

**Marion County Schools
Plan For Reopening Schools
2020-2021**



This plan is based on the current State Health Order and recommendations from the Alabama State Department of Education and is subject to change.



A Message From The Marion County Schools' Superintendent

The beginning of a new school year is always an exciting time for students and school personnel. As we approach the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year we are certainly eager and ready to come back to school but, also, there is anxious anticipation of what this school year will hold. Schools are fundamental to the development and well-being of our children. Schools provide students with academic instruction, social and emotional skills, safety, reliable nutrition, physical/speech and mental health therapy, and opportunities for physical activity. There are many benefits for students that they receive by being in school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics “strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.” We know that the first priority of Marion County Schools must be the safety of our students and employees. That is why much thought and planning have gone into the development of this plan. This plan was developed in accordance with the guidance provided in the *Alabama State Department of Education's Roadmap To Reopening Schools*.

The 2020-2021 school year will be different than any other school year we have experienced. There will be things that we like and we will incorporate them into our plans for years to come. There will be other aspects of this year that we will tolerate this year and put aside in the future. In order to have a successful school year we must all work collaboratively. Students, parents, school personnel, and our community partners must stand together and always be willing to do what is best for students.

This document is a beginning but, it will change and continue to develop based on the needs that arise. COVID-19 is new to everyone and this plan will continue to evolve as more guidance and new information is available.

Guiding Principles

Five principles should guide all planning, decision making, and execution of plans to return to school in the 2020-2021 school year.

1. We will be transparent. We will share what we know and what we don't know and be clear about what we can control and what is outside of our control.
2. We will be equitable. We will center decisions on what is best for all students, families, and educators.
3. We will listen. We will bring together diverse stakeholders and experts to understand realities on the ground and to surface creative solutions.
4. We will put safety first. We will leverage science, data, and public health leadership to inform the choices we make.
5. We will be decisive. Given the size and scope of the challenge, we must move deliberately and make tough choices. We may make mistakes but will adapt quickly as variables change on.

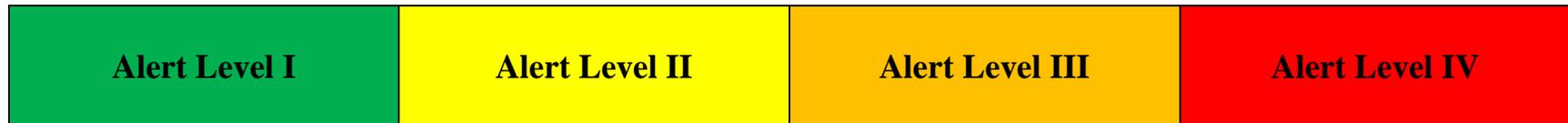
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School System Status

The Alabama State Department of Education has recommended the use of the Alabama Department of Public Health's map to determine the status of schools.

Alert Levels



Alert Level I—Cases are rare and contact tracing can be used to control the virus.

Alert Level II—A moderate number of cases exists with most cases from a known source.

Alert Level III—Many cases exist including community spread, with undetected cases likely.

Alert Level IV-- Widespread outbreak is growing with many undetected cases.

Wellness

In order to maintain a clean, safe, and healthy environment, Marion County Schools will utilize the following continuum:



HOME is the first point on the screening continuum and our first line of defense. Marion County Schools will educate and support families on identifying the symptoms that indicate staff and students must stay at home. Families should be encouraged to self-report symptoms of illness, which could include fever, new onset of cough, etc. Self-reporting mechanisms will include calling the school, and calling your health-care provider,



TRANSPORTATION is the second point on the screening continuum. Marion County Schools will use clearly visible signage or other notice to communicate the symptoms students should not have if traveling on a school bus.



SCHOOL is the final point on the screening continuum. School staff will visually check for symptoms (which may include temperature checks) and/or confirm with families that students are COVID-19 symptom-free.

Marion County Schools' Persons with COVID-19

- All MCS employees or students who have had contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 should immediately notify the Office of the Superintendent.
- If a student or teacher has a positive COVID-19 test, all persons in the class will be notified. No names or personal information will be given in compliance with HIPPA.
- Contact tracing will be handled by the Alabama Department of Public Health.
- Parents are encouraged to check their child's temperature each morning with an oral, tympanic or temporal scanner. All employees are also encouraged to check their own temperature each morning. Any student or school employee with a fever should stay at home that day and consider being tested for COVID-19 if no other explanation is available.
- Students who become ill at school will be placed in a designated area of quarantine with a facial covering in place. Nurses will wear masks when caring for these students. A parent/guardian will be called to pick the child up immediately.
- Students sent home from school should be kept home until they have completely recovered according to ADPH guidelines.
- All employees and students who are diagnosed with COVID-19 must test negative OR be quarantined for 14 days and should be asymptomatic (FEVER FREE) for 3 days before returning to school.
- After the two-week period, asymptomatic persons may be allowed to return to school activities. Athletes can return to sports in accordance with the AHSAA guidelines.

Close Contact (6/15 Rule)

Close contact is defined as contact within six feet of the diagnosed individual for a total time of more than 15 minutes. After the two-week period, asymptomatic persons may be allowed to return to school activities. Or, if the person that was in close contact has a negative COVID-19 test they will be allowed to return to school activities.

COVID-19 in the Household

If students and employees live in a household in which someone has been diagnosed with Covid-19, this person should be quarantined for 14 days and be asymptomatic for 3 days OR receive a negative test before returning to school. This application applies if any person has been within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.

Hand Sanitizer

- Hand sanitizer should contain at least 60% alcohol and only used with staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer (CDC Hand Hygiene).
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom, bathroom, and lunchroom.

Clean and Disinfect

- Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep out of reach of children (Disinfecting Facilities).
- Five additional Clorox 360 machines have been purchased for our system. We already have one
- Six Surface Sanitizing Misting Machines have been purchased.
- Five backpack sanitizing sprayers have been purchased.
- Antimicrobial No Rinse Spray has been purchased that has been confirmed by laboratory tests to kill COVID-19.

Marion County Schools will:

- Provide school-level guidance for cleaning and disinfecting all core assets, including buildings.
- Have custodial and staff review and make actionable guidance regarding cleaning and disinfection.
- Maintain facilities for normal school operations.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces including doors, benches, bathrooms, etc. with either an EPA-approved disinfectant or other diluted disinfectants at least twice daily.
- Change air filters regularly.

- Place signage regarding frequent handwashing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing in all MCBE buildings, in the community, and on buses.
- Inventory necessary materials and supply chains for cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- Keep restrooms supplied with soap and hand sanitizer.
- Develop procedures to minimize times and areas where large groups typically congregate or transition during the school day.

Water Fountains

- Water fountains will not be allowed for individual use but will be available for refilling student water bottles.
- Parents are encouraged to send a water bottle with their child each day. This may be a refillable bottle.

Assemblies

- Assemblies will be discouraged during Alert Levels greater than Level I.

Guests

Marion County Schools welcomes guests. Given any status, parents/guardians are encouraged to remotely connect with teachers and principals. Although we normally encourage parents/guardians and grandparents to visit our schools, this year our first priority must be the health and safety of our students and employees. The fewer people that are in our buildings lessens the chance of spreading the virus.

Level I (green)- Guests will follow Board Policy and proceed as normal.

Level II Status or Greater (yellow, orange, red) - Guests may not be allowed on campus. All conferences and required meetings may be conducted virtually.

INSTRUCTIONAL SCENARIOS

Traditional

Students attend classes in a traditional, on-campus setting.

Remote

Students attend classes “remotely” using a variety of virtual and paper resources. Teachers have regular check-in times and can provide virtual instruction.



Blended

Students transition between traditional and remote and back again based on need and preference.

Traditional

- All Marion County Schools will begin on August 11th with a staggered phase-in of students based on the letter of the alphabet their last name starts with. Those dates appear later in this plan.
- Facial coverings are recommended and allowed but, unless there is a state or local ordinance, they will not be required for students. Employees will wear facial coverings, in accordance with the current State Health Order, when they cannot be adequately distanced from students.
- Marion County Schools will use the Schools PLP and Schoology platform to deliver both traditional, remote, and blended learning. STAR will be used for assessments and Freckles for Individual Learning Plans.

- Teachers will be expected to incorporate Schools PLP curriculum and the use of digital tools into weekly lesson plans. There will be students who transition between traditional and blended and they will need to have a working knowledge of how to complete lessons through Schools PLP.

Blended

- Students enrolled in traditional school may be exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have to be quarantined or they may contract the virus themselves and have to be quarantined.
- During the quarantine, students will work from home using Schools PLP and other lessons provided by their teacher.
- When students are learning remotely, teachers should have face to face meetings, if at all possible, with students at least once per week. This could be through Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet, etc.
- In the event that a school or schools have to be temporarily closed, students will continue to receive instruction remotely.
- This option is not available to students who have chosen the remote option.

Remote

- Parents/Guardians that choose to keep their children at home will enroll in the Marion County Virtual Academy.
- Marion County Schools is providing internet access in all school parking lots. Parents or students with a driver's license can park in the designated area and connect to WiFi.
- Marion County Schools is working, in conjunction with the SDE, to use federal funds that Governor Ivey is allocating to school systems, to provide WiFi access on school buses. These buses will be parked at various locations throughout the county to provide internet access while the bus is parked at the location.
- Students who enroll in the Marion County Virtual Academy will be allowed to transfer to traditional school at the end of any of the first three nine week grading periods.

- Students who do not have access to the internet will receive packets with lessons to complete. They will be considered enrolled in their homeschool and their instruction will be provided through packets by their teachers instead of a virtual curriculum.

In-person Instruction

- All students will be assigned a specific desk.
- Students must sit in their assigned seats.
- Grades 9-12 will be on a normal schedule with intermittent class dismissal times to decrease the amount of traffic in halls. All students will remain in their classes when the bell rings until they are dismissed.
- Grades 4-8 - if they are departmentalized, core teachers will rotate classes. Students will transition to P.E. and to elective classes as necessary.
- PK-3 are self-contained but, students will transition to P.E.
- Tier 3 intervention, special education, speech, and EL Students:
 - Teachers may pick up students from classroom and have a small group in a designated location. Social distancing rules will apply. After each group, the teacher will disinfect the area before getting the next group of students.

Instructional Coaches

- Alert Level I - Proceed as normal
- Alert Levels II, III, IV – Instructional coaches may be reassigned to core areas.
- Typical duties will be resumed later in the school year if advisable.

Library Media Specialist

- Alert Level 1 -Proceed as normal. Digital books are recommended.
- Alert Level II, III, IV -Library media specialist may be reassigned to core areas.
- Library books may not be checked out. This is subject to change based on the Alert Level. All students have access to digital books on MyOn.
- Library media specialists will provide services as required by the principal.
- Typical duties may be implemented later in the school year.

Physical Education

- Alert Level I = Students will participate as normal.
- Alert Level II, III, and IV - Students will participate in non-contact, social distanced physical activities led by the P.E. teacher. Playground equipment will not be used. If a ball is used it should be wiped with a disinfectant as often as possible.

Formative and State Required Assessment

All Students will participate in all formative assessments (i.e. Virtual K-3 students will participate in fall literacy assessment as required by State law)

Transportation

- Transportation by bus to and from school will proceed as normal.
- Eating is prohibited on State school buses by federal and state laws. Because of the pandemic, this rule will be strictly enforced.
- Visible signage to communicate COVID-19 symptoms and students who should not be riding the bus will be displayed.
- All students will have an assigned seat. Students within the same household will be given priority to sit together.
- Students participating in extra and co-curricular activities (band, football) will have assigned seats.
- Students will be required to face forward and not lean across the seats. If students do not adhere to this mandate, they will not be allowed to continue riding the bus and parents will have to provide transportation.
- Bus drivers will spray or wipe common touch points inside the bus with a disinfectant prior to the start of a route, between runs, and immediately following the completion of a run.
- This task will be performed for morning and afternoon routes and will include the transportation of students for extra and co-curricular activities.

Breakfast and Lunch

- All meals will be served in areas designated by principals. Each principal and lunchroom manager will work together to devise a plan that works best for the schools that particular lunchroom serves.
- Meal seating could vary, utilizing classrooms, 50% cafeteria occupancy, or other less confined areas. This decision will be made by the principal at each site.
- Parents may not bring food to the school building.
- Students who bring meals from home will need to pack items that do not require heating or reheating. All food items and beverages should be sent with the student. (see handbook).
- Snacks and food items are limited to your child.
- No items may be brought from home for a class or group of students.
- All meal payments can be made by going to www.paypams.com.

Field Trips

- Marion County Schools recognizes the educational and cultural values of field trips. Each field trip request may be approved or denied based on a variety of factors. Virtual field trips should always be considered. COVID-19 hotspots will be avoided.
- Field trips may be approved per consideration of destination, number of students attending, and availability of buses/drivers. Highly contagious areas/events will be avoided.
- Alert Level II, III, and IV – There may be no field trips.

Co- and Extracurricular Activities

- Marion County Schools will adhere to guidance as disseminated by governing and national entities (i.e. Alabama High School Athletic Association, etc.).
- When traveling to away locations, Marion County Schools will adhere to municipal and state directives for Concessions
- All concession stands will adhere to the Alabama Department of Public Health guidance (i.e. local city/restaurant rules apply).

Staggered Start Dates

Purposes of Staggered Start:

1. Allow students and parents to learn new school protocols that have been put in place due to COVID-19 prevention.
2. Allow students to acclimate back to school in a small group setting.
3. Allow teachers to have small groups of students to assess gaps in learning possibly caused by school closure.
4. Allow teachers to teach students how to use Schools PLP and Schoology in smaller groups.

Benefits of staggered start dates:

1. Teachers will have more time to invest in getting to know their students.
2. STAR will be administered to all students in grades K-12 during the staggered start days. This will help teachers have a clear picture of what standards and skills students are deficient in. We fully expect that, after being out of the classroom for five months, there will be areas where students need to catch up, re-learn, or, in some instances, learn for the first time.
3. Teachers will have more time to teach students' new school protocols such as physical distancing, hand washing, and personal responsibility for keeping their desk and area clean.

Schedule for Staggered Entry Start

1. August 11, 2020 – All students with a last name beginning with A-G will come to school.
2. August 12, 2020 – All students with a last name beginning with H-M will come to school.
3. August 13, 2020 – All students with a last name beginning with N-S will come to school.
4. August 14, 2020 – All students with a last name beginning with T-Z will come to school.

Open House and Beginning School

Traditionally, schools have a night before school starts that we refer to as “Open House”. Unfortunately, unless current conditions change drastically for the better, the activities normally handled on these nights will have to be done virtually. Students will be given paperwork, handbooks, and free/reduced lunch applications to bring home. Parents will be asked to fill out all of the information that is sent home and return it to school.

Parents/Guardians or other guests will not be allowed to enter the building. This is for the health and safety of our students and employees.