



WEAKLEY COUNTY SCHOOLS REOPENING 2020-21

Guidance on Operations, Safety and Health,
Academics, Transportation, Nutrition,
and Special Populations

Introduction

The goal of every school within the Weakley County Schools system is to provide a safe and nurturing school community during the active COVID-19 pandemic while demonstrating compliance with state, federal and other guidelines.

When schools closed in March, administrators and teachers began the process of regular contact with students. An initial informal survey revealed that ¼ of our student population had no to low access to the internet. To keep students engaged in learning, activities were offered online and in print (pre-K through 5th grade distributed weekly with meals). A second survey, this time of teachers, showed that while some standards were not addressed, due to the closure's timing prior to spring break and scheduled testing, the majority of the standards were. As a result, with the emotional health of students, family and teachers in mind, no mandatory curriculum or grading was employed. During the summer, the writers of the weekly materials for K-5 focused on the standards which were not covered during the shortened school year.

Upon learning of the inadequacies of the county's internet access and with a growing awareness that "school as normal" would not be possible in the 2020-21 school year, research began into options for providing computers, personal protection equipment, sufficient sanitizing resources, and more. Teams of administrators, teachers, School Board members, parents, students and, when applicable, medical personnel formed in June to research and develop guidance on operations, safety & health, academics, transportation, nutrition and special populations.

This document reflects the results of that work and aligns with the Tennessee State Board of Education's requirement to provide comprehensive and high-quality instruction regardless of COVID-19.

Due to the ever-changing circumstances and evolving research and guidance regarding COVID-19, the district will be prepared for two primary responses for schooling. The decision locally will be based on the guidance of local health officials and/or a national or state executive order. Schools will follow a traditional in person, in classroom approach with adjustments for social distancing until notice of a closure is announced. If a closure is required, after two days for adjustments to be made, remote learning will begin.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control, the group most vulnerable to educational losses when a remote process is employed are students living in poverty-level households. Weakley County's population includes a majority that would fall into this socio-economic demographic. As a result, every attempt will be made to provide for safe, traditional learning. Remote learning will allow for daily interactions between teacher and students and require weekly check-ins. For those students for whom attendance at school constitutes a health risk or for those whose parents determine a return to in-class learning is not advisable, Monitored Distance Education will be provided.

Operations/Safety and Health

The safety and health of our students has dictated various operational adjustments at each of our school facilities. Since some of our schools include kindergarten through 12th grade and others are focused on particular age groupings, each administrator has developed facility-specific operational practices. The following offers an overview of the guidance provided after safety and health-focused staff members reviewed resources from the American Academy of Pediatrics, National School Safety Center, the National Association of School Nurses, the National Association of School Psychologists, Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network, the Centers for Disease Control, the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Department of Health. The recommendations also reflect input received from the Weakley County Health Department and local medical personnel.

Definitions of CDC terms used throughout this document:

Social distancing, also called “physical distancing,” means keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social or physical distancing, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

A **close contact** is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 10 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Isolation keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.

Quarantine keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine for COVID-19 should last for a period of 14 days.

Face coverings are simple barriers to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. In schools, younger children, those with conditions that prohibit the use of a covering, and those engaged in high intensity activities may be exempt from wearing. The covering must include the nose and mouth and cannot include offensive words, graphic images, or symbols of gang affiliation.

START OF THE DAY (applicable for all Weakley County Schools)

Traffic Entry points into school buildings will be adjusted. As a result, drop-off traffic flow will be altered. Building administrators will announce changes.

Building Entry Multiple entrances will be used for student entry to accommodate temperature screening.

Hand sanitizer units will be positioned on either sides of entrances; *all* students, staff and visitors are required to use upon entry.

Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.

Initial Screening Staff will be scheduled to greet students at building entrances. Normal readings will allow students to proceed to class.

Breakfast	<p>Hand sanitizer used upon entry/exit.</p> <p>Schools will develop a rotation schedule for class combinations to alternate between cafeteria/gym/classroom according to facility/population needs.</p> <p>Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.</p>
Class Setting	<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics supports 3-6 feet distance if needed (particularly with younger students). The expectation is to maintain 6 feet between students whenever possible.</p> <p>Seating charts and/or lists of group assignments must be maintained to enable contact tracing.</p> <p>If the school is notified that a student or staff member has tested positive, building officials will assist with contact tracing that includes the previous 48 hours.</p> <p>Communal type centers and shared items will be removed for kindergarten through 5th grades. Additional cleaning will be used for pre-K activities.</p> <p>Elementary students’ routinely used items will be kept in labeled air-tight containers/zip-lock bags</p> <p>Individual/computer lab devices/surfaces wiped down as used.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer used upon entry/exit – “sanitation station” supplies (hand sanitizer, wipes, gloves) and thermometers will be provided.</p> <p>Staff will wear face coverings when working in close proximity to student(s). Teachers will be issued clear face shields.</p> <p>Portable desk or tabletop dividers will be provided (as available).</p>
Workrooms/ staff lounges	<p>Building administrators will determine and schedule the number of persons that may access teacher workrooms or staff lounges during the day.</p>
Class Changing	<p>Floor tape, floor markings, wall signage and/or stanchions will be used to introduce and instill the habit of one-way directional, socially distanced hallway travel.</p> <p>Schedules will be designed to result in limited hallway traffic at any one time (offset bell schedules, staggered class change times).</p> <p>Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.</p>
Locker Use	<p>Lockers, in general, will not be used. Arrangements will be made for special circumstances.</p>
Restroom/ Hydration	<p>Water fountains will be disabled. No-touch hydration stations will be available.</p> <p>Schools will determine and schedule restroom and hydration breaks to limit the number of students in one setting.</p> <p>Staff must monitor grouping and hygiene practices leaving restroom.</p>

Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.

Personal water bottles must be clearly labeled with student’s name.

Lunch

Hand sanitizer used upon entry/exit.

Schools will develop rotation schedule for class combinations to alternate between cafeteria/gym/classroom/outdoor settings according to facility/population needs.

Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.

**Recess/
Physical Activity**

Lower grades will use open spaces for play, assign student “play groups or pods.”

Middle and high school students will walk outdoors as possible avoiding congestion and large student grouping. Staff will monitor at all times.

Teacher developed groups/pods for use of equipment – indoor equipment wiped after use.

Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.

END OF THE DAY (applicable for all Weakley County Schools)

Traffic

Building administrators will announce changes.

Face coverings (available in the office and nurse’s office) are required when social distancing isn’t possible such as when riding a bus, entering the building in the morning, hallway transitions, breakfast/lunch, class changes, class restroom breaks.

Safety and Health – Special Considerations

Mental Health Supports

Building administrators will ensure full pandemic debriefing occurs with staff and students upon reopening/classes resuming and will routinely remind students and staff of existing resources. Available resources include:

- Local community mental health providers as facilitators for staff
- Teachable Moment lesson plan for teacher use with class, first thing, first day; additional guidance materials will be provided prior to classes resuming.
- EAP (Employee Assistance Program) available to staff insured through WCS.
- SAP (Student Assistance Program) available to all WCS students.
- School Social Workers will continue to assist schools in addressing student/staff social, emotional needs.
- Training will be provided to teachers in the use of a new Safe Schools Alert module: *Handle With Care*.
- Teachers trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) may create online account, review course and complete quiz to satisfy 2-hour annual suicide prevention requirement, other traditional sources of suicide prevention and child abuse prevention/identification training resources will be provided prior to classes resuming.
- Signage for Safe Schools Alert, Text-a Tip, National Suicide Prevention Hotline, Child Abuse Reporting Hotline will be provided for all schools to display throughout buildings.
- Support materials, information will be shared in multiple formats for distribution to parents/families, included in materials prepared for student engagement.

Daily Cleaning

Building Administration will regularly review expectations with assigned custodial personnel, staff and students.

Per the Weakley County Health Department, all students and staff using wipes to clean surfaces need to wear gloves.

Emergency Drills

Evacuation of building, locations outside, should include provisions for distancing; consider distancing for shelter-in-place procedures (tornado in particular) as much as possible.

Visitors/Vendors

Until further notice, visitors to campus will be limited.

ALL visitors/vendors must have temperature taken and complete entry log prior to proceeding to office/classroom/delivery area.

All visitors/vendors must wear a mask while in the building.

Parental Help

Before students leave for school, parents should take temperatures. If a fever exists, the child should stay home (see below for specific next steps).

Use bleach or sanitizer daily to wipe down backpacks, etc.

Remove all non-essential items in backpacks.

Daily Temperature Screening/Elevated Temperature/Possible Exposure

Each school will designate a separate, easily monitored triage room for students.

Staff will take and log their temperatures daily upon entering the building.

A no contact thermometer will be issued to each teacher prior to building reopening. Staff will use these when scheduled to take student temperatures at the start of the day, or as otherwise assigned, in addition to using in the classroom.

All students will have their temperature taken each day upon building entry. An elevated temperature will result in the nurse being contacted. The nurse will escort the student to the triage room; parents will be contacted for immediate pickup. Students will remain in the triage room until a parent/guardian or designated emergency contact arrives.

The Department of Children Services will be contacted if a family fails to comply in a timely manner. We understand that most fevers will not be COVID-related. Care will be taken to ensure that students do not feel isolated or stigmatized.

Elevated Temperature During the Day

Student:

1. Teacher will contact office, request nurse or designee to come to classroom.
2. Nurse or designee will respond to room with face mask for the student and escort student to triage room.
3. Nurse will document elevated temperature and initiate contact with parents.
4. Parents will arrange for immediate pick-up.

Staff:

1. Staff will check temperature; make arrangement for immediate class supervision; verify reading with nurse.
2. Upon reading being verified by nurse, arrangements for classroom supervision for the remainder of the day will be made.
3. Teacher will leave campus.

With either, the nurse will ask questions related to current known COVID-19 symptoms and exposure.

Note: If a student or staff member is seen by a physician upon leaving school, and **if a specific diagnosis is given** (sinus infection, strep throat, etc.) the individual may return to school after being fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

If student or staff become ill and **no specific diagnosis is provided**, staff and students are asked to be tested for COVID-19 and quarantine at home.

COVID -19 Exposure - INDIVIDUAL

SYMPTOMS	NO SYMPTOMS	CLOSE CONTACT
<p>If a student/staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has symptoms (Symptom-Based Strategy)</p>	<p>If a student/staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has no symptoms (Time-Based Strategy)</p>	<p>If a student or staff is known to have been in close contact with someone who has or has had COVID – 19 (household case, co-worker, etc.)</p>
<p>Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared and for at least 72 hours they have not had a fever and are feeling well. <p>For more information: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html</p>	<p>Persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test (assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test). If symptoms develop, then the symptom-based or time-based strategy should be used. 	<p>The student/staff must be quarantined for 14 days after the last contact with the affected individual (even if the student/staff tests negative).</p> <p>If the student/staff lives in the home with the affected individual, they must remain at home for 14 days after the affected individual has been without a fever and is feeling well. If the affected individual was asymptomatic, the student/staff must quarantine for 14 days after the date of the affected individual’s COVID test.</p> <p>The student/staff must have been symptom-free for the entirety of the 2 weeks.</p> <p>If symptoms develop, the student or staff member will follow the guidelines for infected persons.</p>
<p>According to the Weakley County Health Department, if someone tests positive for COVID-19, the quarantine period is 14 days from the onset of symptoms. The Health Department has the authority to enforce compliance.</p>		

COVID -19 Exposure – CLASSROOM/BUILDING EXPOSURE

When the school is notified of a positive case among the staff/student population, the school nurse and building administrator will assist with contact tracing within the school. Any student who fits the definition of having had close contact (less than six feet for more than 10 minutes) will be advised to not return for 14 days from the last exposure. Remote learning for those students will immediately be available.

Academics

Weakley County Schools is committed to providing the best opportunity for each student to learn and grow. Due to the impact of COVID-19, we are expanding and reworking learning opportunities so that students continue to learn regardless of where they are.

Due to the ever-changing circumstances and evolving research and guidance regarding COVID-19, the district will be prepared for two primary responses for schooling. The decision locally will be based on the guidance of local health officials and/or a national or state executive order. Schools will follow a traditional in person, in classroom approach with adjustments for social distancing until notice of a closure is announced. If a closure is required, after two days for adjustments to be made, remote learning will begin. For those students for whom attendance at school constitutes a health risk or for those whose parents determine a return to in-class learning is not advisable, Monitored Distance Education will be provided.

Outlined below is an overview of what teachers, students, and parents/guardians can expect regarding learning in Weakley County.

Traditional School Teachers teach and students learn in their traditional classroom setting with high quality instruction.	Remote Learning A school closure has occurred, and all students are at home. All teachers will be remote learning teachers, working out of the school facility.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teachers will work prior to the start of school to analyze available data on student academic achievement and readiness for the next grade. 2. Teachers will plan together to address learning gaps that may have occurred due to closure. 3. Once students return to school, students will participate in the typical beginning-of-school academic screeners in reading and math to determine a starting point for instruction. 4. Intervention and remediation and/or enrichment will occur during each school day for every student in grades K-8 and for high school students who need it. 5. Homework will not be required initially. The district will determine when homework can resume. However, reading and studying at home will continue to be encouraged. Make-up work for absences is still applicable. 6. While adhering to the guidelines in the school operations plan, teachers will work throughout the year to create the best possible learning environment for kids. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first two days of a school closure will be treated as snow days. This will give teachers an opportunity to organize their remote learning lessons for the coming days. 2. Teachers will report to their school facilities during the closure. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, they will have set office hours for Zoom/Google Classroom interaction with students. Timing will include early evening opportunities. Individual meetings may be scheduled for Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. 3. On day 3, teachers will begin checking attendance. Attendance will be checked using a phone call, text message via Remind, or Google Classroom. 4. On day 3, students will begin learning remotely. Students in grades PreK-5 will do so via their Take-Home Tool Kits. These tool kits will contain a weekly calendar and learning materials for all subjects. Students in grades 6-12 will learn remotely via Google Classroom. 5. Students will earn grades and be provided feedback on their work. 6. Contingencies are in place for students who do not have devices, do not have internet, or in the case of PreK-5, cannot get to the school once a week for a pick-up/drop-off of paper materials.

	7. A Help Desk will be available for technical difficulties from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 731-364-3580.
Teaching and learning in the traditional setting will look as close to “normal” as possible. However, teachers will incorporate more online tools, especially in grades 6-12, so both the teachers and students will be more prepared in the event of a closure. During the fall, the district will provide laptops for every student in grades 6-12 to aid in this effort.	Students will be familiar with their Toolkits or Google Classroom. These tools will be implemented in regular class at the beginning of the school year, so that if a closure occurs, students will already know how all this works. Expectations for the teacher, student if practical, and parent/guardian for teaching and learning in a remote learning environment will be addressed and signed early in the year as an “in case of closure” document.

Monitored Distance Education

Monitored Distance Education is online curriculum by grade and subject which will be monitored by a teacher for attendance and grading. The instruction is delivered in pre-packaged video segments and through written guidance for activities. For those without access to the internet, a device loaded with the program will be provided. Choosing the option of MDE is a semester-long commitment. Students opting for MDE at the beginning of the year are committing to doing so for the entire semester and may return to traditional school after winter break if desired.

The parent/guardian must inform the school principal of the desire to participate in Monitored Distance Education and receive an application. Parents/Guardians with students in multiple schools would need to contact each school’s principal.

The MDE coordinator will assign students to teachers who have volunteered to monitor remotely in addition to their regular duties. Teachers will be trained on the program if necessary. The parent/guardian and student will meet (virtually or in-person) with the MDE teacher to learn about the program.

The teacher, student if practical, and parent/guardian, will sign an agreement outlining the expectations of the teacher, student, and parent/guardian in the MDE environment.

Generally, students will be required to log in to the system each day to verify attendance and complete work. Teachers will check in and meet with students (and a parent/guardian if necessary) with a virtual face-to-face via meeting at least once per week.

Students will earn grades and be provided feedback on work.

Transportation

Bus drivers will be provided a list of the students that will be riding their bus. Seating charts will be created and strictly followed.

Face coverings will be available and are required during the duration of the route, during initial temperature screening and while walking in the hallways.

Social distancing will be followed when possible and when not in conflict with TN state law. Due to the high volume of bus riders and the limited number of buses and drivers, not all social distancing guidelines can be strictly followed on Weakley County buses. Parents are encouraged to transport children when possible.

In an effort to ensure shorter time on buses, students will be limited to one of two previously identified drop off locations.

For bus drivers to follow social distancing guidelines safely, no children will sit on the first row of the bus and when children enter and exit, the driver will use a face covering. No covering will be used during driving so as to ensure those with glasses do not have their vision obscured.

Parents will be encouraged to take the temperatures of children prior to boarding the bus.

In the mornings students will load from the back to front of the bus and in the afternoon the first off will load from front to back.

Families will sit together.

Sanitizer will be provided on each bus.

Nutrition

The Weakley County Nutrition Staff distributed nearly 400,000 meals since schools closed in March. During that time, they observed guidelines dictated by the CDC and local health authorities regarding face coverings, gloves, sanitizing, etc. They will continue such safety precautions in the 2020-21 school year.

Since some of our schools include kindergarten through 12th grade and others are focused on particular age groupings, each administrator has worked with the Nutrition Staff to develop facility-specific meal distribution plans. The following represent processes that will be common to all campuses.

If schools are closed, meals will continue to be provided on a similar drive-by, multiple location pick up process as was used during the summer.

If students opt for Modified Distance Education and notify their school of the desire to receive meals, those meals will be available for daily pick-up at the school.

Breakfast at All Facilities

All meals delivered to classrooms will be entered into the Point of Sales by teacher. Teacher will distribute breakfast items only to students who want the meal. Students who get breakfast can save non-perishable items for snack or teacher can give to students who want seconds (if students have not handled items). Breakfasts that are unaccounted for by a patron (student or teacher) must be returned to the cafeteria.

Breakfasts being served from a cart or cafeteria will be pre-bagged to eliminate students handling items. Students will still have a milk flavor choice.

Students being served in the cafeteria or on a cart will need to utilize badges for meal counting.

Lunch at All Facilities

Lunch counts will be taken during 1st period on the Point of Sales platform. To minimize the amount of money collected during meal services, all lunch money will be received in 1st period and sent to cafeteria in an envelope with student's name, 1st period class, and amount.

All meals delivered to classrooms will be entered into the Point of Sales by teacher. Teacher will distribute pre-boxed meals to students based on entree choice.

Lunches being served in the cafeteria will be pre-boxed to eliminate students handling items and to expedite the flow. Students will have a milk choice. Students/schools will be responsible for providing water.

Students being served in the cafeteria will need to utilize badges for meal counting unless prior arrangements have been made with the manager.

As time progresses, Nutrition Staff will seek to incorporate additional meal choices and a la carte options.

Special Populations

Special Populations focused on re-opening strategies for continuing educational opportunities and services regarding our special populations, including special education and English learners. The social and mental health of students is a primary focus of this group. As a result, this document is fluid and responses will be adjusted as practices are put in place. The special education and English language learner staffs have been made aware of all COVID-19 recommendations and will continue to advise regarding necessary adaptations.

The following is their work-to-date.

Operations/Safety and Health

It is extremely important for special populations students to be given support in the areas of social distancing, personal space, hygiene, etc. It is suggested that visual signage be developed to support learning in these areas. In addition, visual schedules should be incorporated into student schedules, as needed. The incorporation of social stories to explain what a typical day will involve is appropriate for students with disabilities, English language learners, and young children. In addition, parents should be encouraged to have discussions about the upcoming school year with their children. This would involve any changes to the school day.

Outside providers for related services, such as physical therapy and speech/language, should have continued access into buildings to provide services. Outside counseling services, such as Carey Counseling, should continue to have access, if available.

To minimize traffic in school hallways, it is recommended that schools establish areas for parent meetings, evaluation, and therapy close to the school entrance. In addition, parent meetings could be offered virtually.

Transportation

Bus monitors will continue to be placed on all SPED buses. Mid-routes for SPED buses will continue.

Academics

IEP teams will determine appropriate services for students with disabilities to have access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Continued differentiation of instruction by general education teachers is encouraged to promote independence in all students.

In light of school closure due to COVID-19, intervention and/or remediation is a priority for all students. Online intervention platforms should be explored. This would allow students to seamlessly change to online intervention should it become necessary. Staff development may be necessary to assist teachers in the use of virtual instruction.

Advocacy

As advocates for special populations, special consideration of changes to the attendance policy, especially truancy, should be considered for students whose health may impede attendance during this time.

Communication with parents is essential and will be included regularly in the planned Weakley County Schools email newsletter.