

ITAWAMBA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Return to School Plan

2020-2021 School Year

The faculty, staff and Board of Education of the Itawamba County School District (ICSD) is continually working to help ensure the health, wellness, and safety of our students and staff for the upcoming school year while also providing for the educational needs of the ICSD students. In doing so, this Return to School Plan has been developed to provide guidelines for students, parents, faculty and staff and to outline expectations of the ICSD. However, these guidelines and expectations are not exhaustive and other items may be mandated as needed. **Therefore, these guidelines will be updated with new information as it becomes available, and decisions will be made in coordination with local and state guidelines.**

In June, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) issued guidance for school districts wherein three learning models were outlined for the 2020-2021 school year. These models are a traditional school model, a hybrid school model, and a distance learning model. Each school district in the State is being given the authority to adopt the model that best suits its individual needs.

This summer, the ICSD asked parents to complete a survey regarding how to return to school. Approximately 88% of parents who responded preferred the traditional method. Taking this into consideration, along with input from our Parent Advisory Group and our Teacher Advisory Group, it has been determined that it is in the best interest of ICSD students for them to return to school as normal as possible while also trying to ensure that our students and staff are prepared in the event a closing becomes necessary. Therefore, the ICSD plans to begin the school year with primarily a traditional school model. Students will participate in traditional school on Monday – Thursday of each week and will then participate in distance learning from home or from a hotspot on Friday of each week. Friday will not be a day off. Students will be expected to participate in and complete online work while teachers will use this time to prepare for classes. Fridays will also be used to deep clean classrooms, bathrooms, buses and other needed areas.

Understanding that each student is unique with varying degrees of issues, students will have the option of electing to take classes via distance learning. If a student opts to take classes via distance learning, the student and his/her parent or legal guardian must make an appointment with the child's school where they will receive, execute and agree to the terms and conditions of the Itawamba County School District Distance Learning Agreement (see Agreement for deadline dates). Also, students who elect to attend school via distance learning must physically attend school on Friday of each week from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., providing their own transportation, to take proctored tests or complete proctored assignments. This will be a time for student/instructor interaction and no outside persons will be allowed. Students that utilize the distance learning model will be expected to meet the same academic requirements as traditional students. Students who have an IEP, a 504 plan or are being evaluated for Special Education services, will not be required to attend school on Friday if they have appropriate medical documentation excusing their presence due to the pandemic.

The ICSD believes that a schedule that is mainly traditional provides the greatest opportunity for student success. However, providing a virtual class day for all traditional students on Fridays will help students, parents, teachers and staff be prepared if a school closing occurs and a distance learning or hybrid model is then mandated. Parents should be prepared for all three models of instruction, including returning to school Monday – Friday, to be utilized during the school year depending on the severity of the COVID-19 virus in our area and depending on direction from the Governor's Office, the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), and MDE.

Parents, teachers, staff and students should understand that a positive COVID case does not necessarily mean that classes or schools will be closed. The ICSD will evaluate each situation individually using risk assessment guidelines recommended by the MSDH in determining if any closings should occur.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Before School Each Day

- Staff and students should not come to school if:
 - You have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Close contact is defined by the MSDH as contact within 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or more.
 - Anyone in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 must self-quarantine for 14 days from the beginning of the exposure.
 - You have tested positive for COVID-19. All COVID-19 cases must self-quarantine for 14 days.
 - You are experiencing an unexplained cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.
 - You have had a fever of 100.0 or more in the 24 hours prior to the school day.
 - You have experienced new loss of taste or smell.
 - You have experienced vomiting or diarrhea in the 24 hours prior to the school day.
- See the Itawamba County School District COVID-19 Response Plan for more information.

Transportation

- Social distancing on buses will be a challenge. Parents are encouraged to provide transportation to school if possible.
- Students will be separated on the bus where feasible. Siblings or children living in the same household will be seated together where feasible.
- Bus drivers and students riding a bus will be required to wear a mask or facial covering while on the school bus. If a student fails to have facial covering during the first two days of school, a mask will be supplied. After the first two days of school, any student who does not have facial covering will not be allowed to ride the school bus.
- Buses will be appropriately disinfected after each use.
- Buses will have hand sanitizer.

Arrival/Breakfast

- Students may not be dropped off before 7:15 a.m. unless permission is received by the principal.
- Students that drive to school should not arrive on campus until 7:30 a.m.
- Staff members and students will have their temperature taken upon arrival to school.
 - Any staff or student who has a temperature of 100.0 or above will be sent to the nurse for further evaluation.
- Any student arriving after the normal arrival time will check in at the office and have his/her temperature taken.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to use [My School Bucks](#) for cafeteria payment in an effort to reduce the need to exchange money and reduce the spread of germs.
- Specific breakfast plans are in place for each school that will encourage social distancing.
- Students will use hand sanitizer or wash hands upon arrival into classrooms.
- Break areas will be restricted where feasible.

Cafeteria-Lunch

- Parents are strongly encouraged to use [My School Bucks](#) for cafeteria payment in an effort to reduce the need to exchange money and reduce the spread of germs.
- Hand washing opportunities and hand sanitizer will be available before and after lunch.
- Schools will utilize a combination of eating in the cafeteria and classrooms to encourage social distancing.
- Cafeterias will be appropriately disinfected after each use.

Classrooms

- Multiple social distancing strategies will be implemented based on feasibility of the unique space and needs of each school and class.
- Teachers will be required to wear facial covering when within 6 feet of students.
- Teachers will speak with students in regard to social distancing and appropriate hygiene.
- Students will keep and utilize their own supplies for use in the classroom. Shared supplies and manipulative materials will be discouraged.
- We encourage all students to bring their own water bottles to use during the day. Water fountains could possibly be limited to circumstances yet unknown.
- Hand washing and hand sanitizing will be encouraged multiple times a day.
- Items that might be used by multiple students (Chromebooks, etc.) will be disinfected appropriately after each individual use.
- ICSD teachers/staff will clean/disinfect at appropriate times.

Hallway Traffic

- Hallway traffic will be limited by schedule and students will be monitored while walking in hallways. Principals will speak with students in regard to directional traffic, etc.
- Scheduling considerations will include how to best accommodate social distancing, while at the same time providing students a high quality education.
- Movement throughout buildings will be limited or reduced.
- Hand washing/hand sanitizer will be available.

Visitors/Parents/Legal Guardians/Vendors/Volunteers

- Nonessential visitors will be limited.
- If a visit to a school is necessary, the visitor, including parents or legal guardians, must first contact the school and make an appointment.
- All visitors, including parents and legal guardians, must wear a mask.
- Upon arrival for the appointment, the visitor's temperature will be taken.
- Vendors who have to service buildings will undergo a temperature screening.
- No lunch guests will be allowed unless approved by the school principal.
- No outside food items will be allowed except for personal lunches and personal snacks.

Playgrounds

- Students will be monitored while on playgrounds and social distancing will be encouraged
- Hand washing/sanitizer will be available upon re-entry to building.

Cleaning/ Hygiene

- Cleaning with approved products will target frequently touched hard, non-porous surfaces.
- The janitorial service (ABM) will follow appropriate guidelines to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of our campuses. In addition, teachers will be required to clean and disinfect classrooms as needed.
- CDC posters will be visible throughout campuses to encourage social distancing and best practices in slowing the spread of COVID.

Health Services

- Faculty and staff will be trained regarding COVID safety measures.
- Students who know that they will be taking medication when school starts should contact the school nurse and schedule a time, preferably between August 3 and August 6, to drop off the medication and complete any necessary paperwork.
- Staff must self-screen each day prior to coming to school.
- Parents must screen students at home prior to sending to school. Parents must also sign and abide by the Itawamba County School District Parent Attestation form prior to the student starting school.

- Students or staff demonstrating COVID symptoms will be referred to their physician. **Prior to returning to school, a student/staff member must be fever free for 24 hours.** See the Itawamba County School District COVID-19 Response Plan for more information.
- Students/staff who are symptomatic will be issued a mask to wear and other safety measures will be implemented, including separation from other students and staff, until the student is picked up or until the staff member leaves school property.
- If a student's parent/legal guardian cannot be located after a reasonable amount of attempts or if a parent/legal guardian refuses to pick up a child that has COVID symptoms, including a temperature of 100.0 degrees F or more, the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services may be contacted.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

- Use of personal masks will be encouraged for students for the safety of those around them.
- Use of personal masks will be encouraged for staff and will be required in certain situations.

Dismissal

- We encourage parents to pick children up, if possible, to help reduce the number of students riding buses.
- At the end of each day, students may only be picked-up in the car line. No in-person pick-up will be allowed so as to avoid gatherings in school lobby or other areas.
- If early student pickup is necessary during the day, follow normal checkout procedures.

Athletics/Activities

- Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) and MSDH guidelines will be followed.

Other General Items

- The role of children in the transmission of COVID19 is unclear at this time. Face coverings may be challenging for students, especially younger students, to wear in an "all-day" setting, such as school.
- These guidelines will be updated with new information as public health data, safety precautions, and appropriate guidance is received
- No field trips will be permitted.
- Cleaning/Disinfecting a classroom or area with a confirmed case:
 - All areas used by the person who is sick will be disinfected.
 - Schools will not necessarily need to close operations if an area can be effectively disinfected and an individual risk assessment concludes that closing is not warranted. Risk assessments will be conducted pursuant to guidelines established by the MSDH.
 - Once an area has been appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use.
 - Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that ICSD normally utilizes to maintain a healthy environment.
- **These guidelines will be updated with new information as public health data, safety precautions, and appropriate guidance is received.**

(Any Itawamba County School District Board Policy, Plan or Procedure, or any part thereof, inconsistent with this Return to School Plan shall be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.)

ITAWAMBA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT DISTANCE LEARNING AGREEMENT

If you wish for your child to participate in online/virtual instruction which will apply toward attendance, the following agreement must be signed and returned to the school office. Please note that this agreement is for selected nine weeks. **Exceptions to change during a nine weeks can only be made by the school administrator.**

Please indicate **with your initials** that you understand the following:

- I am requesting for my child to receive online/virtual classroom instruction.
- I understand that this is on a nine-weeks basis.
- I am indicating that I have access to reliable and adequate Internet.
- I understand certain classes (e.g. - career technical courses, agriculture, driver's education, etc.) will require my child to physically be present.
- I understand that my child is responsible for completing all classroom assignments and returning completed work on time, or their grades will be negatively affected.
- I understand that attendance will be taken for my child on a daily basis and that my child will be subject to Mississippi school attendance laws.
- I will assure the work and all assignments are completed and returned.
- I understand that my child will be required to personally attend school on Fridays of each week from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. to complete proctored tests or assignments.
- I understand that my child may need to come to the school at additional times to complete mandated assessments and screeners, or for needed additional support.
- I understand that it is solely my responsibility to provide transportation for my child to and from school on Fridays.
- I understand that this agreement must be turned into my child's school by the following deadlines:
1st 9 weeks – **July 30**, 2nd 9 weeks - **Oct. 5**, 3rd 9 weeks - **Dec. 18**, 4th 9 weeks - **Mar. 1**

Nine Weeks Requested: **First**____ **Second**____**Third**____**Fourth** _____
(A separate request must be completed at the beginning of each 9 weeks)

Parent Signature

Date

Child's Name

School

Grade Level