students and staff while also providing for the educational needs of the ICSD students. In light of those objectives during the summer of 2020, the ICSD adopted a Return to School Plan for the 2020-2021 school year. In continuing those objectives, this Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services Plan (“Plan”) has been developed to provide guidelines for students, parents, faculty and staff and to outline expectations of the ICSD. It replaces the former Return to School Plan. These guidelines and expectations are not exhaustive and other items may be mandated as needed. **Therefore, this Plan will be updated with new information as it becomes available, and decisions will be made in coordination with local and state guidelines.**

In preparing this Plan, the ICSD took into consideration public comments allowed prior to and during a noticed Public Comment meeting in 2021, comments from teachers and staff, preferences of MDE, analytical data regarding ICSD student progress, and information from the CDC and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

After such review and consideration, the ICSD will begin the 2021-2022 school year with a traditional program of students going to school Monday – Friday.

Those students who have an underlying health condition may petition to attend school virtually pursuant to School Board Policy and/or Plans.



ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING

Continuity of Services

- ICSD will offer traditional face-to-face instruction Monday – Friday as its main method of teaching.
- Credit recovery; tutoring, both during and after school; summer school; and extended school year will be offered to assist students who may need additional support and help outside the normal classroom setting due to absences as a result of COVID-19.
- Remediation methods and strategically organizing content to correct gaps in learning levels.
- In the event of closure, ICSD will continue academic learning and instruction delivery through Canvas, its LMS service, for upper-elementary, middle and high school students. Google Meets or other similar services will be used for lower-elementary students.
- Hotspots will be available for those without adequate home internet service.

Progress Monitoring

- The District will monitor both in-person and virtual student progress with the use of universal screeners in math and reading in grades K-10; and universal screeners in behavior, state assessment data and benchmark assessments in grades K-12.
- The District will also use report in SAMs (the student data management system) and Canvas (the LMS)

Feedback

- Administrators at each school will do one formal and 2 informal observations of each teacher and offer feedback each year.
- Administrators at each school will perform observations of staff teaching virtual students by the traditional method, Zoom, Google Meets and/or by observing the class as a virtual student.
- The District will gather feedback from staff about instructional programming and needed supports through surveys, grade level meetings and teacher advisory group meetings.
- Interventionist and TST will monitor grades, attendance and universal screeners for grades K-12 and referrals will be made to teacher support teams where deficits are indicated.

OPERATIONS

Transportation

- Social distancing on buses is a challenge. Parents are encouraged to provide transportation when possible.
- Students will be separated on the bus where feasible. Siblings or children living in the same household will be seated together where feasible.
- Bus drivers and students riding a bus will be required to wear a mask or facial covering while on the school bus ONLY if required by Executive Order of the Governor of the State of Mississippi or by order the Mississippi State Department of Health.
- Buses will be appropriately disinfected after each use.
- Buses will have hand sanitizer.

Arrival and Dismissal

- Students may not be dropped off before 7:15 a.m. unless permission is received by the principal.
- Students that drive to school should not arrive on campus until 7:30 a.m.
- We encourage parents to pick children up, if possible, to help reduce the number of students riding buses.
- At the end of each day, students may only be picked-up in the car line. No in-person pick-up will be allowed so as to avoid gatherings in school lobby or other areas.
- If early student pickup is necessary during the day, follow normal checkout procedures.

Cafeteria – Breakfast and Lunch

- Parents are strongly encouraged to use [My School Bucks](#) for cafeteria payment in an effort to reduce the need to exchange money and reduce the spread of germs.
- Hand washing opportunities and hand sanitizer will be available before and after breakfast and lunch.
- Students will eat breakfast and lunch in shifts that will encourage social distancing.
- Cafeterias will be appropriately disinfected after each use.

Academic Calendar

- Teachers will begin school on August 2, 2021.
- Students will begin school on August 6, 2021.
- The last day of school will be May 25, 2022.
- Graduation will be on May 21, 2022.
- Professional Development days for teachers (no students) will be on August 2-5, 2021; October 12, 2021; January 4, 2022; and April 18, 2022.
- Holidays will be as follows:
 - Labor Day – September 6, 2021
 - Columbus Day – October 11, 2021
 - Thanksgiving Holidays – November 22 – 26, 2021
 - Christmas Holidays – December 20, 2021 – January 3, 2022
 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – January 17, 2022
 - President’s Day – February 21, 2022
 - Spring Break - March 14 – 18, 2022
 - Good Friday – April 15, 2022.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- The District will provide academic support to families by providing tutoring, reading nights, parents nights and/or PTO meetings at each school.
- The Central Office has a parent resource center to assist families.
- Feedback will be gathered via surveys and social media, such as Facebook.
- The District offers short videos for parents answering frequently asked questions.

- The District offers access to supplements programs after school.
- The ICSD will utilize the website to post parent resources to help children with

COMMUNICATIONS

- The District will utilize its messenger systems SchoolCast and AIM, as well as letters, emails and newsletters, to communicate regularly with families to promote healthy behaviors to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- The District will utilize social networks, including websites, Facebook and Twitter; its messenger systems SchoolCast and AIM; letters; emails and newsletters to communicate health and safety issues or necessary changes to the District's regular operating schedule.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Before School Each Day

- Staff, faculty and students must not come to school if:
 - You have tested positive for COVID-19. All COVID-19 cases must self-quarantine for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours (or for 10 days from the date of the test if asymptomatic).
 - You are experiencing an unexplained cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.
 - You have had a fever of 100.0 or more in the 24 hours prior to the school day. **Each employee and student should check their temperature each day before coming to school. Temperatures will not be checked at school unless a student or employee appears to be sick.**
 - You have experienced new loss of taste or smell.
 - You have experienced vomiting or diarrhea in the 24 hours prior to the school day.

Physical Distancing

- Schools should maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms.

Close Contacts

- Close contact is having 15 minutes or more of cumulative contact at a distance of 3 feet or less over a 24-hour period with a person who is positive for COVID-19.

Contact Tracing and Quarantine for Close Contacts

- Fully vaccinated people DO NOT QUARANTINE or get tested unless they develop symptoms.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 3 months and recovered DO NOT QUARANTINE or get tested unless they develop symptoms.
- Students and employees who are not fully vaccinated MUST QUARANTINE for a full 14 days UNLESS:
 - 10-day option – Quarantine can end after 10 days if the individual has no symptoms during the entire 10-day period. OR

- 7-day option – Quarantine can end after 7 days if the individual has no symptoms for 7 days and has a negative test with any form of molecular based testing (i.e. PCR) for the detection of COVID-19 RNA collected on day 5, 6 or 7 of the quarantine period. Molecular based tests do not include antigen test or antibody test. OR
- Testing option – Unvaccinated students and staff who are exposed to COVID-19 will not be excluded from school for quarantine if they received any type of COVID-19 testing, other than over-the-counter tests which are not acceptable, every two days and remain asymptomatic. At the end of the 7 days, they will no longer require testing.
- Masking option – If both the positive student/employee and the close contact are each wearing a mask during the time of close contact, the person who was in close contact does not quarantine.
- Essential employees who are not fully vaccinated do not quarantine as long as they wear a mask the entire time they are at work for 10 days, they quarantine at home when they are not at work (not going out publicly), remain asymptomatic the entire time, and check for fever and symptoms every day.

Positive Tests

- Students and employees who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from the school setting for a full 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours.
- Asymptomatic students and employees who test positive with a rapid screening test will be excluded from the school setting for a full 10 days from the date of the test as long as they remain asymptomatic. If they develop symptoms, they should be excluded for a full 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Asymptomatic students and employees with a positive rapid COVID-19 test who have a negative molecular based COVID-19 test within 48 hours of the rapid positive are not to be excluded from the school setting and should return to school. This only applies to molecular based tests (i.e. PCR) and does not apply to antigen tests or antibody tests.

Exclusions when Sick

- The All students, teachers and staff who have symptoms of ANY infections illness, regardless of vaccination status, shall quarantine and not attend school and should be evaluated by their healthcare provider.
- Students, teachers and staff will not be allowed to return to school until they are symptom free (including fever free) for at least 24 hours, or if COVID-19 is diagnoses, until the isolation criteria for return is school are met.

Masking

- The District will only require masks or other face coverings if mandated by the Governor of the State of Mississippi or local authorities in conjunction with suggestions from the CDC and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

Classrooms

- Multiple social distancing strategies will be implemented based on feasibility of the unique space and needs of each school and class.
- Teachers will speak with students in regard to social distancing and appropriate hygiene.

- Students will keep and utilize their own supplies for use in the classroom. Shared supplies and manipulative materials will be discouraged.
- All students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to use during the day. Water fountains could possibly be limited to circumstances yet unknown.
- Hand washing and hand sanitizing will be encouraged multiple times a day.
- Items that might be used by multiple students (Chromebooks, etc.) will be disinfected appropriately after each individual use.
- ICSD teachers/staff will clean/disinfect at appropriate times.

Hallway Traffic

- Hallway traffic will be limited by schedule and students will be monitored while walking in hallways. Principals and teachers will speak with students in regard to directional traffic, etc.
- Scheduling considerations will include how to best accommodate social distancing, while at the same time providing students a high quality education.
- Movement throughout buildings will be limited or reduced.
- Hand washing/hand sanitizer will be available.

Playground

- Students will be monitored while on playgrounds and social distancing will be encouraged
- Hand washing/sanitizer will be available upon re-entry to building.

Visitors/Parents/Legal Guardians/Vendors/Volunteers

- Nonessential visitors will be limited.
- If a visit to a school is necessary, the visitor, including parents or legal guardians, must first contact the school and make an appointment.
- Upon arrival for the appointment, the visitor's temperature may be taken.
- Vendors who have to service buildings may undergo a temperature screening.
- No lunch guests will be allowed unless approved by the school principal.

Cleaning/Hygiene

- Cleaning with approved products will target frequently touched hard, non-porous surfaces.
- The janitorial service (ABM) will follow appropriate guidelines to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of our campuses daily. In addition, teachers will be required to clean and disinfect classrooms as needed.
- Hand washing/hand sanitizer will be available.
- Cleaning/Disinfecting a classroom or area with a confirmed COVID-19 case:
 - All areas used by the person who is sick will be disinfected.
 - Schools will not necessarily need to close operations if an area can be effectively disinfected and an individual risk assessment concludes that closing is not warranted. Risk assessments will be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the MSDH.
 - Once an area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be reopened for use.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that ICSD normally utilizes to maintain a healthy environment.

Health Services

- Faculty and staff will be trained regarding COVID safety measures.
- All students and employees are encouraged to be vaccinated.
- Students who know that they will be taking medication when school starts should contact the school nurse and schedule a time, preferably between August 2 and August 5, to drop off the medication and complete any necessary paperwork.
- Staff must self-screen each day prior to coming to school.
- Parents must screen students at home prior to sending to school
- Students or staff demonstrating COVID symptoms will be referred to their physician. **Prior to returning to school, a student/staff member must be fever free for 24 hours.** See the Itawamba County School District COVID-19 Response Plan for more information.
- Students/staff who are symptomatic will be issued a mask or facial covering to wear and other safety measures will be implemented, including separation from other students and staff, until the student is picked up or until the staff member leaves school property.
- If a student's parent/legal guardian cannot be located after a reasonable amount of attempts or if a parent/legal guardian refuses to pick up a child that has COVID symptoms, including a temperature of 100.0 degrees F or more, the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services may be contacted.
- The District will address the social, emotional, mental health and other needs of students by utilizing universal screeners for grades K-12; counselors assisting students at each school; and referrals to LifeCorp which offers a variety of services, including on-campus resources.
- The District has a behavioral specialist and a therapeutic counselor which are available for students at each school.
- Counselors have mental health training, and interventions are in place at each school for students who present a threat of self-harm or have suicidal ideations.
- Two schools have on-site medical clinics and all the schools have a school nurse who can aid in the social, emotional and mental health of students as well as staff.
- The District mandates and offers suicide training for all staff, and provides tips for self-care.
- Each Principal of a campus is responsible for overseeing health and safety within his or her campus. The Superintendent of Education is ultimately responsible for overseeing health and safety within the District.
- To help ensure the safety of students, staff and spectators involved in extracurricular activities, the District will adhere to the guidelines presented by the Mississippi High School Activities Association and will also follow the guidelines outlined herein, including, but not limited to scheduled cleanings and distancing to the extent possible,

Air Quality

- The District is replacing HVAC systems at each school. The new systems will include air purification systems that kill the virus that causes COVID-19 as well as other viruses.
- The District is replacing carpeting in areas to improve air quality and reduce the amount of pollutants in rooms.

TECHNOLOGY

- The District will utilize a wide range of technologies to enhance in-person learning and

to support remote learning for students as needed.

- The District has Chromebooks or Ipads for each student's use.
- Interactive technologies are also used in the classroom
- The District has purchased Canvas and is utilizing it for grades 3-12 whether a student is in-person learning or remote learning.
- The District uses Google Meets for K-2.
- The District uses Google's array of programs, such as Google Docs and email.
- The District will identify the professional learning needs of staff in utilizing technology to enhance in-person learning and support remote learning via feedback from surveys.
- The District provides professional development based on these surveys.
- Multiple professional development sessions, in the areas of technology, balancing a traditional and technological approach to learning, and Canvas are planned for the summer of 2021 to help teachers in these areas.



(Any Itawamba County School District Board Policy, Plan or Procedure, or any part thereof, inconsistent with this Plan shall be suspended for the 2021-2022 school year.)

(Any governmental Orders, including, but not limited to those executed by the President of the United State, the Governor of the State of Mississippi or local authorities, that conflicts with any portion of this Plan will take precedence over this Plan and will be the prevailing requirement.)