



**South Panola School District**

**2020-21**

**Return-to-School Plan**



South Panola School District is committed to offering students an exceptional education experience, while considering the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff for the upcoming school year. SPSD has put together this guide to help students and parents understand protocols in place for the 2020-21 school year due to COVID-19.



The South Panola School District will open schools on Aug. 3, 2020 for teachers and Aug. 6, 2020 for students, with a traditional schedule. We understand the traditional model may not be suitable for every family situation. Distance learning will be available for students whose parents determine their child cannot resume face-to-face instruction.

Parents **MUST** confirm their child's learning option by July 24. Parents will be called July 20-21 by the school in which their child(ren) attends to choose an option. For parents who choose distance learning for their child, instructions will be provided by the school on completing a distance-learning agreement.

**ALL** students will be issued a Chromebook and a backpack for use at both home and school. Once a learning option is chosen, regardless of traditional or distance learning, instructions will be given to parents regarding the distribution of the Chromebook and backpack.

**Parents must complete registration of their child(ren) before any device is issued to a student.**

Due to the fluidity surrounding COVID-19, everyone must be prepared for intermittent closures. Parents must have plans that can be activated immediately if there is a school closure or if their children are not able to attend school because of a quarantine situation. Parents are urged to be prepared to change plans within 24 hours if needed, and it is critical that parents have updated email addresses and phone numbers on file with their child's school.

Please keep in mind, due to the ever changing nature of the Coronavirus pandemic, information in this plan is subject to change based on communication from federal, state, and local officials.



## Health and Safety Standards

**Health Awareness and Education:** Students and staff will receive education on social distancing, use of face coverings, cleaning, and disinfection.

**Screening Protocols:** Daily temperature checks will be required for all students and staff. Students and staff should not come to school if they have a fever (defined as a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above) or have displayed other symptoms of COVID-19. If a student or staff member is found to have a fever while at school they will be referred to the school nurse for evaluation.



**Face Coverings:** While in the classroom, face coverings are not required for students, but strongly encouraged. Coverings must be worn

by all students when outside of the classroom, such as entering and exiting the building, changing classes, and in any hallways or common areas. Face coverings will not be required during recess or while taking part in physical education classes. If parents/guardians choose to utilize transportation provided by the South Panola School District, the student will be required to wear a face covering while on the school bus. SPSD intends to provide two washable face masks and one face shield to each student and employee. Parents may have to provide replacements if those coverings are lost. **ALL FACE COVERINGS MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SPSD DRESS CODE POLICY.**

All employees will be required to wear a face covering in the presence of students or other employees.

**Social Distancing:** Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. However, students may not be able to maintain social distancing in numerous classroom settings or while utilizing district school buses.

**Larger Gatherings and Common Spaces:** Large assemblies, gatherings, and field trips will be suspended during school hours.

**Restricted Visitors:** Visitors will not be able to enter school buildings except as deemed necessary by school principals. Parents/guardians will be allowed to check their child(ren) in/out of school, but a face covering must be worn in the office while doing so.



**Sports and Extracurricular Activities:** The South Panola School District will follow the guidance and activities calendar of the Mississippi High School Activities Association (MHSAA) regarding school athletic and activity programs.

**Decision-Making Process:** The district will continue to partner with local public health and government officials to garner accurate data for our decision-making processes.

**Signage on School Campuses:** Each campus will utilize signage as reminders for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, adequate hand washing techniques, observing social distancing, and adequate face coverings.



breakfast at school must report directly to their homeroom classroom.

- Parents will not be allowed to walk students into the building. School staff members will be available to assist students in the building.

### **General Safety Throughout the Day**

- Recess for students in grades Pre-k through fifth will be conducted in a designated location by class. There will be no interaction with students outside of the static classroom at recess.

- Enhanced cleaning will include replacing general-purpose cleaners with EPA-registered disinfectants for nightly cleaning.

- The district will increase the frequency of cleaning classrooms, restrooms, conference rooms, break rooms, offices, cafeterias, and buses.

- Buses will be wiped down with a sanitizing solution between routes.

## **Daily Procedures**

### **Arriving at School**

- Students will not be permitted to congregate outside or in common areas within the building.

- Upon arrival at school, students will unload the bus or vehicle while remaining masked, and enter the school through entry points designated by the building principal.

- Upon entering the school building, students who eat breakfast at school may obtain their meals from the cafeteria and take it to their homeroom class. Students who do not eat



- Hand sanitizer and sanitizer wipes will be available in each classroom.
- All meals will be eaten inside the classroom.
- Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles from home. Touchless water fountains have been installed to allow for water to be obtained from the fountains. Face coverings must be worn by all students when outside of the classroom. While in the classroom, coverings are not required to be worn but strongly encouraged. **ALL FACE COVERINGS MUST BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE SPSD DRESS CODE POLICY**

### **When Someone Shows Symptoms**

- Immediately separate staff and students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at school.
- Identify a room/space to isolate anyone who displays symptoms of COVID-19.

- Contact the parent/guardian or someone on the emergency contact list to retrieve the child from campus.
- Immediately transfer the student to temporary distance learning.

### **COVID-19 Diagnoses**

- SPSD and/or the department of health will inform students/employees who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to quarantine for 14 days, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop. “Close contact,” as defined by the Mississippi State Department of Health, is being in contact of less than 6 feet for 15 consecutive minutes or more and not wearing a face covering.
- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, parents should notify the school and keep the student in isolation at home for a full 14 days.
- If a student meets the definition of close contact with a COVID-19 case, the parents should contact the student’s school.

### **Returning to School**

- If students or employees are sent home from school:
  - Due to fever: The student or employee must be fever free for 72 hours without medicine in order to return to school.
  - Due to vomiting, diarrhea, persistent dry cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell: must go 3 days with no fever or symptoms to return to school. The three-day period begins the next morning.



- If a student tests positive for COVID-19, after the duration of the 14-day quarantine period, the student may return to school.

- If a student meets the definition of close contact with a COVID-19 case, they must self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the infected individual before returning to school.

### **Health and Safety Considerations**

- The district will not conduct COVID-19 testing. This is the responsibility of parents/guardians.

- If there is a significant COVID-19 spread, any group of students could be moved to temporary distance learning for a period of time. This move could apply to individual classes, individual schools, multiple schools, or the entire school district.

## **Instructional Plan**

While face-to-face interaction is a more effective means of instruction, a distance learning option is available for parents. However, distance learning may not serve as an equitable alternative in all circumstances to the traditional classroom setting.

Parents **MUST** confirm their child's learning option by July 24. Parents will be called July 20-21 by the school in which their child(ren) attends to choose an option.



**Full-Time Distance Learning:** Parents will be able to choose full-time virtual instruction during the 2020-21 school year if they do not feel safe sending their child to school. Also, any student required to stay home because of illness will be able to transition to a full-time virtual schedule while at home and transition back to a traditional schedule once cleared to return to school.

**Description of Distance Learning:** Teachers will give live and recorded lectures via Google Classroom. Students will be assessed through observations using video conferencing and discussion boards as well as assignment submissions and assessments. Students may be required to schedule a time to take major tests on the campus of his or her respective school. State assessments and some district assessments will be proctored by a South Panola School District employee in a classroom set aside for assessment of online students.

Linked here is a detailed description of what distance learning will look like for each school.



**Training:** Tutorials for online learning and the South Panola School District learning management system (Google Classroom) are provided by clicking on the following links: students, teachers, and parents. In addition, all SPSD certified staff members will complete the Google Level 1 for Education modules (13 in total) to better utilize and offer instruction through Google Classroom.

**Grading:** Grading for students in the traditional classroom setting and distance learning environment will follow the same SPSD grading policies as listed in the school’s student handbook.

**Attendance:** The Mississippi Department of Education is responsible for establishing general attendance requirements that are to be followed by Mississippi school districts. These guidelines are presently being revised due to the current circumstances. The South Panola School District will comply with these requirements when the guidelines are established.

## Items to Keep in Mind

Continuing to provide safe and effective education to the students is the top priority for the district. For those who choose to take part in distance learning, please know, there will be certain cases where the distance learning option may not be as equitable as traditional face-to-face instruction.

While in the classroom, face coverings are not required for students, but strongly encouraged. Coverings must be worn by all students when outside of the classroom, such as entering and exiting the building, changing classes, and in any hallways or common areas. Face coverings will not be required during recess or while taking part in physical education classes. If parents/guardians choose to utilize transportation provided by SPSD, the student will be required to wear a face covering while on the school bus. All employees will be required to wear a face covering in the presence of students or other employees.

Social distancing will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. However, students may not be able to maintain social distancing in numerous classroom settings or while utilizing district school buses. Strategies will be implemented by school officials based on the feasibility of the space at each school and in each classroom.

With that in mind, the district developed this plan in an effort to conduct school in the safest way possible. Plans will continue to adapt and change as new information and guidance arises to best suit the needs of our students and staff.

## Communication Methods



Public information will be provided to families and community partners using multiple methods and languages (email, mobile app, district and school websites, and social media pages).