

# DCS Continuity of Services Guidelines

<b>Operational Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The absence requirement in the DeSoto County Schools exemption policy has been removed for the 2021-2022 school year. Students are encouraged to stay at home if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms.</li><li>• Due to the lack of COVID testing at this time, DeSoto County Schools will make a temporary change to the absentee policy for the month of January. If your child is showing symptoms but you are waiting on available testing, here are the steps to follow:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Please keep your child at home.</li><li>○ Contact your school's attendance clerk. After the clerk is contacted, your child will be marked as quarantined for attendance purposes while you are awaiting testing and results.</li><li>○ Contact the school nurse if you have any questions.</li><li>○ Please provide the school nurse with test results upon your child's return to school for attendance purposes.</li></ul></li><li>• Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible depending on classroom size and student enrollment.</li><li>• Teachers will keep seating charts and movement in the classroom will be limited.</li><li>• Principals have the autonomy to alter morning arrival procedures and class changes to promote social distancing.</li><li>• In elementary grades, teachers may rotate, and students may stay in the same classroom all day when feasible.</li><li>• Group work will be limited in order to promote social distancing.</li><li>• Teachers will keep the same seating arrangements on a weekly basis.</li><li>• Extra supplies and training will be made available for cleaning crews.</li></ul>
<b>Child Nutrition Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breakfast and lunch will be free for students.</li><li>• Principals have the autonomy to alter their lunch schedule so that fewer students are in the cafeteria at one time, and schools may also serve lunch in the classroom in certain situations.</li><li>• Social distancing will be promoted in the serving lines and at cafeteria tables.</li><li>• Cafeterias and kitchens will be cleaned frequently throughout the school day.</li><li>• Handwashing will be incorporated into the daily school schedule.</li><li>• If needed, entrance and exit pathways will be marked to designate student flow.</li><li>• Cafeteria staff will wash hands immediately after unpacking and storing deliveries.</li><li>• All surfaces will be sanitized daily, and all tools and equipment used in the kitchen will be sanitized between uses.</li></ul>
<b>Transportation Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mississippi school districts are not under a mask mandate this school year. Mississippi State Department of Health officials have indicated that masks should be worn in school settings.</li><li>• Buses will be deep cleaned as frequently as possible.</li><li>• Buses will have seating charts and social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.</li></ul>

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<p><b>Facility Guidelines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All facilities will be cleaned before the return of students and staff, and buildings will be cleaned on a regular schedule.</li> <li>• Signage will be located throughout the building reminding students about social distancing and what to do if they are showing symptoms.</li> <li>• Age-appropriate signage will be posted throughout the building with tips for proper hygiene and preventive measures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Health and Hygiene</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every elementary school, middle school, and high school will have a full-time, on-site nurse.</li> <li>• Based on guidance from the Mississippi State Department of Health, DeSoto County Schools recommends that students wear masks while in school buildings and on buses. No mask mandates have been issued by the Governor for this school year.</li> <li>• The Mississippi Department of Health has provided specific guidance that establishes identifiable criteria for school closures due to Covid-19 outbreaks. A school closure would interrupt in-person learning for students in that specific school. In an attempt to minimize the need for school closures throughout the district, the school board instructs the superintendent or his designee to meet with the school principal when 5% of the school's student enrollment tested positive for COVID during the previous week. The principal will submit plans for further mitigation strategies to reduce transmission and maintain a safe school environment.</li> <li>• Students will be taught and reminded about proper handwashing and cough covering.</li> <li>• Nonessential visitors and school activities will be limited.</li> <li>• Water fountains are being replaced during this school year with touchless water bottle refill stations.</li> <li>• High touch surfaces will be cleaned frequently.</li> <li>• Nurses will evaluate symptomatic students and provide consultation if deemed necessary.</li> <li>• An isolation area will be designated for students exhibiting symptoms while they wait on their parents.</li> <li>• Mental health support will be available for students on each campus.</li> <li>• Teachers and staff will be trained on safety hygiene protocols.</li> <li>• Sanitizer will be made readily available for students throughout the day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parent Support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents are asked to check their children for symptoms at home each morning before school. These symptoms include fever of over 100 degrees, new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, body aches, muscle pains, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, unusual fatigue or irritability, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, unusual rash, or unusual pink/red eyes not explained by allergies or injury.</li> <li>• Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness to the school nurse. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick.</li> <li>• If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your household, please report that information to school officials immediately.</li> </ul>

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## Quarantine and Testing Requirements

- Mississippi school districts are required by the Mississippi State Department of Health to report the number of student COVID cases, the number of school staff COVID cases, and the number of quarantines on a weekly basis.
- The number of school cases and quarantines will be posted on the DeSoto County Schools website each Monday.
- If a student is in a class with an individual who has a positive COVID case, his/her parent will be contacted via email with that information.
- If a student is identified as a close contact, he/she student must quarantine for 10 days unless the parent chooses for their child to return to school after 5 days. If the parent chooses the 5-day option, the student can only return if he/she is not showing any symptoms, and he/she must wear a mask on days 6-10 when around others. It is recommended that parents have their child tested during the quarantine period, and parents must notify the school if their child tests positive. If the student returns before end of the 10-day period, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child has not shown any symptoms and that their child knows that he/she must wear a mask around others on days 6-10. If the student is unable to wear a mask, he/she must quarantine for the full 10-day period.
- Students who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from the school setting, and it is recommended that they remain in isolation for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever-free for 24 hours. If the student is asymptomatic after 5 days of isolation, the parent can choose for their child to return to school after 5 days of isolation with required mask use while around others for the following 5 days. If the student returns before the end of the 10-day period, it is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child has not shown any symptoms and that their child knows that he/she must wear a mask around others on days 6-10. If the student is unable to wear a mask, he/she must quarantine for the full 10-day period.
- Fully vaccinated persons in close contact with an infected person do not have to quarantine or get tested unless they develop symptoms.
- People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- A student can be exempted from being quarantined if he/she was wearing a mask at the time of close contact.

- Guidelines are subject to change throughout the school year.
- The DeSoto County Schools Continuity of Services Guidelines will be updated periodically throughout the school year.
- Public comment will be taken into consideration. That information can be emailed to [covid@dcsms.org](mailto:covid@dcsms.org).