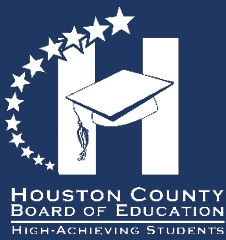
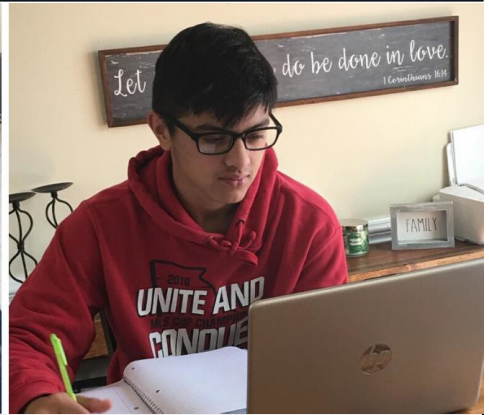


Houston County School District Plan for 2021-2022



The Houston County School District’s (HCSD) Plan for 2021-2022 was developed to share the procedures in place during the 2021-2022 school year. These guidelines will protect the safety of our students, staff, and visitors while returning to a more traditional atmosphere of learning. District leadership considered the guidance of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), Georgia High School Association, Governor Kemp’s executive orders, Houston County and North Central District Health Departments, and our local Board of Education. The HCSD will continue to provide guidance and procedures to schools on navigating the academic, social, and emotional well-being of students and employees.

Please note that this plan will be revised as needed.

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Guiding Principles for Decision Making

- Face coverings are recommended.
- The HCSD recognizes that vaccinations help stop the spread of COVID-19 and encourages eligible students and staff to consider getting vaccinated.
- Students will be taught correct hand washing procedures and will be encouraged to practice frequent hand washing as part of the daily routine.
- For the safety of all students and staff, schools will continue to limit the number of visitors entering the building. Guests are encouraged to visit the schools when they are invited, as in the case of a special event or celebration.
- All school buildings and buses will be cleaned and sanitized.
- Sick employees and students will be required to remain at home.
- Classrooms will be provided necessary cleaning and sanitizing supplies.
- Custodians will be given a school specific disinfection routine and schedule.
- Programmable sinks in all schools will be programmed to run for at least 30 seconds.
- Hand sanitizers should contain at least 60% of alcohol and only used with staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer (See [CDC Guidance](#)).
- CDC Guidance of safe storage and application of disinfectants will be ensured (See [CDC Guidance](#)).
- **The HCSD will continue to monitor COVID-19 cases in our schools and community, and we will adjust this plan as needed.**

Health and Wellness



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding health and wellness:

- Face coverings are recommended.
- There will be promotion of daily hygiene throughout the school building.
- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Frequent hand-washing will be encouraged. Teachers should have a handwashing schedule.
- Students and desks will be spread out for physical distancing, maximizing all classroom space for student seating.
- Staff members will monitor themselves for any symptoms of illness.
- Prevention protocols will be reviewed with students.
- Directional hallways will be encouraged.
- Seating charts will be kept for contact tracing purposes.
- Students will be kept in cohorts when practicable.
- Lunchrooms will operate at a reduced capacity and will use strategic layouts to encourage physical distancing.
- Meals may be consumed in alternate locations.
- High touch areas will be cleaned frequently.
- Barriers will be used, as practicable, where students are not physically distanced.
- Signage will be used as a reminder of mitigation measures.
- Shared items (Chromebooks, keyboards, mouse, PE equipment, etc.) should be sanitized between groups.
- Students should not share items in the classroom such as scissors, crayons, glue, etc.

What families can do to support the health and wellness of students, peers, and school staff:

- Be informed about this plan and ask questions to clarify procedures.
- Update parent contact information in [Infinite Campus](#), the parent portal.
- Screen your child daily prior to coming to school. Keep your child home if they are sick or exhibiting [symptoms](#).
- Actively monitor your child's health daily for any changes or concerns.
- Speak with your healthcare provider regarding the importance of vaccinations to avoid absences, and follow their recommendations regarding health and wellness.
- Inform the school if your child has a positive COVID-19 test result.
- Follow appropriate procedures regarding your child's return to class after illness.
- Provide your child with age appropriate [explanation of COVID-19](#), and ask what questions they may have to ensure they have accurate information and to relieve their fears.
- Educate your child to consistently self-regulate their behaviors in following CDC and school guidelines for the safety of themselves, other students, and staff. Educate them about handwashing, refraining from touching others, and refraining from touching their face.
- Practice ways your child can greet/interact with peers without using physical contact.
- Provide personal hand sanitizer for your child.
- Reinforce/educate your child on proper handwashing, covering coughs or coughing into a tissue, sneezing into their elbow, and other general hygiene practices.
- Encourage your child to eat healthy, exercise, and develop good sleeping habits.
- Be patient and understanding when plans and procedures need to change to keep students and staff safe.

Quarantine & Isolation Protocols

These procedures are subject to change.

Contact Tracing Definitions:

Close Contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of a positive person during the infectious period for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period.

Direct Exposure: Someone who has been in direct contact with the sweat, blood, saliva, etc. of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, hugging, hitting during contact sports).

Infectious Period: When someone experiencing symptoms tests positive for COVID-19, the infectious period begins 2 days prior to the start of symptoms. In people who are asymptomatic, the infectious period is 2 days prior to the date they tested.

Fully Vaccinated: Vaccinated individuals who meet the following criteria:

- It has been at least 14 days (2 weeks) but less than 6 months since the completion of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccination series,
- It has been at least 14 days (2 weeks) but less than 2 months since receiving a 1-dose vaccine,
- It has been more than 6 months since completion of a 2-dose vaccine series or 2 months since a 1-dose vaccine, but they have received a booster:
 - NOT required to quarantine BUT should seek testing 5 days after exposure and wear a mask around others for 10 days after exposure.

When a student tests for COVID-19:

- Symptomatic students who are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test should isolate until test results are received. Household members should monitor themselves for symptoms and quarantine until test results are received. Any household member who remains asymptomatic and meets the current definition of fully vaccinated (defined above) may attend school, but will be required to wear a mask for the full 10 days while in the school setting, to include school events.

- Students who test positive for COVID-19 will isolate for 5 days from the start of symptoms or 5 days from the date they tested if they are asymptomatic. If they return to school on day 6, they must wear a mask for 10 days from the start of symptoms or date of positive test result.
- All student household members of a positive will be considered a direct exposure and shall be required to quarantine for 5 days from the last exposure. Any student household member who remains asymptomatic and meets the current definition of fully vaccinated (defined above) may attend school, but will be required to wear a mask for the full 10 days while in the school setting, to include school events. The school administration of the positive student's school will provide the parent/guardian with return to school dates for all household students and notify any other schools of those students and dates.
- Contact tracing will take place to identify close contacts and direct exposures.

Contact Tracing Protocols:

- Students identified as a direct exposure will be required to quarantine for 5 days from the date of last exposure. Any identified direct exposure who remains asymptomatic and meets the current definition of fully vaccinated may attend school, but will be required to wear a mask for the full 10 days while in the school setting, to include school events. Unvaccinated students who remain asymptomatic may return to school on day 6 and must wear a mask for 10 days from last exposure.
- Students identified as a close contact may continue to attend school, but will be required to wear a mask in the school setting for the full 10 days. Students who choose not to wear a mask in the school setting will be required to quarantine at home for the full 10 days.
- Parents/guardians of direct exposures and close contacts will be notified.
- Students who have been exposed to a positive person and are symptomatic should consult their physician and remain isolated for 5 days from start of symptoms. Household members should take mitigation measures such as masking and physical distancing in order to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19. If a COVID-19 test is done, parents should report results to the school. If positive results are received, the isolation guidelines for positive persons and identification of those who may have been directly exposed/close contacts should be followed.
- Students who have been directly exposed to a positive person and are asymptomatic should monitor themselves closely for symptoms, take mitigation measures such as masking and physical distancing in order to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19, and quarantine for the recommended 5 days. If symptoms develop, follow the guidance for symptomatic students in the bullet above.

Criteria Review:

Positive test result for symptomatic person: Isolation period is 5 days from start of symptoms, followed by 5 days of required masking when around others.

Positive test result for asymptomatic person: Isolation period is 5 days from date of testing, followed by 5 days of required masking when around others.

Person identified as a Direct Exposure: Quarantine for 5 days from last exposure. Students who meet the current definition of fully vaccinated may attend school, but will be required to wear a mask in the school setting for the full 10 days.

Person identified as a Close Contact: Close contacts may continue to attend school, but will be required to wear a mask in the school setting. Close contacts who choose not to wear a mask, will be required to quarantine for 10 days from the last exposure to the positive person.

Mental Health and Wellness



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding mental health and wellness:

- The Houston County School District is aware that all of our students and families have been impacted in some way by COVID-19 and is prepared to continue to support our students when they return to school.
- Resources are available to assist your student with mental health needs. This ranges from direct support from our school counselors, social workers, psychologists and school nurses, as well as connecting your child with community resources.
- The *Houston Hope Line* remains open to serve students and families. Call (478) 273-9174 with any crisis.

Transporting Students



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding transporting students:

- Face coverings are recommended.
- Bus riders will have assigned seats.
- Buses will be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
- Students will only be allowed to ride their assigned bus.

Entering and Exiting School Buildings



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding entering and exiting school buildings:

- For the safety of our students, parents will not be able to walk their students to their classroom before school begins. Parents are encouraged to attend the Meet and Greet and/or New Student Orientation to meet the teacher and get familiar with the student's classroom before school begins.
- Visitors will be asked to complete a health screener to enter the building beyond the office area.

Serving Meals



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding serving meals:

- All meals will be served at no charge to all enrolled students during this school year.
- Students will wash hands before meals.
- Cafeterias will have designated entrances and exits. Menus will include as much variety as possible, while maintaining efficient and safe service. Menus can be found online at <https://www.hcbe.net/schoolnutrition>. Meals may be served in alternate locations in the school other than the cafeteria to maximize physical distancing.
- Lunchrooms will operate at a reduced capacity.
- Lunchroom tables may be split up so that students are facing one direction or where students sit on only 1 side of a table.
- It is recommended to use cohorts for the lunchroom when practicable.
- For the safety of our students, visitors will not be allowed to eat meals with students. An exception to this would be in the case of a special event where visitors were invited, such as a holiday meal.
- All enrolled students, to include Houston Virtual distance learners, will have access to school meals. Families participating in Houston Virtual will be provided information on how to receive meals.
- School nutrition staff will follow all appropriate guidance.

Supporting Teaching and Learning



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding teaching and learning support:

The District offered two options for students for the 2021-2022 school year.

Option 1

Students will return to campus following all health and safety protocols.

Option 2

Distance Learning will be offered through Houston Virtual, a learning platform to deliver online courses to our students. Elementary schools (grades 3-5) will utilize Google Classroom, along with the i-Ready digital learning program. Middle schools (grades 6-8) will use Google Classroom and Apex, a digital learning program. High school (grades 9-12) will utilize Apex. All students will have a District-assigned teacher.

Parents who registered their student(s) in Houston Virtual must:

- commit to distance learning for the academic school year;
- have internet access at home;
- be available for instruction during normal school hours;
- log-in and participate in the class to be counted as present for the day;
- meet all normal academic and attendance requirements;

- take district and state-mandated standardized tests in person; and
- be a resident of Houston County and enrolled in the District.

In addition, students enrolled in Houston Virtual will have limited options for specials, connections, and electives. They will not participate in school activities or extracurricular activities.

What families can do to support students with instruction for both options:

- Communicate with teachers on a regular basis and let them know if your child is experiencing specific challenges.
- Visit the district website regularly for updates.
- Talk to your child routinely to make sure he/she understands work expectations.
- Talk to your child about how they are feeling.
- Be patient and accepting of how they are feeling during this stressful time.
- Maintain a daily routine around school and schoolwork.
- Conduct check-ins regarding academics by logging into Google Classroom and/or Apex with your child and checking their courses.
- Encourage your child to seek assistance for emotional or mental health by talking with a school counselor.
- Reach out to your child's teacher with any changes that may impact your child's success.

Access to Special Programs and Services



What families can expect from the District and schools regarding access to special programs:

- **Special Education Services:** Students with disabilities, including those with underlying health conditions, will continue to receive services in person or virtually. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting may be held to determine the most appropriate services. The District is committed to providing free and appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible in alignment with public health guidelines. Collaboration with families has always been an integral part of the special education process and continues to be essential during this time.
- **Community Based Instruction:** Community Based Instruction will resume in the form of trips in the community and will be enhanced through activities in the school building.
- **Child Find and Evaluation:** The HCSD will continue to identify, locate, and evaluate students suspected of having a disability and needing special education and related services.
- **IEP meetings:** The HCSD is committed to providing families the opportunity for meaningful participation in the special education process. IEP teams will partner with families to determine the most appropriate format to conduct meetings.
- **Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan accommodations in Houston Virtual:** All students attending Houston Virtual will be provided their specified accommodations per their IEP or 504 plan. The IEP team will work collaboratively to determine appropriate accommodations.
- **Related Services:** Students in Houston Virtual will receive their IEP related services (OT/PT/SLP) virtually.
- **Medically Vulnerable Populations:** School health staff will develop or review medical plans for medically vulnerable students in consultation with the family and the child's doctor.
- **ESOL/ELL:** The District is committed to continuing to identify and serve English Language Learners. Whether in-person or an alternative format, ESOL strategies will continue to be implemented by instructional and support staff to address the academic and language needs of ELL students. In addition, ESOL teams will continue to partner with families and schools to provide resources and tools to ensure the academic success of ELL students. Whether students attend on campus or in Houston Virtual, we are committed to providing instruction that will allow students to reach their maximum potential.

Extracurricular Activities and Athletics



What families can expect from the District and your school regarding Extracurricular Activities and Athletics:

- Schools may hold club meetings, athletic events, and activities for face-to-face learners.

What families can do to support the health and wellness of your student, their peers and school staff beyond the school day:

- Remind them to wash their hands frequently when on campus and also before and after practice.
- Please notify your child's coach or school if he/she becomes ill after participating in practice or other activities held on the school campus.
- Do not attend an event if you are feeling ill.
- Model positive behavior and words for your child. They will follow your lead.

When a Child or Staff Member Becomes Sick at School



- Med Techs and School Nurses will use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for anyone with symptoms of illness.
- Employees who have symptoms of illness will be sent home.