

HIGBEE R-VIII RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

OUR PRIORITIES

As we return for the 2020-2021 school year, the Higbee R-VIII School district's top priority is the safety of our students and staff. We will work to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 for students and staff, however we must all understand that returning to in-seat instruction will introduce a greater risk of exposure despite our best efforts.

The following key areas have been identified for implementation across the district in order to allow for the return to in-seat education this fall:

- Increased sanitation efforts
- Social distancing
- Staff & student screening measures
- Personal protective equipment
- Limited visitor access to buildings
- Procedures for COVID-19 infections

SIGNAGE

- Post reminders at entryways not to enter the school if experiencing signs of illness.
- Put up posters about hand washing and covering coughs and sneezes.

SCREENING

Parents and caregivers should be empowered to screen children for symptoms at home, prior to coming to school, and will be provided with a checklist that includes the following symptoms and exposure:

- fever or chills
- cough
- headache
- muscle aches
- new loss of taste or smell
- new runny nose or congestion
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- sore throat
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the last 14 days

Performing these checks in-person at school has the potential to create lines/groups of students. Screening your child at home will promote safe and timely access to the building upon arrival.

- Children will be visually inspected for signs and symptoms of illness as they enter the school and/or classroom. Temperature checks will be done every morning as the students enter the classroom.

- Staff members will also perform at-home screenings. Staff should self-screen at home, following the same protocol listed above for families screening students at home. If a staff member is ill, he or she should not come to work. In addition to at-home screening, staff will undergo temperature checks upon arriving to their point of entry.
- Visitors will be limited inside the building during the upcoming school year. All visitors will be asked to wear a mask when in the building during the school day and will be screened upon entering. Meetings such as IEP's may be conducted electronically if requested.
 - Physical distancing measures will be enforced.
 - A record of visitors will be kept, as normal, but will now include areas of the school visited.

PROCEDURE FOR STAFF/STUDENTS DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

For staff/students who are diagnosed with COVID-19, either by a laboratory test or based on their symptoms, return to school is permissible when the student is at least 10 days from symptom onset, has had 24 hours with no fever without fever reducing medication, and have improved symptoms. Return to school for

children with an alternate diagnosis is at the discretion of their healthcare provider and/or the school nurse. Children with a known close contact with COVID-19 (or an adult with symptoms compatible with COVID-19) should stay home for 14 days from their last contact and until return to school is approved by the Randolph County Health department in accordance with the CDC guidance. See the CDC and the Randolph County or Howard County Health Department websites for more information.

TRANSPORTATION

- Bus routes will be configured to ensure equality in numbers; however, it is not guaranteed that social distancing will be maintained.
- Students will be required to wear a mask. If a student forgets his mask, a mask will be provided to them.
- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected between each bus route using an EPA registered disinfectant.
- When students are loading the bus, they will fill the seats from back to front to avoid students walking by one another. Family members will sit together when possible. All passengers will have assigned seats.
- Hand hygiene will be encouraged upon boarding the bus (hand sanitizer).
- Student bus drop off in the morning and bus loading in the afternoon will be performed in a manner promoting distancing.
- Windows will be open when safe and weather permits.
- Bus drivers and staff onboard will be provided with personal protective equipment, as long as these do not impair driving.

Higbee R-VIII asks families to transport their students to and from school, when possible, to reduce the number of students riding buses in the upcoming school year.

SCHOOL ARRIVAL

- The school will have two points of entry, the main by the principal's office door and the south doors for bus riders only.
- Visitors will be limited during the upcoming school year. Parents may not walk their children into the school building.
- When students arrive at school, they will go directly to their first hour classroom for high school and middle school or to their elementary classroom.
- Students and staff are highly encouraged to wear masks in the school building and are required in the hallways.

LUNCH / BREAKFAST

- Breakfast will be served in the classroom for 1st - 5th grades; PreK & Kindergarten will be in the cafeteria with social distancing and trays placed on the tables for them; 6th -12th grades will pick up breakfast on their way to their 1st hour. All students will go directly to their 1st hour class. Masks must be worn in hallways and in the cafeteria.
- PreK-2nd grades will eat lunch in the cafeteria with social distancing. 3rd - 5th will eat lunch in their classrooms.
- High school will have 2 lunch shifts to allow for social distancing.
- 6th & 7th graders will have the last lunch shift.

DAILY SCHEDULES / ROUTINES

- High touch areas will be disinfected periodically throughout the school day.
- An appropriate schedule will be created for students and staff to wash hands during the day.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in all classrooms.
- Restrooms and other high-touch surface areas will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout the day using an EPA registered disinfectant.
- Students and staff are asked to bring a water bottle. Bottle fill stations will be available.

SPECIALS CLASSES

- Students will bring their individual art supplies to art class (no shared supplies).
- It may be necessary for larger classes to have specials in their classroom.
- PE equipment will be disinfected after each class.
- Music classes will be controlled. The risk of transmission during music and band classes increases in older grades. When considering music classes, we will ensure that students remain in cohorts and are appropriately physically distanced. Classes may be held outdoors, weather permitting.
- Students will wash their hands / use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting each class.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Should school be forced to close, distance learning will be implemented. Students will utilize their assigned Chromebooks and will follow the distance learning schedule and guidelines set forth by Higbee R-VIII school.

- Grades K-5 will utilize Class DoJo and/or Google Classroom for communication.
- Grades 6-12 will utilize Google Classroom
- For those without internet access will work with their teacher in a mutually acceptable location and time at least two times per week.

IMPORTANT: Distance and Virtual learning activities will be MANDATORY. Grades will be given for student work.

DISINFECTANT/JANITORIAL PLAN

- EPA registered cleaning sanitizers effective for use against SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, will be utilized multiple times daily in bathrooms and high-touch surface areas.
- In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case inside the building, the affected area will be deep cleaned and proper PPE will be provided and utilized by maintenance personnel.
- Maintenance and janitorial staff utilize our Monday not in session to deep clean the building regardless of a confirmed case or not.

2020 - 2021

Health Procedures

SENDING STUDENTS HOME FROM SCHOOL

For general illness and/or fever of 100.0 or higher:

- Students will be allowed in the nurse's office one at a time.
- The nurse will ask students to wear a mask.
- The school nurse will wear a mask when seeing students inside her office.

When a student is ill, it may be necessary to send a student or students home from school. If a student has a temperature of 100.0 or higher, he or she will be sent home for the rest of the day. This in and of itself does not mean the student has COVID-19.

The student with a temperature will not be allowed to return to school until he or she has been fever free, without fever medication, for a minimum of 24 hours.

The student should also not have evidence of any symptoms of illness prior to return. In order to not fall behind, students may utilize virtual learning until they are released to return to school.

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER EXCLUSION

Once a student or employee is excluded from school for COVID-19, they may return if they satisfy the recommendations of the CDC and the Randolph County or Howard County Health Department.

SIBLINGS OR OTHER STUDENTS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

If a student is excluded from school due to a positive COVID-19 test, his or her siblings or other students living in the same household will also be excluded from school until released by the Randolph County or Howard County Health Department.

SELF-QUARANTINE

If a student or employee has recently had contact with a person with suspected COVID-19 or has recently traveled from somewhere considered to be a “hot spot” by the CDC, Higbee R-VIII may exclude the student or employee from the school building and recommend that they self-quarantine for 14 calendar days.

DISTRICT RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL OR SELF-QUARANTINE

As soon as the district becomes aware of a student or employee that may have COVID-19 or that has been excluded from school or recommended to self-quarantine, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers and workspaces of the person are thoroughly disinfected.

If the school is not open when notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours or as long as possible prior to disinfecting and instead will block off the area so that others do not have contact. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was in a school building, the District will contact the Randolph County or Howard County Health Department immediately.

The District will contact parents/students and employees and notify them that a person who tested positive for COVID-19 was in the building and encourage cooperation with the District and Health Department to trace contacts with the individual.

The individual will not be identified in communications to the school community at large, but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the Health Department.

In the event of a school closure, all school activities will be cancelled or rescheduled.

Parents, students, and employees will be encouraged to stay home until more information is provided by the District and the Randolph County Health Department.

Please know that this document is as current as it can be. Information and guidelines are changing often and we may need to update as needed.

Our goal is to return to school as safely as possible for our students, staff, and community.