Roadmap to
Reopening Schools
2020-2021 School Year
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Disclaimer

July 14, 2020

This is a working document that will be updated and revised as new information becomes available or as circumstances deem necessary.

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The Winston County School System has developed a school reopening plan with tremendous care and caution, with a focus on flexibility. Our intent is to reopen schools in a traditional fashion. Our plan is contingent on the pandemic and compliance with any executive or statewide orders. The following plan outlines measures Winston County Schools will take in order to continue providing a quality education while putting safety first for students, faculty, and staff.
Winston County Students, Families, Staff, and Friends:

The changes in our lives due to the COVID-19 Pandemic are many. Unfortunately, the impact of the virus continues to change the most fundamental aspects of how we live, including how we hold school. When students return to campus for in-person instruction, learning will look much different than previous years because of new health and safety measures. The Winston County Roadmap to Reopening Schools has attempted to take into account every aspect of safe reopening. I want to reiterate the pride I have for our communities and its response to the ongoing pandemic. The events that began to unfold in March have created enormous challenges and the Winston County School System is here to help support our families, staff, and community during this difficult time.

Sincerely,

Greg Pendley, Winston County Schools Superintendent
**Winston County Schools 2020-2021 Calendar**

First day of school for students: August 12, 2020

**2020-2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR**

**FALL SEMESTER**

**AUGUST**
Aug. 3...............................Teacher Institute Day
Aug. 4-7, 10-11........................In-Service Day
Aug. 12..............First Day for Students

**SEPTEMBER**
Sept. 7.................................No School-Labor Day

**OCTOBER**
Oct. 12..............................No School-Columbus Day
Oct. 13..............In-Service-Parent/Teacher Conf. (12:00-7:00)

**NOVEMBER**
Nov. 11.........................Veterans Day Programs
Nov. 23-27..............No School-Thanksgiving Holidays

**DECEMBER**
Dec. 17.......................Semester Exams (1/2 day for students)
Dec. 18..............Semester Exams (1/2 day for students)
Dec. 21-Jan. 4..............No School-Christmas Holidays

**SPRING SEMESTER**

**JANUARY**
Jan. 4.........................In-Service Day/Flex Day
Jan. 5..............Students Return to School
Jan. 18..............No School-King/Lee Day

**FEBRUARY**
Feb. 15..............................No School - In-Service Day

**MARCH**
Mar. 22-26.............................No School-Spring Break

**APRIL**
Apr. 19.........................No School - In-Service Day/Flex Day

**MAY**
May 20..................Semester Exam (1/2 day for students)
May 21..............Semester Exam (1/2 day for students)
May 24..............No School / Last Day for Teachers (9-mo.)

- School Holidays
- In-Service Days
- ½ Days

**GRADING PERIODS**
1st Grading Period (08/12-10/09) = 42 Days
2nd Grading Period (10/14-12/18) = 43 Days
3rd Grading Period (01/05-03/12) = 47 Days
4th Grading Period (03/15-05/20) = 44 Days
1st Semester = 85 Days – 2nd Semester = 91 Days

**PROGRESS REPORT & REPORT CARD DATES**
1st Nine Weeks – 09/10, Report Card 10/15
2nd Nine Weeks – 11/05, Report Card 01/07
3rd Nine Weeks – 02/04, Report Card 03/11
4th Nine Weeks – 4/15, Report Card 05/21
Along with scheduled holidays and breaks, 12-month employees will receive May 31, 2021 (Memorial Day), July 5–7, 2021 and 2 additional vacation days.
Winston County Schools’ existing procedures have been revised to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**Health and Safety Practices**

Social distancing and the use of personal protective equipment can help safeguard learning environments and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

All students, faculty, and staff will be required to wear a face mask as much as feasible for the circumstances. Masks must be worn while on buses and while in transition from the classroom to other areas of the school. Please provide a mask for your student on a daily basis. It is recommended that you have multiple cloth masks at home for each student so they can be properly laundered between uses.

**Buildings and Common Areas**

- Hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom and in strategic common spaces. Soap and paper towels will be stocked at sinks and hand washing or sanitizing will be encouraged often.
- School spaces and high touch areas will be cleaned throughout the day.
- Faculty and staff will teach and reinforce good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- COVID-19 prevention signage will be posted at all entrances and throughout the buildings.

**Entryways/Hallways**

- Traffic patterns through the hallways may be altered to reduce student interaction.
- High traffic entry and exits will be cleaned frequently throughout the school day.

**Classrooms**

- Student interaction may be limited in the classroom depending on guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama State Department of Education.
- Sharing of personal items among students will be discouraged and limited.
- The use of communal classroom items may be limited to small groups.
- Some classes, such as physical education may be altered or limited to provide greater protection for students.
- Student ability to check-out library/media resources may be limited or restricted.
**Restrooms**
- The number of students allowed into restrooms may be limited to reduce student interaction.

**Cafeteria**
- The number of students in the cafeteria may be limited.
- Masks will be worn in line in the lunchroom unless determined unnecessary by administration through guidance from the Alabama Department of Public Health and the Alabama State Department of Education.

**School Office**
Winston County Schools desire to engage parents and stakeholders in new and innovative ways as in-person visits to the school will be reserved only for emergencies.
- All visitors will be required to wear a mask upon entering the building.
- Parents may not drop off food for their child in the school office.
Health and Safety-Screening and Wellness

The physical health and well-being of every person associated with Winston County Schools is our primary focus as we reopen and maintain a safe school environment.

**Routine Health Screening:**
Parents should screen their students each morning for fever and/or COVID-19 symptoms. Any student with a fever **over 99.4 degrees** or **two COVID-19 symptoms** should not go to school. Students displaying these symptoms should be treated as presumed infected until diagnosed otherwise.

A visual screening of students will be conducted upon arrival at school, and any student exhibiting signs or symptoms of COVID-19 will be sent to the school nurse for evaluation and parent contact. Students with a fever over 99.4 degrees or two COVID-19 symptoms will be required to leave campus until cleared to return by a physician or such time that they have recovered according to CDC recommendations for recovery. Students will remain in a quarantined area until a parent arrives.

Parents will not be allowed in buildings when picking up students **who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms**. Students will be escorted to the parent’s vehicle by a school designee.

If a student or employee is diagnosed with COVID-19, a negative test must be provided at the end of a fourteen day quarantine in order to return to school.

Students who are not allowed to return to school will be able to participate in remote learning opportunities.

**Parents are responsible for notifying the school principal if your child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you suspect that your child has COVID-19.**
Learning Environment

Traditional and virtual instruction plans have been developed with the health and safety concerns of all students in mind. Students/Parents must select an instructional plan by the deadline of Friday, July 24, 2020. If no instructional plan has been chosen by this deadline, the student will automatically be enrolled in traditional instruction.

A remote instruction plan has been developed, and will be utilized in the event a student is absent from school due to being diagnosed with or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or in the event a long-term school closure is necessary due to COVID-19.

**Traditional Instruction:**
Traditional instruction involves in-person, teacher-lead instruction taking place in a classroom setting, while adhering to enhanced procedures to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While the maximum square footage in each classroom will be utilized, students participating in traditional instruction may not be able to maintain a social distance of 6 feet throughout the school day at all times.

**Virtual Instruction:**
Virtual instruction provides students an alternative to traditional instruction, and requires additional organizational skills and more parental involvement than with a traditional classroom format. Virtual school classes do not provide live instruction. A variety of software platforms will be used to provide student instruction. Virtual instruction is available to students in grades K-12. We encourage parents of students in grades K-3 to consider the new requirements of the [Alabama Literacy Act](https://www.leg.state.al.us/) when choosing the appropriate instructional plan for your student. All Winston County students will follow these new state guidelines.

Students who choose the virtual instruction plan will be provided a 7-day trial period. At the conclusion of the trial period, students will not be able to transition from virtual school to traditional school, and must remain there until the end of the semester.

Students enrolled in virtual school will remain students on record at their existing school.
Remote Instruction:
Remote instruction will only be available for students with prolonged illness, who are absent from school for an extended period of time, or in the event a long-term school closure is necessary due to COVID-19. Remote instruction involves nontraditional instruction directed by your child’s teacher and includes content based on Alabama’s critical standards. Learning management systems such as Google Classroom and Schoology will be used to disseminate and submit assignments, as well as share feedback on learning experiences in the remote learning context.

Students enrolled in traditional instruction will also utilize aspects of the remote learning platform, so they may become accustomed to remote learning should the need arise.
Operations and Facilities

Visitors
- Visitors to buildings during normal operating hours will be limited. Visitors will only be allowed when absolutely necessary. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers, administrators, or support personnel using email or phone calls in order to limit unnecessary visits.
- In order to minimize exposure, personal deliveries to students will be limited to medical needs and emergencies.
- Updated check-in/check-out procedures will be communicated by each individual school with back-to-school information.
- All visitors to the school must wear a mask or face covering upon entering the building.

Custodial Services
- Enhanced daily and weekly cleaning protocols will be implemented.
- High use areas will be cleaned frequently throughout the day.
- Classroom sanitation will be a joint effort by the school custodial staff, classroom teachers, and other school personnel

School Nutrition
- Grab-N-Go or pre-plated meals will be available.
- A contactless payment system called PayPAMS is available for student meals. Parents are strongly encouraged to utilize this system.
- Students in lower grades may eat in the lunchroom at strategically scheduled times while following safety guidelines. Other grades may eat meals in the classroom or in other areas designated by the principal.
- Cafeteria staff will maintain compliance with the ALSDE and ADPH when preparing and serving food.
- Water fountains will be shut off, however an alternative water source will be provided. Students may bring adequate amounts of bottled water to school each day.

Attendance and Truancy
- Students who attend traditional school will be expected to attend on a regular basis in accordance with the board-approved attendance policy.
- Attendance for remote and virtual students will be tracked by participation in the assigned virtual or remote learning activities.
- Students who are absent should submit a note for their absence in the school office upon return to school.
- In the case of a Covid-19 related absence, the student/parent is strongly encouraged to notify the school administrator and submit a physician’s note in a timely manner to the school.
**Athletics/Extracurricular Activities**
Guidance from the ALSDE and the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) will be used to make decisions concerning athletic and other extracurricular activities.

**School Events**
- Traditional registration and Meet the Teacher will not occur. Alternative plans for student registration, schedule pickup, and locker sales will be released by each individual school.
- Traditional field trips, public assemblies, pep rallies, etc. are not allowed until such time as the state relaxes guidelines for social distancing and travel is safe for students and staff.
- Schools will take advantage of numerous virtual field trips in order to enrich and supplement curriculum.

**School Nursing Services**
- School nurses will systematically review and update all current student health plans (Individual Healthcare Plans/IHP’s) and make accommodations and adjustments as necessary.
- Any changes to a student’s health status should be reported to the nurse. All student health information will remain confidential.

**Food service areas**
- Procedures for meal service will ensure as much distancing as is feasible.
- Masks may be worn in food service lines where social distancing is not feasible.
- Principals and Child Nutrition staff will work together to develop meal schedules.
- Children in lower grades may eat in the lunchroom while adhering to CDC and ADPH social distancing recommendations while children in upper grades may pick up meals or have meals delivered to their classroom.
- Child Nutrition staff will follow all ADPH guidelines for sanitation and personal wellness.
Technology

All kindergarten through twelfth grade students of Winston County Schools will have access to a district-owned electronic device.

Winston County Schools will consider issuing these devices to students during the initial phases of school reopening. If another long-term school closure occurs, Winston County Schools will be prepared to move traditional classroom instruction to remote instruction via Google Classroom or Schoology.

For students who may require remote instruction for an extended period of time, we will designate a time to distribute devices at the local school. Virtual school students are responsible for their own device and reliable Internet connectivity.

**Internet Access:**
Wireless Internet access is available at public libraries and at all Winston County Schools. Winston County Schools is exploring additional opportunities to increase Internet access within the county, including the possibility of utilizing school buses as mobile wireless hotspots.

**Technical Support:**
If a virtual student needs technical support, please contact our IT Department. To submit a Technical Support request, please click [here](#) or visit winstonk12.org - Parents - Student/Parent Technical Support Request. While our technology team will review and address tickets throughout the day, responses to Virtual Students typically will be handled between 1:00 and 2:00 each day. We will dedicate specific times each day to address tickets for remote students. Technical support will not be available for devices not issued by Winston County Schools.
Winston County Schools is dedicated to meeting the individualized service and accessibility needs of our students with exceptionalities.

In our effort to meet the needs of students with disabilities recognized under IDEA or Section 504, provisions for traditional, virtual, and remote learning may be offered for all services documented in each student’s individualized plan, including goal instruction, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech therapy. All IEP services will be provided to the fullest extent possible.

IEP and 504 plan development and amendments will be addressed in IEP meetings via traditional meeting, virtual meeting, or phone conference. Formal evaluations necessary to identify or review a student’s eligibility for special education services will be traditional utilizing Winston County School’s social distancing and safety directives to the greatest extent possible.

Any policy regarding face coverings should be sensitive to the needs of students with medical issues that make the wearing of a mask inadvisable.

Parents/guardians should contact their child’s IEP case manager or the school 504 coordinator (school counselor) with any specific questions or concerns.
Transportation

- Students are required to wear a mask while entering, exiting, and while riding the school bus. We ask that parents/guardians provide their child with a mask. Buses will be equipped with masks for students who board the bus without a mask.
- Drivers will sanitize buses at the completion of morning, midday, and afternoon routes.
- Buses will be equipped with hand sanitizer for student use.
- Bus drivers are encouraged to wear a mask, however careful consideration will be given to driver visibility and safety of transportation when determining the use of a mask or other facial covering.
- Visible signage to communicate COVID-19 symptoms will be displayed on buses.
- Eating is prohibited on state school buses by federal and state law. Because of the pandemic, this rule will be strictly enforced.
- All students will have an assigned seat. Students within the same household will be given priority to sit together.
- Students will be required to face forward and not lean across the seats. If students do not adhere to this rule, they will not be allowed to continue riding the bus and parents will have to provide transportation.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will students be screened each day at school?**
   Yes. All school personnel will be trained to look for signs and symptoms of sickness. However, we will not be conducting temperature checks before boarding buses or entering the school building. We will rely heavily on parents/guardians to screen their children before they leave for school. It is critical for parents/guardians to help us with screening their children and adhere to our guidelines.

2. **Will masks be required for students at school?**
   Yes. However, masks will not be worn all day. Students will wear a mask where social distancing is not feasible or possible, such as on buses, in a lunchroom line, during class changes, and during transition from place to place on school campus. Winston County Schools will be sensitive to the needs of students with medical issues that make the wearing of a mask inadvisable. **Please provide a mask for your student on a daily basis.** Masks will be provided to students who do not have one of their own.

3. **Will masks be required for faculty and staff?**
   Yes. However, masks will not be worn all day. Faculty and staff will wear a mask where social distancing is not feasible or possible. Winston County Schools will be sensitive to the needs of staff with medical issues that make the wearing of a mask inadvisable.

4. **Will masks be required for students transported by bus to/from school?**
   Yes. Students will wear a mask at all times while on the bus. We ask that students have their own mask. Bus drivers will have masks for any child that boards without a mask. The use of masks or other facial coverings by bus drivers will follow the Alabama Health Order directed by Governor Kay Ivey. However, careful consideration will be given to driver visibility and safety of transportation when determining the use of a mask or other facial covering.

5. **What cleaning and sanitizing procedures will be in place to maintain a safe environment?**
   Winston County Schools’ existing procedures have been revised to ensure the safety of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
6. What responsibility do I have to notify the school if my child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or I suspect my child has COVID-19?
Parents are responsible for notifying the school principal if your child has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or if you suspect that your child has COVID-19.

7. Will visitors be allowed in the schools?
Only for emergencies and when absolutely necessary. Parents are encouraged to utilize email or phone calls to communicate with teachers, administrators, or support staff in order to limit any unnecessary visits inside their child’s school. Also, parents will not be allowed to walk students in the building on the first day of school or each day after that. Teachers and other support staff will be in place to help guide students to locate their classes and ease fears as the new school year begins. Additionally, parents/guardians, grandparents, or others will not be permitted to eat lunch with students. Winston County Schools will notify parents/guardians as guidelines may change.

8. Will social distancing be practiced?
Yes. Social distancing will be followed at school as much as is practical. This may require altered PE schedules and formats, as well as how classes transition on campus. Specific guidelines will be determined by each school according to their own specific needs.

9. Will field trips be allowed?
Traditional field trips will not be allowed. This subject will be revisited as new information becomes available throughout the school year however, our teachers will enrich academics with the vast array of virtual trips that are currently available.

10. How do I register my child for virtual instruction?
Please complete the Winston County Schools-Learning Intent Survey form no later than Friday, July 24, 2020. Someone will contact you at a later date regarding further instruction.

11. What do I do if my child has to receive remote instruction for an extended period of time due to illness or another long-term school closure and I don’t have Internet access?
Wireless Internet access is available at public libraries and at all Winston County Schools. Winston County Schools is exploring additional opportunities to increase Internet access within the county, including the possibility of utilizing school buses as mobile wireless hotspots.
12. How will classrooms maintain a six-foot distance between all students?  
Teachers will work to maximize the distance between desks as much as possible. Classrooms that utilize tables for student seating will evaluate their ability to properly distance students and identify potential solutions to ensure a safe learning environment.

13. Will I be notified if a classmate or teacher of my child has tested positive for COVID-19?  
In the event that a student or teacher tests positive for COVID-19, parents of students within that class will be notified to the greatest extent possible, without revealing any confidential student information.

14. Will students with IEPs be allowed to participate in virtual classes if the parent requests?  
Yes. While it is difficult to provide every specialized IEP service virtually, Winston County Schools will work together with parents to provide a free and appropriate public education to the greatest extent possible.

15. Will students enrolled in virtual school be able to receive meals from the lunchroom?  
Yes. There will be a scheduled time for virtual students to pick up meals at the school. The procedures and schedule will be announced at a later time.

16. Do I need to apply for free and reduced lunches?  
Yes, all students, traditional and virtual, need to apply for free and reduced meal eligibility. You may apply online for free and reduced meals via Winston County Free and Reduced Meal Application. The existing summer food service program will be discontinued July 31st.

17. Is this information subject to change?  
Yes. This is a working document that will be updated and revised as new information becomes available or as circumstances deem necessary.

18. Will I be required to choose a specific instructional plan for my student?  
Yes. All students must choose a specific instructional plan by completing the Winston County Schools-Learning Intent Survey form no later than Friday, July 24, 2020. Any student that does not submit their choice, will automatically be enrolled in a traditional instructional plan.
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