



SCS COVID-19 Response Plan

2021 - 2022

**Sumter County Schools
100 Learning Lane
Americus , GA 31719**



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Executive Summary

The nationwide school closures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have placed a significant strain on public school systems around the country. The Sumter County School System (SCS) is no exception. The SCS ended on-campus instruction for the 2020 school year effective March 2020. For the remainder of the school year, students, teachers, educational leaders used a variety of remote learning approaches to continue the educational process. The majority of faculty and staff transitioned to working remotely and distributing educational packets.

As the schools and district leaders began to look ahead to the 2021-2022 school year, the focus was on meeting the anticipated increased academic and non-academic needs of students.

Challenges to Successfully Reopening for the 2021-2022 School Year

There are five key challenges to successfully reopening schools:

- **Public health challenge:** First and foremost, the COVID-19 virus is a public health emergency. With its novel nature, much remains to be learned about COVID-19, in terms of its transmission, manifestations, treatments and a cure. The SCS will need to be ready to respond to a variety of scenarios ranging from a return to full closure/remote learning to a modified or full opening.
- **Lack of agreement:** Second, unfortunately given the lack of precedent, there is lack of agreement as to the appropriate response. Medical and scientific data are limited, constantly changing, and being interpreted in many different ways. The result is that decisions are being questioned and interpreted in various ways.
- **Decisions will be scrutinized:** Third, the reopening plan will need to be validated. The re-opening plan will need to withstand the scrutiny of experts, community members, and other SCS stakeholders. Despite the level of planning and details that have gone into the reopening plan, it should be expected that plans and related decisions will be scrutinized and second-guessed.
- **Shifting circumstances:** Finally, the SCS will need to constantly evolve. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, there is a possibility of resurgence of cases or waves of resurgence. Full or spot/rolling closures of schools may be necessary.

Using an approach that constantly evolves with the COVID-19 Challenges

Given the above-referenced challenges, the SCS has had a series of leadership meetings to discuss virtual learning as well as a re-opening plan. This approach involves three key steps:

- ❑ **Develop:** First, the SCS needed to quickly and rigorously develop a detailed reopening plan that takes into account the guidance from federal, state and local agencies, while incorporating the experience gained from this spring.
- ❑ **Validate:** The reopening plan will need to be validated along three dimensions.
 - First, how well does the plan conform to the best available expertise and thinking that exists?
 - Second, does the plan incorporate the experience and feedback from last spring?
 - Third, how does the plan compare to other districts in the area?
- ❑ **Modify:** SCS school and district leaders need to be able to monitor the results of the reopening and also be able to modify and evolve the approach based on public health policy announcements, stakeholder feedback, and results.

This philosophy requires several things of all of our partners - employees, families, board members and businesses -- in order to be successful:

- **Patience:** While planning for different scenarios will help speed up the district's response and reaction time, there will inevitably be lost time as the district shifts from one model to the next. Patience from all audiences is critical to ensuring the fewest distractions and disruptions during this period.
- **Grace:** Despite working with partners across the state and with some of the brightest minds and planners available, we will not have a seamless operation should we have to pivot from one model to another. Expect some protocols may change along the way, as we get more information and determine more effective ways of getting things done.
- **Communication and Feedback:** The success of any of this plan hinges on thorough communication from the district and appropriate feedback from our stakeholder groups including students, parents and our community partners.

Regardless of the plan, the district fully intends to offer rigorous and relevant academic content and to continue to address the non-academic needs of our students and families. Now, perhaps more than ever, it's important to ensure that we meet the diverse needs of our students. We're committed to doing everything we can to accelerate learning where possible, remediate where necessary and provide emotional and social support to our students where required.

We live in interesting times, but I'm convinced that, with your support, grace, and perseverance, we'll overcome our challenges while keeping our students and employees safe, engaged and involved in building a better community and brighter future.

Working Groups

There are five essential workgroups that were developed individually and then integrated in order to create a comprehensive, well-thought-out plan for successfully opening schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

- **Instructional Core/Social Emotional Learning:** The first workgroup is to develop a well-thought-out plan that addresses the academic and social-emotional learning needs of all students in the district. Given the public health constraints, the plan will need to take into account plans for Face-to-Face (on-campus) instruction. Plans contain detailed considerations for the role and expectations of the teacher, the student, and the curriculum. Plans also consider curriculum, instructional design, school and staffing schedules, and a myriad number of details related to teaching and learning. The social, emotional well-being of students and staff remain the foundation of any successful teaching and learning plan.
- **Operations:** Given that schools are densely occupied spaces with many ancillary activities (e.g., food service), the SCS created a detailed and well-understood plan for operations. Under what conditions will buildings open? How can schools assure parents and the community that health safety measures are being taken to maintain a safe and healthy environment? How will transportation be managed?
- **Resources:** In light of the severe economic impact of the pandemic, the State of Georgia is forecasting that public school systems and state agencies will have to absorb up to an 11% reduction in state revenue. A big unknown is whether or not the federal government will pass legislation that will provide additional relief to states. Regardless, school systems (the SCS included) will be faced with mounting costs associated with dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 while at the same time addressing the financial uncertainties it has caused. Multiple financial scenarios and a detailed plan to address any potential budget shortfall are being developed.
- **Stakeholder Communications:** SCS schools are essential institutions of the Sumter County community, and there are lots of stakeholders directly and indirectly vested in the well-being and plans of the district. These stakeholders range from students, parents, faculty, staff, and school board members all the way to business owners and residents. Schools' ability to function effectively has an outsized impact on the ability of parents to go to work, stores to open, and residents to stay healthy. With so many stakeholders, there is a heightened need for clear and frequent communication. Having a regular cadence and well-developed toolkit to communicate effectively with these stakeholders is crucial for successfully opening in the fall.
- **Steering Committee:** The final workgroup is led by the superintendent for the express purpose of ensuring that there is coherence among the four workgroups mentioned above. In addition, given the diverse communities served by the SCS, this workgroup has worked to ensure that equity issues are being properly addressed; because, the pandemic is not affecting families equally. Both the coherence and equity are focused on through a public health lens; since, the COVID-19 virus is first and foremost a public health emergency.

Instructional Model and Enhanced Safety Protocols

We undoubtedly believe the best model for Pre-K through 12th grade teaching and learning is face-to-face, on-campus instruction. We also know that we must balance this belief with the obligation to provide a healthy and safe learning environment. With the challenges and risks presented by the COVID-19 public health emergency, never has this balance been needed more.

Our goal is to provide Face-to-Face (On-Campus) instruction for the 2021-2022 school year.

We understand the return to school is a personal decision for each family. Parents will be provided a virtual option based on extenuating circumstances and if their child meets attendance, academic and technology criteria.

The protocols were developed in collaboration with various state and local agencies, which include but are not limited to the Georgia Department of Public Health, Georgia Department of Education, Sumter County Public Health Department, West Central Health District, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and are subject to change based upon recommendations and guidance from these and other agencies. As guidelines are updated and our protocols are modified, we will provide updates to all staff and families and post relevant information on the SCS website.

Extenuating Circumstances

Sumter County Schools will make educational accommodations for those students who have extenuating circumstances.

Extenuating circumstances require a letter from a medical doctor with specific health issues identified that prevents them from being in the regular educational setting.

Safety Protocols for Face-to-Face (On-Campus) Learning

Collective Responsibility

The return to in-person learning requires collective responsibility for every SCS family. Failure to exercise proper care and precaution would significantly compromise the health and safety of others. It is imperative, particularly in the current environment, that students are not sent or brought to school if they are sick, or are medicated before school in order to reduce a fever.

We all share a collective responsibility to do the right thing and look out for one another.

Department of Public Health (DPH) Guidelines: Symptoms and Self-quarantine

Individuals within close contact (less than six feet apart for at least 15 minutes, without Personal Protective Equipment or PPE) to another person in their classroom or office who show COVID-19-related symptoms may also be required to self-quarantine for at least 14 calendar days or until one can produce a negative COVID-19 test. Students and staff must be symptom-free before returning to school or work.

DPH Guidelines – Contact with Person with Positive COVID-19 Test

Please see the letter from the Department of Public Health “Return to Child Care, School, or Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure” in the Appendix.

Contact Tracing

Based on the most recent DPH guidelines, contact tracing will be initiated for any student or staff member who tests positive for COVID-19. This process will include identification of and notification to any person (student or staff) who was in close contact with the person within the last 48 hours of symptoms or the positive COVID-19 test. Close contact is considered less than six feet apart for at least 15 minutes without PPE.

Face Mask/Face Shield

Students: Use of face mask/face shield is required on the bus and in the classroom.

Staff: Use of a face mask/face shield is required in occupied classrooms and offices, common areas (such as hallways, school lobby, and cafeteria).

Temperature Checks – All Students

All families are requested to check the temperature of their child each day prior to leaving home. SCS schools intend to check the temperature of students daily.

Bus Riders

SCS students who are bus riders will have their temperatures checked while entering the school bus as well as entering the school building. **SCS bus riders will be required to wear a face mask/face shield while on the school bus. Additional school bus safety protocols are included later in this document.**

Car Riders

SCS students who are car riders will have their temperatures checked before exiting the vehicle (in the carpool line). Students with a temperature below 100° Fahrenheit will be permitted to exit the car and enter the school; any student with a temperature at or above 100° Fahrenheit will be directed to return home with their parent/guardian or supervising adult.

Drivers

SCS students who drive to school will have their temperatures checked after entering the school building. Students with a temperature below 100° Fahrenheit will be permitted to enter the school; any student with a temperature at or above 100° Fahrenheit will be directed to return home and their parent/guardian will be contacted by school staff.

Entering the Building

Any visitor entering the building must wear a face mask/face shield.

All students will have their temperatures checked by our digital thermal facial recognition camera system. If a student has a temperature of 100 degrees or more, they will be sent to a holding room and have their temperature rechecked after a one-minute wait-time. If the temperature remains high, the parent will be contacted to pick up their child. “

Return-to-School Guidelines

Any student or staff member who exhibits COVID-related symptoms will be required to be absent from school (self-quarantine) for at least 10 calendar days **unless** one can produce a negative PCR nasal swab COVID-19 test and is asymptomatic for 72 hours. Students and staff must be symptom free before returning to school or work. **Appropriate documentation is required prior to a student or staff member returning to in-person learning.** If a vaccinated person has been exposed but shows no symptoms, they may return to work but will be required to wear a face mask/face shield.

Classroom Protocols

To provide the greatest degree of social distancing and safety protocols, teachers will adhere to the following classroom guidelines:

- To separate student desks to the greatest extent possible to provide for social distancing.
- Limit sharing of supplies, books, etc. when possible; sharing of such items calls for disinfecting prior to passing from one student to another. Hand sanitizer and disinfecting spray will be available in each classroom.

School Meals (Breakfast/Lunch)

To the greatest degree possible, school meals will be served in a manner to limit student interactions in the cafeteria. Students will eat meals in their classroom, or in other areas of the building as determined by the principal, provided social distancing guidelines are followed.

School Signage

Signage will be placed throughout schools to remind students of personal hygiene (hand washing, coughing into arm, etc.) and social distancing from others. Additionally, signage may be used to create one-way directional walk patterns in some areas of the buildings. Students will also be permitted to walk outside the buildings, when possible, to transition from class to class.

School Cleaning and Disinfecting

Throughout the school day, custodial staff will disinfect high-touch areas. Additionally, classrooms, hallways, and common areas will be disinfected daily.

Safety Protocols for Transportation

Patience and Understanding

Given the increased safety protocols on school buses, we kindly ask that families extend to us patience and understanding during the opening weeks of school. In the morning routes, it is possible that buses may be delayed arriving at bus stops or schools as we navigate through the new protocols and increased car rider traffic.

Social Distancing

To the greatest degree possible, students will be socially distanced and may be placed in assigned seats on the school bus. It is our desire to be able to place students one per seat, except for students living in the same household. Wearing a face mask/face shield will be required on the school bus.

School Bus Cleaning and Disinfecting

SCS staff will disinfect high-touch areas of buses between bus routes. Additionally, school buses will be disinfected at the end of each day.

General School Considerations and Safety Protocols

GHSA-Sanctioned Athletics

The SCS is working in collaboration with the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) to develop and adhere to appropriate guidelines for athletic practices and competitions. We expect these guidelines to continue to evolve; each coach will provide updates to our student-athletes and their families, as appropriate. As you have specific questions or needs, please contact your child's coach.

After-School Extracurricular Clubs and Activities

Students will have the opportunity to participate in after-school extracurricular clubs and activities, based on the ability to implement appropriate safety protocols and social distancing guidelines. Please contact the appropriate sponsor/coach for detailed information.

Limit Non-Essential School Visitors and Volunteers

To protect our students and staff, SCS schools and offices will limit non-essential school visitors and volunteers to school campuses.

All essential visitors or volunteers will be subject to a temperature check and answering the following COVID-related screening questions:

- ☐ Do you have a temperature over 100°F without having taken any fever-reducing medications?
- ☐ Do you have a loss of smell or taste?
- ☐ Do you have a cough?
- ☐ Do you have muscle aches?
- ☐ Do you have a sore throat?
- ☐ Do you have congestion or a runny nose?
- ☐ Do you have shortness of breath?
- ☐ Do you have chills?
- ☐ Do you have a headache?
- ☐ Have you experienced any new onset of gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of appetite in the last few days?
- ☐ Have you, or anyone you have been in close contact with, been diagnosed with COVID-19 or placed in quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19 within the last two weeks?
- ☐ Have you been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by a medical professional or a local public health official in the last two weeks?

Media Center

SCS schools will limit student use of shared spaces and materials in media centers. Efforts will be made to give students access to learning resources in such a manner that provides the appropriate degree of safety and sanitation.

Student Assemblies and Large Group Events/Meetings

Significant limitations will occur relative to student assemblies and large group events/meetings. School leaders will provide additional details about how such events may occur virtually, when appropriate.

Student Field Trips

Student field trips will be limited. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis for field trips that achieve an appropriate degree of social distance and other safety precautions.

Student Teachers / Field Experience Students from Colleges

Please Note: College students must produce a negative test prior to the start of their field experience. The test result is to be given to the building level principal before entering the classroom.

The SCS District highly recommends that all college students that are participating in field experience in the SCS district be vaccinated.

Any college student who is unvaccinated must produce a negative test every two weeks. The test result is to be given to the building level principal before entering the classroom.

Any college student who is vaccinated must produce a negative test monthly. The test result is to be given to the building level principal before entering the classroom.

Any college student who is having to complete 15 hours or less must produce a negative test prior to starting their field experience. The test result is to be given to the building level principal before entering the classroom.

SCS Weekly Snapshot of COVID-19 Cases

Each Friday the SCS will post a one-week snapshot of COVID-19 cases in our schools as reported by each school. Here is some key information to remember about the data reported:

- These cases include both students and staff members.
- Student records are protected by state law and the school district cannot release information that could be used to identify a student. Additionally, students and staff are protected by federal HIPAA law.
- When a school has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the school notifies the Department of Public Health (DPH) and works to identify "close contacts" as defined under DPH guidelines. Please know that according to guidelines established by DPH, any student or staff member who are confirmed cases of COVID-19 must quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. Any identified close contacts must quarantine for a minimum of 10 days. In both instances, they cannot return to school until they have completed all requirements of the DPH guidance for persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 or identified close contacts.

On “SCS's COVID-19 Reports” page you will find a table with five columns: **1) School, 2) Number of Positive Confirmed Cases, 3) Number of Classes Shutdown/Quarantined, 4) Number of Students Quarantined, and 5) Number of Teachers/Paraprofessionals Isolated/Quarantined** (<https://www.sumterschools.org/scsscovid19reports>)

- **School** is the name of each school in the Sumter County School System
- **Number of Positive Confirmed Cases** is the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 who spent at least some time on a school campus during the week reported.
- **Number of Classes Shutdown/Quarantined** is the total number of classes that are shutdown or quarantined due to exposure or close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- **Number of Students Quarantined** is the total number of students that are quarantined due to exposure or close contact with someone with COVID-19
- **Number of Teachers/Paraprofessionals Isolated/Quarantined** is the total number of teachers and paraprofessionals that are quarantined due to exposure or close contact with someone with COVID-19

Total Quarantined Due to Exposure does not mean individuals were exposed in school setting.

Who needs to quarantine?

You have been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19, now what?

Who needs to quarantine? People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 -- ***excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

****People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.*

What is close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Steps to take: Stay home and monitor your health

- Stay home for 10 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19

Isolation Guidance

Symptomatic students, teachers or staff

- Remaining home for at least 10 days **and**
- 24 hours fever-free without any fever reducing medications and
- Other symptoms of COVID are improving*
 - *Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation. Note that these recommendations do not apply to people with severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised).

Asymptomatic students, teachers or staff

- Remaining home for at least 10 days from the positive test
 - No symptoms developed.

Quarantine Guidance

- If asymptomatic, fully vaccinated close contacts do not need to quarantine at home following an exposure (they can continue to attend school in-person and participate in other activities). In addition to correctly wearing masks in school, they should wear a mask in other indoor public settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result
- Unvaccinated close contacts should remain home for 10 days. However, there are shorter quarantine options:
 - Quarantine for a full 7 days and get tested on day 5
 - Results are negative and remain asymptomatic; return to work on school day 8
 - Remain home for 10 days without testing and remaining asymptomatic

What should you do if your student is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

What should you do if your student is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)

If your student is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, you should keep him/her home and contact their medical provider for guidance or go to a testing site. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms.

Regarding positive cases of COVID-19

My student has tested positive for COVID-19, now what?

- Notify your student's school so that close contact determinations can be made.
- Monitor his/her symptoms. If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Have him/her stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Have him/her use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Have him/her avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Have him/her [Wear a mask](#) when around other people if able.
- Quarantine siblings and other household members per CDC guidance.

Learn more about [what to do if you are sick](#) and [how to notify your contacts](#).

When can they return to school?

- A student who tests positive for COVID-19 and **did not exhibit signs/symptoms** can return to school after at least 10 days have passed since they were tested and they remain symptom free. Please contact your student's school so that determinations for quarantine may be made.
- A student who tests positive for COVID-19 and **does experience symptoms** may return after at least 10 days have passed since their symptoms began. They must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication and symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.

Regarding quarantine

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. **Quarantine** helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

What does it mean to Quarantine?

What does it mean to Quarantine?

- Stay home for 10 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
- If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

Who should quarantine?

Anyone who has been in “close contact” with someone who has COVID-19 within 48 hours of their first symptom or positive test.

Options to reduce “At Home Quarantine”

Options to reduce “At Home Quarantine”

To prevent further transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, CDC currently recommends that persons who have been in close contact with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection should quarantine (stay away from other persons) for **10 days after the last known contact**. However, quarantine might be difficult to maintain for a prolonged period.

My student has already tested positive for COVID-19. Does he/she still need to quarantine after exposure to a positive case?

From Georgia DPH concerning quarantining after already testing positive:

- You do not need to isolate if you test positive within three months of a positive test you have already completed isolation for (unless you develop new symptoms).
- If you have developed new symptoms following a prior isolation and have tested positive again, you should complete isolation again.
- Additionally, if you have a new positive test 3 months after your prior infection, you will need to isolate and identify all close contacts for quarantine.

If someone is vaccinated for COVID-19, do they still need to quarantine after being exposed to a positive case of COVID-19?

An individual is considered fully vaccinated if it has been at least 14 days (2 weeks) since the completion of the COVID-19 vaccination series (two doses in a two-dose series OR one dose in a one-dose series). **Individuals fully vaccinated for COVID-19 who are exposed to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are NOT required to quarantine as long as you are NOT an inpatient or resident in a healthcare facility or a congregate setting.**

Regardless of vaccination status you should still monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following a suspected or confirmed exposure. If you develop symptoms for COVID-19, you should follow [isolation guidance](#).

Close Contact

What does “close contact” mean?

- Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person (laboratory-confirmed or a clinically compatible illness) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

Exception: In the K–12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) where:

- both students were engaged in consistent and [correct](#) use of [well-fitting masks](#); and
- other [K–12 school prevention strategies](#) (such as universal and correct mask use, physical distancing, increased ventilation) were in place in the K–12 school setting.

Students who were possibly exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 may discontinue “At Home Quarantine” before completing the recommended 14 days as follows**:

- After **10 full days** have passed since your most recent exposure occurred, if you fulfill **BOTH** of the following criteria:
 1. Are NOT tested for COVID-19
 2. Do not experience any symptoms during your monitoring period

OR

- After **7 full days** have passed since your most recent exposure occurred, if you fulfill all **THREE** of the following criteria:
 1. Are tested for COVID-19,
 - The test should be a diagnostic test (PCR or antigen) and the specimen for your test may not be collected more than 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation. If you plan to discontinue quarantine after 7 full days, it should not be collected before day 5 of your quarantine period.
 2. Receive a negative result,
- You may not discontinue quarantine until you have completed a minimum of **7 full days** since your most recent exposure, even if you receive your negative test result earlier. If your result is positive, you must follow DPH isolation guidance <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>
 3. Do not experience any symptoms during your monitoring period.

****If you choose to discontinue your student’s At Home Quarantine before the recommended 14 days, your student will be required to wear a mask for the remainder of the quarantine time and will be monitored for signs/symptoms of COVID-19. If your student exhibits any signs/symptoms of COVID-19 at school during the remainder of the quarantine period, he/she will be sent home immediately per CDC and DPH guidance.**

Students, Teachers, and Staff that Become Ill at School

- ☐ Prior to the identification of an ill student, teacher, or staff, identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits [COVID-19 like symptoms](#).
- ☐ Have a plan for how to transport an ill student, teacher, or staff member home or to medical care as appropriate.
- ☐ Immediately isolate symptomatic individuals to the designated area at the school and send them home to isolate as soon as possible.
- ☐ Ensure symptomatic students remain under visual supervision of a staff member. The supervising adult should wear [respiratory protection](#) (e.g. respirator or facemask depending on availability) and eye protection.
 - ❖ Look for emergency warning signs for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately (911 or local equivalent):
 - Trouble breathing
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion
 - Inability to wake or stay awake
 - Bluish lips or face
 - Other symptoms that are concerning to you
 - Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who may have COVID-19
- ☐ A mask should be placed on the symptomatic person while waiting to leave the facility.
 - ❖ Masks should not be placed on:
 - Children under age 2
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance
 - Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical, or behavioral health needs
- ☐ Advise positive or ill individuals of DPH's home isolation criteria: <https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>. The student, teacher, or staff may not return to school until they fulfill DPH's ["Return to School Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure."](#)
- ☐ Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before you clean and disinfect. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
- ☐ Adhere to DPH's ["Return to School Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure"](#) for allowing a student, teacher, or staff member to return to school.

Positive COVID-19 Case Notification

In the event that Sumter County School System is notified of a COVID-19 positive case:

- Contact tracing will be performed at the school (may include teachers, administration, paraprofessionals, and nurses) to identify individuals who were in close contact with the positive person up to 48 hours prior to symptoms/positive test results.
- Those who are deemed to be “Close Contacts” of the positive person will receive a phone call and/or a letter informing them that they will need to quarantine at home for 10 days from the last exposure to the positive person. This can include exposures from the classroom setting, on the bus, extended day programs, and extracurricular activities.
- The students who are considered “close contacts” will not be penalized for attendance and will be able to work with their teachers to complete assignments online.
- **“Close Contact”** is defined by the CDC as:
 - ❖ You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
 - ❖ You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
 - ❖ You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them)
 - ❖ You shared eating or drinking utensils
 - ❖ They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you
- We are required to submit the name and contact information for all known positives and close contacts to the West Central Health District.
- A general letter will go home to those who share a classroom with the person who tested positive, notifying them of the positive case, and that their child has NOT been identified as a close contact and does not need to quarantine at this time.
- We require the students who have shared a classroom with the positive person to wear a mask at school for at least the following 14 days.

Child, Teacher or Staff with Symptoms

When a student, teacher, or staff member has symptoms, they should **immediately** be sent home and the school's existing illness management policy should be implemented (e.g., the person cannot return until symptom-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications, etc).

Exceptions: If a healthcare provider suspects COVID-19 they should remain out of school and follow the "Return to School and Child Care Guidance After COVID-19 Illness or Exposure."

Quarantining close contacts is not necessary. However, the school should continue to monitor students, teachers, and staff for clinical signs and symptoms.

Exception: If while quarantined, the individual identifies exposure to a laboratory confirmed COVID case, the recommendations for a "Probable Case" should be followed.

*Recommendations may vary on the length of time of exposure, but a cumulative total of 15 minutes of close exposure can be used as an operational definition. Data are insufficient to precisely define the duration or length of time for prolonged exposure. Additionally, there is little data to determine the effect of multiple short-term exposures (when the cumulative exposure equals or exceeds 15 minutes). Brief interactions are less likely to result in transmission; however, the type of interaction (e.g., did the infected person cough directly in another person's face or did the infected person engage in high-exertion exercise with others) remain important. Individuals who are unable to maintain physical distance from others throughout the day (e.g., individuals have multiple exposures to a case and either are unable to calculate total time exposed or exposure equal or exceed 15 minutes in total) may be considered a close contact. If a person clearly meets definitions as a "close contact", that person should follow quarantine guidance prior to public health assessment. If there are questions Public Health will perform a risk assessment to determine who is considered a close contact if the duration or type of contact is in question.

Reporting

Schools are required to:

- Notify your local public health department immediately when a positive COVID-19 case is identified in the school setting (as required by § OCGA 31-12-2)
- Notify your local public health department of clusters or outbreaks of COVID-19 immediately
 1. Clusters of illness are reportable to public health under notifiable disease reporting rules. This includes clusters or outbreaks of COVID-19 or other illnesses. Local epidemiologists will work with each school to collect information about a cluster or outbreak, including but not limited to the number of students and staff at the school, the number which are sick, and the number which are laboratory-confirmed.
 2. A COVID-19 outbreak in a school setting will be defined as: Two or more laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases among students or staff with illness onsets within a 14-day period, who are epidemiologically linked (e.g., have a common exposure or have been in contact with each other), do not share a household, and were not identified as close contacts of each other in another setting during standard case investigation or contact tracing.
- Develop a procedure to report outbreaks to public health.
 - Individual confirmed and positive cases will be reported to the local health department immediately. Weekly, all cases, clusters, outbreaks, and school closures will be reported to public health
- **WEEKLY, each school must report aggregate data on clusters and outbreaks to public health. NOTE: This mechanism does not replace reporting individual cases and outbreaks to your local public health. Each school should notify local public health officials immediately regarding COVID-19 cases and outbreaks.**
- Weekly, schools must report COVID-19 cases
- For questions regarding reporting COVID-19 to public health and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) please refer to: <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpa-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my child, a child in their class or their teacher gets sick?

First, all students, visitors and employees will be temperature screened. Those with a temperature over 100°F will not be allowed to enter. If a student or employee gets sick during the day, the staff member will be dismissed, students will remain in the classroom with adult supervision until they can be picked up, and contact tracing will take place.

What happens if there's another spike in cases or another stay-at-home order?

If there's a spike in cases or a shelter-home order, the SCS will take appropriate action, including pivoting to an online-only model of instruction for the duration of any such order. During that time, we'll deliver meals to students and ensure their academic and non-academic needs are being met.

How will we know if the instructional model changes?

If there's a need to pivot to a different model, we'll immediately push out notifications to all parents through our mass notification system which is connected to the Infinite Campus student information system. We'll also post information to social media, on our website and share with our media partners.

What steps are you taking to keep my child safe?

The safety of our students, employees and visitors is our first priority. To support Face-to-Face instruction, custodians will receive continuous training on using best practices for cleaning and disinfecting buildings; we'll be temperature checking everyone who comes into our buildings; we're increasing signage to help facilitate social distancing and we're altering transportation plans and processes to ensure that we're able to transport our students in a safe way.

Since the school system will be requiring students to wear a face mask/face shield on buses and in classrooms, will the school system be providing them or will parents have to get them as part of the back to school supply list?

We will require each student to bring at least two face masks/face shields to school each day.

My child's an athlete; how will that work?

We released guidelines for athletic conditioning that were based on the Georgia High School Athletic Association guidelines.

I'm just not ready to send my child to school yet, what options do I have?

Parents who are uncomfortable sending their students back into a school building should contact the school principal and/or the district's social worker.



Returning to School Procedures for Custodial Department

Sumter County Schools Maintenance Department

Monday-Friday

- **Main point of entry** to school buildings will be sprayed after students arrive each day and throughout the day
- **Cafeterias:** Wipe and disinfect tables and chairs after breakfast and lunch
- **Media Centers:** Wipe and disinfect tables and chairs throughout the day
- **Classrooms:** Spray with disinfectant spray at the end of the day
- **Classroom Door Handles:** Spray throughout the day
- **Front Office:** Countertops to be wiped and disinfected throughout the day
- **All Restrooms:** Cleaned and sprayed throughout the day
- **Cleaning Logs:** Will be maintained

Friday Afternoons

- Deep clean every classroom and all high traffic areas with foggers
- Deep clean Central Office, Transportation and Maintenance Departments with foggers

Returning to School Procedures for Nutrition Department

Sumter County Schools Nutrition Department

- It is required that students wear a face mask/face shield at all times when they are not actively eating or drinking. Actively eating is defined as the time students are actually eating and chewing.
- It is required that students wear a face mask/face shield while picking up their lunch, opening contents, clearing up their area and exiting and entering the location designated for lunch.
- Students should wash their hands before and after lunch. If hand washing is not feasible, use of hand sanitizer is permissible. Students should also use hand sanitizer before taking their face mask/face shield off and putting it back on.
- The School Nutrition team will continue to provide lunches in or on disposable containers or trays for at least the first 6 weeks of school.
- When eating indoors, 3 feet of physical distancing should be maintained.
- Schools should also discuss with staff the most appropriate schedule to allow staff to eat lunch.

Sumter County High School

Breakfast and Lunch

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided in the cafeteria following:
 - Social Distancing guidelines will be posted for reference.
 - Transition to and from lunch will be staggered to allow social distancing

Sumter County Middle School

Breakfast

- Breakfast will be picked up once students have been scanned for fever and taken directly to the classrooms.

Lunch

- Lunch will alternate between the cafeteria and classroom.

Sumter County Intermediate School

Breakfast

- Students will report to their designated area in the hallway each morning to pick up their breakfast.

Lunch

- During lunch, there will be only one grade level eating in the cafeteria each week. The remaining students will pick up their lunches in a designated area in the hallway so they can eat in the classroom.

Sumter County Elementary School

Breakfast

- Students will continue to pick up their breakfast at the entrance of their designated hall.

Lunch

- Lunch will be picked up with students going through the lunch line and eating in their classroom. Alternate days may be in place for dining in the cafeteria.

Sumter County Primary School

Breakfast and Lunch

- All breakfast/lunch meals and snacks will be picked up/delivered to the class. The students will eat in class. All trash will be placed outside of the door. Homeroom classes will transition to the cafeteria within the first month of school.



Returning to School Procedures for Transportation Department

Sumter County Schools Transportation Department

Sanitization of the School Bus

- All SCS's buses are equipped with Air Filtration Systems.
- All buses will be disinfected when they return from their routes each morning.
- All buses will be disinfected when they return from their routes each evening.

Face Mask/Face Shield

- ❖ Drivers and students are required to wear a face mask/face shield covering their nose and mouth at all times while on the school bus.
- ❖ Drivers will have extra disposable face masks/face shields to ensure that all students have one available.

Thermometers

- ❖ All bus drivers and monitors are required to check their temperatures each morning before entering the bus.
- ❖ All students will be required to have a temperature check each morning prior to entering the bus.
- ❖ Temperatures above **100** degrees F will not be allowed to enter the bus.
- ❖ All Sumter County school buses are equipped with thermometers.

Transporting Students

- ❖ Siblings will be placed on the seat together.
- ❖ The seating capacity will be reduced, when possible.
- ❖ Seats will be assigned according to how students load and unload each day.



Multi Layered Prevention Strategies

Sumter County Schools strongly recommends:

- Desk shields
- Vaccination
- Consistent and correct mask use
- Physical and social distancing
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Cleaning and disinfection

Sumter County Schools mandates:

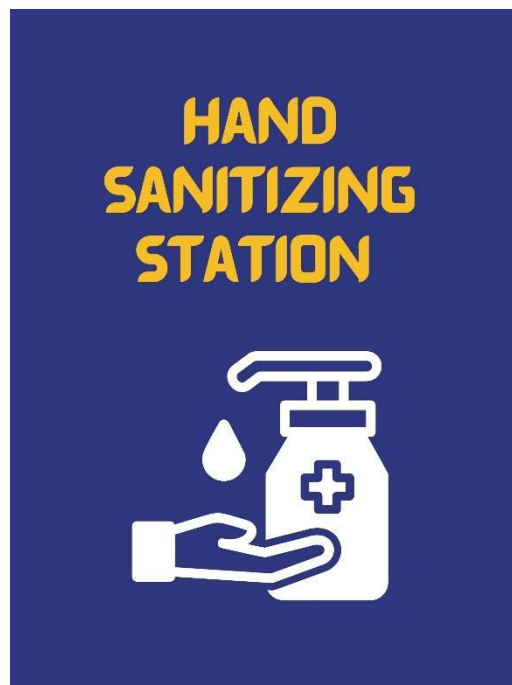
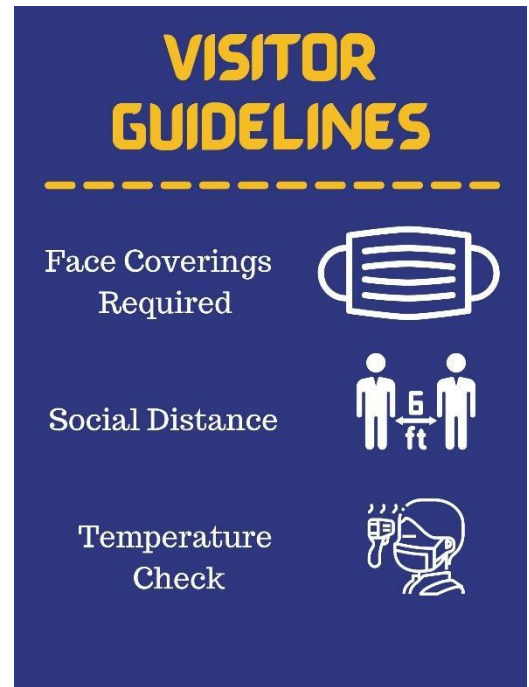
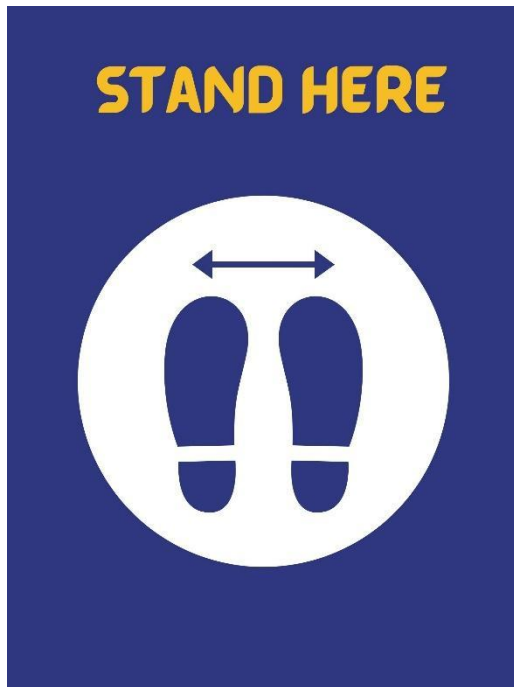
- Use of face mask/face shield is required on the school bus.
- The Sumter County Board of Education approved requiring all faculty, staff, students, and visitors to wear a face mask/face shield when inside the buildings of Sumter County Schools.



Appendix

Signage

The district will have a variety of signage in schools that promote social distancing, personal hygiene and other safe behaviors. Examples include:



Mitigation Strategy / Procedure

Face Mask/Face Shield Indoors	Students should bring several backup face masks/face shields to school each day. It is required that all school staff wear a face mask/face shield while indoors.
Face Mask/Face Shield Outdoor	If 3 feet of distance or more can be maintained while outdoors, wearing a face mask/face shield is not required.
Hand Hygiene	Frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer, including before and after the following activities: eating lunch, taking face mask/face shield on and off, and when using communal materials. Handwashing is preferable before and after eating lunch; however, if that is not feasible, hand sanitizer is acceptable.
Staying home when sick	Parents and staff should continue to monitor for symptoms and stay home when showing symptoms of COVID.
Physical Distancing	It is recommended that student seating is arranged to maintain as much physical distancing as possible. However, with a large number of students returning to in-person learning, SCS will not be able to guarantee 3 feet of distance between all students in every classroom.
Lunch	It is required that students wear a face mask/face shield at all times when they are not actively eating or drinking. Actively eating is defined as the time students are actually eating and chewing. It is required that students wear a face mask/face shield while picking up their lunch, opening contents, clearing up their area and exiting and entering the location designated for lunch. Students should wash their hands before and after lunch. If hand washing is not feasible, use of hand sanitizer is permissible. Students should also use hand sanitizer before taking their face mask/face shield off and putting it back on. The School Nutrition team will continue to provide pre-packaged lunches for at least the first 6 weeks of school When eating indoors, 3 feet of physical distancing should be maintained. Schools should also discuss with staff the most appropriate schedule to allow staff to eat lunch.
Visitor Guidelines	SCS will continue with our no visitor policy during school hours for the start of the school year.
School Assemblies	When gathering more students in one indoor area than would be in a regularly scheduled class or classroom the gathering must occur outdoors.
Cleaning Procedures	Enhanced cleaning procedures will continue.
Transportation	SCS will continue with current mitigation strategies including limiting seat sharing to the greatest extent possible, cleaning the

	bus between routes, hand sanitizer, mandatory face mask/face shield for students of all ages regardless of vaccination status.
Classroom Setup Guidance	Classes should be arranged to maintain the greatest distance between students as possible (3 feet is recommended). Plexiglass shields at student desks. Staff can continue to use shields at the teacher desk if preferred. Shield should still be used in high traffic areas such as at the receptionist's desk.
Staff to Student Exposure Recommendations	If staff are exposed to more students than the average grade level classroom teacher on a daily or weekly basis, additional PPE will be provided as requested. SCS will continue to provide additional PPE to all staff as requested.
School Based Staff and Parent Meetings	Principals are granted autonomy to determine the meeting venue that best fits the need and desired outcome of the event. In person meetings must follow all other mitigation strategies including mandatory wearing of face mask/face shield, maintaining 6ft distance between individuals, and health screening.
Ventilation	All SCS's buses are equipped with Air Filtration Systems.
Recess	Recess and outdoor breaks are encouraged. If 3 feet of distance cannot be maintained while outdoors, wearing a face mask/face shield is required. Playgrounds do not need to be cleaned or fogged between student groups
Viral Testing	Symptomatic staff and students will be given the opportunity to take a rapid COVID test. Those in close contact with a COVID positive staff or student will also be offered the opportunity to take a rapid COVID test 5 days after exposure.
Vaccinations	SCS strongly encourages all eligible individuals to get vaccinated to prevent the spread of COVID and the development of variants. At this time SCS will not mandate vaccinations for staff or students.
Athletics and Extracurricular Activities	GHSA-Sanctioned Athletics The SCS is working in collaboration with the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) to develop and adhere to appropriate guidelines for athletic practices and competitions. We expect these guidelines to continue to evolve; each coach will provide updates to our student athletes and their families, as appropriate. As you have specific questions or needs, please contact your child's coach.

<p>Contact Tracing, Isolation & Quarantine</p>	<p>SCS will conduct contact tracing within classes where a person who tests positive for COVID-19 has been identified.</p> <p>Quarantine and Isolation: To minimize disruption to student's learning, we are adopting a modified quarantine procedure for students.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Should a student exhibit any sign of illness, s/he will be assessed by the school nurse and if symptoms are related to COVID-19 parents will be contacted. Any person who is positive for COVID-19 will be isolated (at home) and may return to school when CDC guidelines are met. SCS Contact Tracers will provide guidance about the start and end dates for students and staff at the time of notification. All people in quarantine may not participate in afterschool activities and athletics, including after-school care, for the duration of their quarantine period. All people in quarantine will be required to report the onset of symptoms and/or a positive test result for COVID-19 to the SCS Contact Tracing Team at the time of symptom onset and/or test result. <p>Fully vaccinated individuals will not need to be quarantined.</p>
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