

KCS CONNECT

Fall 2020

Employees / Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ sheet will be updated as new information becomes available.

Will teachers be able to work from home as part of the Virtual Learning Program?

All educators, whether teaching in person or through the Virtual Learning Program, will be expected to work from the school building.

Will teachers be responsible for taking student temperatures?

Teachers may be asked to take student temperatures. KCS has provided each school one thermometer for every 40 students. In order to get students into classrooms most efficiently, a variety of staff members may be asked to facilitate temperature screens.

Will teacher evaluations be adjusted to account for the challenges of COVID-19?

Evaluations will proceed as normal unless otherwise directed by the State Board of Education. Observation pacing will be set by the Level of Effectiveness score from 2018-19. (No LOE was generated for the 2019-20 school year.) If the State Board of Education modifies evaluation requirements, the District will notify certified employees as soon as possible.

Teachers are required to have a duty-free lunch break. Will that be affected by our new meal procedures?

Employees will be provided a duty-free lunch period. To ensure proper social distancing and other safety precautions, the lunch period may be required to be taken in an assigned location. A staff member will relieve the teacher for the duty-free lunch if students remain in the classroom.

Will employees be screened for health symptoms every day?

Each employee should self-screen before reporting for work. Employees should ask, have you within the last 14 days:

- Been told to quarantine or isolate by a medical provider or health department?
- Had close contact with someone who has COVID-19?
- Experienced any COVID-19 symptoms?
 - Fever/chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - diarrhea

If the answer to any of the above questions is yes, an employee must notify their supervisor.

A staff member with fever and no other symptoms must be fever free without the assistance of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to school.

A staff member with fever and COVID-19 symptoms must remain home for 72 hours and have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation and have consulted their primary care provider.

If a teacher or school employee is quarantined because of exposure to COVID-19, will that employee be required to use accrued sick time?

If an employee is required to self-quarantine at the direction of the Health Department or a Physician, the employee may use 10 emergency sick leave days pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). If the school is operating in RED, the employee may work remotely as directed in the plan. If an employee is required to self-quarantine and has used all available emergency sick leave pursuant to the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the employee may elect to use any available accrued leave days or take days without pay.

Will employees be restricted from international travel?

Employees that choose to travel internationally may not return to work for 14 days upon return to Tennessee. They may use their accrued leave during this time.

What measures are being implemented to protect public-facing school staff, particularly school secretaries?

Sneeze guards will be provided to the front office staff. Additionally, social distancing guidelines should be followed when possible. Visitors to the school should wear a mask upon entry.

Will KCS notify school employees if someone at their school tests positive for COVID-19?

KCS will notify school employees when someone that had been present at their school tests positive. The Knox County Health Department will notify employees individually if they were at risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

Will KCS pay for COVID-19 testing?

For all employees covered under KCS's health insurance, COVID-19 testing will be covered. More information regarding KCS's health insurance is available at [this link](#). The Knox County Health Department will also provide free testing. More information is available at [this link](#).

What will KCS do about substitutes?

KCS has requested that substitutes complete a survey regarding their interest in returning for the 2020-21 school year. KCS will also provide schools with a list of substitutes that are likely to work for each school. KCS has limited the number of allowable Professional Development days during the school year to lessen the demand for substitute teachers.

What if an employee has to be out of work for a prolonged period of time due to a COVID-19 infection?

An employee would qualify for existing leave policies. During this time, employees can use all available accrued leave. A large number of our employees may have a disability policy or be a member of the sick bank, which would provide financial relief in the event that a person needed to be out of work due to a COVID-19 infection.

What if an employee is not comfortable returning to school in August?

If an employee is not comfortable returning to school in August, the employee can complete paperwork for a leave of absence, if applicable. If the employee does not qualify for a medical leave of absence, the teacher may apply for Administrative Leave Without Pay for the first semester. The employee will need to complete the appropriate paperwork to initiate the request process.

If a teacher falls in a high-risk category and chooses to return to school, what safety precautions will be in place?

Teachers should reference the reopening plan released on July 15 to review safety precautions. Additionally, teachers may utilize the reasonable accommodation procedure [G-420-1](#), if necessary.

What will be expected of teachers to assist with disinfecting and social distancing?

Mitigating the risks presented by COVID-19 will be a collaborative effort. All staff may be asked to do additional duties within reason to decrease the probability of transference of the COVID-19 virus.

What expectations and preventative measures or protections will be put in place for TCI-trained staff?

Additional personal protective equipment will be provided.

Can KCS guarantee potentially unlimited sick days if a staff member or their family member is exposed?

KCS cannot provide unlimited sick days to staff members. Employees may use existing accrued leave, existing leave policies, FFCRA leave when applicable, sick bank (for employees affected), or disability insurance.

What should employees do if they feel unsafe because of health and safety actions at their school?

All concerns should be reported to the Human Resources Department. Please email Jennifer Hemmelgarn or Adam Parson if concerns arise.

Can an immuno-compromised teacher have autonomy to require masks in their room?

All employees will be required to wear masks when not in their assigned area and are strongly encouraged to wear masks continuously throughout the day. Teachers may require students to wear masks.

How is social distancing going to be handled in classrooms with large numbers of students where tables are used for desks? In many classrooms, students are already seated as far apart as possible.

With nearly 12,000 students requesting a remote instruction option, there will be greater flexibility to ensure fewer students are in each classroom. Care will be taken to construct a master schedule that limits the amount of students in a class when possible. This, however, may limit the variety of classes that can be offered to students.

What will the expectation be for faculty meetings? Could we do them via video and watch in our class?

All faculty meetings should be conducted virtually. There may be situations where an in-person meeting is required, but this will be limited to the greatest extent possible.

How will we log the parent contact hours, including information nights and parent/teacher conferences?

Parent conferences should be conducted virtually with the 1:1 technology provided by KCS at the regularly scheduled time. Schools will also have the opportunity to explore virtual avenues for information nights.

Will Personal Protective Equipment be purchased for teachers?

Yes.

Will teachers have to sign a waiver to teach in person?

No.

Is early retirement an option as it was last year for those at high risk? If so, will the insurance incentive still be included?

Retirement is always an option for those who are eligible. Unfortunately, the retirement incentive that was offered in 2018 will not be offered prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year. The early retirement incentive requires certain steps pursuant to EEOC guidelines and there is not enough time to

adopt a plan and meet the requirements of those guidelines. However, the deadline for a retirement notice has been extended to July 24 for \$100 a day for those that wish to retire.

Will students or staff who exhibit symptoms be required to show a negative COVID-19 test to return to work / school?

Students or staff will not be required to produce negative test results to return to school.

Will cleaning supplies be provided to teachers if parents are unable to send them as part of school supplies?

Teachers will have access to appropriate cleaning supplies.