

DCS Continuity of Services Guidelines

Operational Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible depending on classroom size and student enrollment.• Teachers will keep seating charts and movement in the classroom will be limited.• Principals have the autonomy to alter morning arrival procedures and class changes to promote social distancing.• In elementary grades, teachers may rotate, and students may stay in the same classroom all day when feasible.• Group work will be limited in order to promote social distancing.• Teachers will keep the same seating arrangements on a weekly basis.• Extra supplies and training will be made available for cleaning crews.
Child Nutrition Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breakfast and lunch will be free for students.• 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.• Social distancing will be promoted in the serving lines and at cafeteria tables.• Cafeterias and kitchens will be cleaned frequently throughout the school day.• Handwashing will be incorporated into the daily school schedule.• If needed, entrance and exit pathways will be marked to designate student flow.• Cafeteria staff will wash hands immediately after unpacking and storing deliveries.• All surfaces will be sanitized daily, and all tools and equipment used in the kitchen will be sanitized between uses.
Transportation Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• Buses will be deep cleaned as frequently as possible.• Buses will have seating charts and social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

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<p>Facility Guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All facilities will be cleaned before the return of students and staff, and buildings will be cleaned on a regular schedule. • Signage will be located throughout the building reminding students about social distancing and what to do if they are showing symptoms. • Age-appropriate signage will be posted throughout the building with tips for proper hygiene and preventive measures.
<p>Health and Hygiene</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every elementary school, middle school, and high school will have a full-time, on-site nurse. • 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. • 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 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. If the mitigation strategies are not sufficient, the school board grants the superintendent the authority to require masks on that campus for a 5-10 day period. This permission expires at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. • Students will be taught and reminded about proper handwashing and cough covering. • Nonessential visitors and school activities will be limited. • Water fountains are being replaced during this school year with touchless water bottle refill stations. • High touch surfaces will be cleaned frequently. • Nurses will evaluate symptomatic students and provide consultation if deemed necessary. • An isolation area will be designated for students exhibiting symptoms while they wait on their parents. • Mental health support will be available for students on each campus. • Teachers and staff will be trained on safety hygiene protocols. • Sanitizer will be made readily available for students throughout the day.
<p>Parent Support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Families are encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness to the school nurse. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick. • If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in your household, please report that information to school officials immediately.

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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 will be subject to quarantine procedures for 14 days as outlined by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Individuals can end their quarantine after 10 days if the individual has no symptoms during the entire 10-day period.
- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be excluded from the school setting and remain in isolation for a full 10 days from the onset of symptoms and are fever free for 24 hours (or excluded for 10 days from the date of the test if asymptomatic).
- 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.
- Students, teachers, and staff who are not fully vaccinated and are identified as close contacts to COVID-19 should be in quarantine for a full 14 days. Individuals can end their quarantine after 10 days if the individual has no symptoms during the entire 10-day period.
- If a close contact has no symptoms for 7 days and has a negative test result with any form of molecular based testing for the detection of COVID-19 RNA collected on day 5, 6, or 7 of the quarantine period, the quarantine period can be discontinued quarantine after 7 days.

- 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.