

Dawson County School System’s Reopening Plan (Release Date: July 10, 2020)

Dawson County Schools plan to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year on August 7, 2020, unless directed otherwise by the Governor, Department of Public Health, or Georgia Department of Education. Dawson County Schools will follow “*Georgia’s Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools*”. State and local health officials determine the level of community spread. The following enhanced safety protocols will be implemented. These protocols are flexible and will allow the school system to adapt as new information becomes available.

ENHANCED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Practicing Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage social distancing measures as much as possible. ● Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread of COVID-19. ● Teach preventative measures (including staying home when sick) and proper hygiene, such as handwashing and covering coughs. ● Enhanced handwashing and sanitation protocols will be in place. Hand sanitizer will be provided. ● Masks/face coverings are encouraged, not required, when social distancing isn’t possible. Staff and students will be allowed to bring face masks/coverings. ● Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces. ● Impacted areas/classrooms will be isolated and deep cleaned. Schools will avoid areas for 24 hours, if possible. ● Water refill stations will be used as an alternative to water fountains. Staff and students must bring their own refillable bottles from home. ● A protocol for students/staff who feel ill/experience symptoms when at school will be implemented. Screening for symptoms will occur as needed. Any staff or students with a temperature over 100.4 will be isolated in a specified location and sent home. Local health officials will be notified for guidance and next steps.
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hand sanitizer will be provided on buses. ● Masks/face coverings will be required for bus drivers/monitors. Students will be encouraged, but not required, to wear face masks/coverings while on buses. ● Frequently touched surfaces on buses will be cleaned after each route. ● Students will be encouraged to social distance at bus stops. ● Field trips will be eliminated until further notice.
Entering School Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post signage in classrooms, hallways, and entrances to communicate how to stop the spread of COVID-19. ● Marked spaced lines and flow paths may be used to encourage social distancing. ● Outside visitors will be limited. Visitors must call the front office before entering and be screened for symptoms. ● Staggered entry drop off and pick-up procedures will be used. ● Clear partitions will be installed in front offices.
Serving Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage hand washing before and after meals. ● Hand sanitizer will be provided. ● Minimize the number of students in the cafeteria at one time. Classes of students may eat lunch in classrooms when necessary. ● Marked spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines to the extent possible, designated entrance and exit flow paths. ● High-touch surfaces will be cleaned thoroughly throughout the day. ● Nutrition staff will be required to wear mask/face coverings.
Transitioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Designate flow paths in hallways to keep students separated and to minimize the congregation of students. ● Staggered class changes when possible, non-essential student movement throughout the day will be limited.
Large Group Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discourage the congregation of students in parking lots and common areas. ● Stagger the schedule for large group gatherings like recess and class changes. ● Utilize large spaces like gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces for social distancing.
Support for Teaching and Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit physical interaction through reducing partner or group work. Use online tools for collaboration. ● The sharing of objects that are difficult to clean will be discouraged. ● Based upon classroom configuration and to the extent possible, desks will face in the same direction and students seated at tables will sit on the same side.

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Learning Options

Parents/guardians will have two options for learning models for their child(ren) for the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Option #1- In-person/Face-to-Face Instruction** - Schools will operate on a regular Monday through Friday schedule.
- **Option #2 - Online Learning** - An online option will be available for both K-5 and 6-12 students. For students choosing option #2, parents/guardians should understand the following:
 - Online learning will look very different than it did during the Spring 2020 school closures. The expectations and rigor will mirror in-person/face-to-face instruction and will require a full school day. Expectations in terms of attendance, grading, and accountability will be the same for those students participating in online learning and in-person learning.
 - There will be a significant commitment needed by parents/guardians to facilitate online learning. Parent involvement is key to successful online learning as students will need parental assistance during the online learning school day.
 - Reliable internet access is required in order to participate in online learning and a district-issued device is available for each student.
 - All students will be assigned a teacher who will support and facilitate online learning.

Online Learning for K-5 Specifics	Online Learning for 6-12 Specifics
<p>For K-5, in response to feedback from the parent survey, the district is working on a model that meets the needs of students who choose the online learning option. The number of students requesting online learning will determine the final model used. Parents selecting this model must commit to the first nine weeks of school. Doing so allows the district to plan accordingly the allocation of staff and teaching assignments. The child’s teacher may not be physically located at the school where they are zoned. Thus, if a parent/guardian wishes to switch to face-to-face instruction, they may have a different teacher after the first nine weeks of school. Parents will be provided additional information for online learning once details are finalized.</p>	<p>For 6-12, the school system is planning to utilize Edgenuity and Georgia Virtual School. Parents/guardians selecting this option must commit to the first semester of school. Doing so allows the district to plan accordingly the allocation of staff and teaching assignments. Edgenuity is a program that is facilitated by Hightower Academy. Core on-level academic courses (social studies, science, math, and language arts/reading) will be available for all grade levels. Middle and high school students will be able to access a limited number of connections, electives, Advanced Placement, and CTAE courses. Students will maintain enrollment at their zoned school and will be able to participate in after school activities/athletics. Guidance from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) will be followed for school athletics. Parents will be provided additional information for online learning once details are finalized.</p>

Next Steps for Parents/Guardians

Please provide your input as we make our plans to reopen our schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Your responses will help guide our planning as we design teaching and learning to meet our students' needs and ensure that students and staff have healthy learning and working environments. To assist us in planning for our students’ learning needs, please follow the next steps below:

- Read the guidelines and options above thoroughly.
- Decide on Option #1 or Option #2.
- An email will be sent to all parents on July 10, which will include a Commitment Form for the online Learning Option. If you select Online Learning (Option #2), you must submit the Commitment Form no later than July 24, 2020. Please complete a separate form for each child. If you want your child to return to school for in-person/face-to-face instruction (Option #1), you do not need to submit the Commitment Form.
- If a Commitment Form for online learning is not returned, it will be assumed that your child(ren) will return to school for in-person, face-to-face instruction.

Need more information, have questions about enhanced safety protocols or learning options, refer to FAQ document posted to the district’s website. If you don’t find the answer there, please submit your question(s) at <https://forms.gle/N4TG2a9pU58ro8zv9> We will contact you as soon as possible.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION (This document will be updated on July 17, 2020)

Need more information, have questions about enhanced safety protocols or learning options, refer to FAQ below.
 If you don't find the answer there, please submit your question(s) at <https://forms.gle/N4TG2a9pU58ro8zv9> We will contact you as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
Will Dawson County Schools start back in August?	Dawson County Schools plan to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year on August 7, 2020 unless directed otherwise by the Governor, Department of Public Health, or Georgia Department of Education.
What guidelines will be in place when schools reopen?	Enhanced safety protocols are shared on the district's website.
Will masks be required for staff and students?	Masks/face coverings are encouraged, not required, when social distancing isn't possible. Staff and students will be allowed to bring face masks/coverings from home. Masks/face coverings will be required for bus drivers, bus monitors, and nutrition staff..
Will social distancing be followed on buses?	It will be difficult to social distance on the buses, but students will be separated as much as possible. Buses will have hand sanitizer available for students and students may wear masks.
Will my child eat in the cafeteria?	Students will eat in school cafeterias and the number of students in the cafeteria at one time will be minimized. To foster social distancing, some students may eat in classrooms on certain days if schools are using a rotating cafeteria schedule. Due to social distancing, visitors cannot be accommodated in the cafeteria at this time.
What will happen if a student or a teacher is determined to be ill while they are at school?	Symptoms will be evaluated by the school nurse and based on this evaluation, staff members may be sent home and students may remain in isolation, with supervision, while parents are contacted to pick them up. The Department of Public Health will be notified immediately for guidance on next steps.
What about attendance?	Every student, regardless of grade level and whether learning in-person or virtually, will be expected to attend and adhere to the school board-approved academic calendar. Attendance will be recorded. All perfect attendance awards, school monthly attendance awards, exam exemption based on attendance, and all other attendance incentives will be waived for the 2020-21 school year.
What if I do not feel comfortable sending my child back to school?	Parents should review the district's enhanced safety guidelines which are aligned to the recommendations made based on "Georgia's Path to Recovery for K-12 Schools". Parents should select Option #1 or Option #2 outlined in the July 10, 2020 district update and complete the Commitment Form no later than July 24, 2020 if selecting Option #2. Parents will be provided additional information for online learning once details are finalized.

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What will online learning for K-5 look like?	There will be a combination of both live and recorded lessons and independent work. The district is working to finalize plans for K-5.
Will parents be notified if their student was exposed to COVID-19 at school?	In the event of a positive COVID-19 test result in any school/facility, the Director of Youth Health Service will reach out to the Department of Public Health for guidance and next steps.
What if my child has a fever in excess of 100.4?	Parents should keep their child(ren) at home if they are ill. Any student and staff member with a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater or symptoms of possible COVID-19 virus infection should not be present at school.
If I select the online learning option for my child, will meals be delivered?	No. There will be a curbside service offered to parents to pick-up meals.
If I select online learning options for my child, will the district provide a device?	All K-12 students will have an opportunity to check out a school-issued iPad. Insurance on these devices will be recommended and can be purchased upon receipt.
If I have more than one child, do I have to select the same learning option for my children?	No, parents should select the option that works best for each individual student.
Will after school be available for elementary?	Yes, YMCA is the district's after school provider. Details will be provided by the school.
If my child does online learning, will they be allowed to participate in after school extracurricular activities?	The system plans to allow those students who select online learning to have access to extracurricular activities. However, the details are school specific and will be shared by each school. Athletic programs will follow guidance from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA).
What happens if my child is attending school face-to-face, gets sick and has to stay home for an extended time?	The student will be allowed to complete his/her lessons through Schoology.
Can I walk my student into the building on the first day of school? (Applies to August 7 and 10)	Yes, as long as the parent agrees to enter and exit the building at times specified by the school and drop the child off at the classroom door. Parents are encouraged to wear masks.
What about Open House?	Schools will not hold traditional Open Houses. Each school will make plans and communicate with parents. Virtual meetings or phone calls with teachers will also be an option.
Will my child have recess?	Outdoor play is essential for elementary students. Therefore, schools will stagger the number of classes at recess at any given time and will spread out classes on the playground.
If my child has an IEP, can I select the online learning option?	The district remains committed to providing students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for remote/virtual learning. Because online learning may affect how special education and related services are provided, each student's IEP team will work to ensure that the student receives services to the most possible extent.

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If the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, could the district return to 100% online learning?	Yes, if the Governor or public health officials call for school closures, the district could move all students to an online format.
Will the school system require all students and staff to be tested for COVID-19 before schools reopen?	The health department does not recommend widespread testing before the start of the new school year.