

KCS CONNECT

2021-22

Knox County Schools will continue to offer two learning options in the 2021-22 academic year for students in Grades 1-12. These students can utilize in-person, on-campus instruction, or they can apply for a transfer to a KCS virtual school (elementary, middle, and high). The virtual learning program will not be available for kindergarten students. More information regarding virtual learning for the 2021-22 school year will be forthcoming.

The first day of school for students will be a half-day on Aug. 9, 2021. Knox County Schools will follow Tennessee Department of Health guidelines with regard to COVID-19 and safety guidelines. **This guidance may change in several ways as the year progresses. Any guidance issued by the State would take precedence.**

COVID-19 Health Guidelines (as of 4.9.2021)

Face Coverings

When physical distancing is feasible inside KCS facilities, masks will not be required for students and staff. Masks are not required when outdoors. Young children who cannot tolerate wearing a face mask or who continuously play with, suck on, or chew their mask, will be excused from wearing one. Anyone riding a school bus, including students, staff, bus drivers and shuttle drivers, is required to wear a face mask, per federal law.

Physical Distancing

Appropriate physical distancing will be followed in classrooms, to the extent possible. In elementary schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart. In middle and high schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission. In areas of high community transmission, middle and high school students should be 6 feet apart if cohorting is not possible. Classrooms should be structured in such a way as to facilitate this distancing, to the extent possible. Please note that for contact tracing and quarantine purposes, the current definition of a “close contact” is 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes.

Daily Temperature Checks

Temperature checks are no longer recommended for students. Families should continue to screen children at home. Knox County Schools will continue to screen staff and other adults in the school building.

Students and staff who have a fever or other symptoms of illness should not attend school or ride the bus.

Area Cleaning

Buildings will undergo daily sanitizing for high-touch areas such as doorknobs, handrails, and countertops using a COVID-certified disinfectant. Common areas such as administrative areas, libraries, cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and hallways will be misted with a COVID-certified disinfectant daily. Classrooms will be cleaned per the district's standing protocols and as needed; they will be misted at least every other day. Restrooms will be monitored and disinfected multiple times each day. Additionally, each classroom will be provided with hand sanitizer and disinfectant. Buildings will also be disinfected either in part or in their entirety as may be necessary following a positive COVID diagnosis of a student or staff member. Buses will be disinfected following morning and evening runs with a COVID-effective agent provided to contractors by KCS.

Contact Tracing

In response to a reported positive COVID-19 case:

- If the district is made aware that a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, district officials will immediately notify local health officials.
- The KCS Health Services Department will work with the Knox County Health Department to initiate contact tracing protocols to determine how widespread the potential exposure is and notify families and staff members impacted.
- If the student or staff member is on a school campus, he or she will be isolated until they can be transported off campus.
- Contacts are to self-quarantine at home for at least 10 days from their last contact with the infected individual or until otherwise directed by public health. The current definition of a "close contact" is 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes.
- Quarantine is not required for fully vaccinated individuals or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days. If they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider.
- If there is an incident on campus that might pose a threat of exposure to COVID-19, families and staff will be notified while maintaining confidentiality.

Moving Schools to Red

The State Board of Education voted on April 12 to retire the emergency rule for school districts operating during COVID-19. As a result, Knox County Schools **will not** have the ability to move individual schools to online learning, unless the Governor declares a state of emergency.