

KCS CONNECT

Fall 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

Updated on 8.5.20.

When does school officially start for KCS students?

The first day for students is Monday, August 24.

How was this reopening plan developed?

The reopening plan was developed by KCS in consultation with the Knox County Health Department and after seeking feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders across the district. This feedback was provided through measures including an online survey completed by more than 30,000 stakeholders; focus groups of teachers, students, parents, principals and non-profit partners; and a Community Task Force of members appointed by the Board of Education.

What are my options for sending my child back to school?

The district reopening plan calls for school buildings to reopen on August 24, with new measures implemented to protect the health and safety of our students, employees and school communities. (Please see our Health and Safety FAQ for more details about these changes.)

However, students who do not feel comfortable returning to school for the fall semester could enroll in our Virtual Learning Program by July 22. (Please see our Academics / Virtual Option FAQ for more details about this opportunity.)

If a student enrolls in the Virtual Learning Program, will they be able to participate in extracurricular activities such as marching band or athletics?

Yes, students who enrolled in the Virtual Learning Program will be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities.

What factors will be considered when moving between green, yellow and red models, and how we know what color the district/school is in?

The district will monitor daily student attendance, staff attendance, support staff attendance and consult with the Knox County Health Department for all medical metrics surrounding COVID -19. Much like on inclement weather days, the district will communicate with families and media if/when there is a color change for the entire system or for individual school(s).

How can I update my contact information, so I am able to get the latest school information?

One of the most important things you can do is update your email address in Aspen Family Portal. Here's how to do it:

1. After logging in to Aspen, click on your (parent) name at the top right, and choose "Set Preferences" from the drop-down menu
2. In the pop-up box, click the "Security" tab at the top
3. Make sure your email address is up-to-date, and add an alternate email if necessary

For all other changes, including an update to your phone number, please contact your school office. If you're not getting text messages from School Messenger, you can also text the word YES to 67587.

Academics And Virtual Option

Updated on 8.5.20

Which classes will be provided in the virtual learning program -- will Honors, AP, dual enrollment, music, art and CTE courses be available?

Class offerings will largely be based on demand among virtual students at each school. In some cases, classes that are not available through the school may be offered district-wide through the QuEST program, but only if there is sufficient demand from students who cannot access those courses at their base school.

Most CTE elective courses include student standards that require students to be "hands-on" with tools, specific technology, and/or equipment. Many of these standards cannot be met sufficiently in the virtual environment. The KCS CTE department will work with high school administrators, counselors, and the QuEST program administrators to identify the CTE elective pathways that are most transferable to a virtual environment. These virtual options may include content areas like business, health sciences, criminal justice, etc.

Art and music offerings will look very different. Fine arts teachers will be providing online courses; however, the activities will not mirror in-class activities. We are not equipped to replicate performances.

Will middle school students still be able to take high school classes if they enroll in the virtual learning program?

In this case, high school classes will be subject to the amount of demand from middle-school students.

Students who enroll in the virtual learning program must remain in that option through December. Are students who attend classes in-person also required to stay with that option through the end of the semester?

Yes. Students who enrolled in the virtual learning program by July 22 must commit to that program for the full semester.

Students who did not enroll in the virtual learning program will attend school in-person, and must commit to in-school instruction for the full semester, unless there is a medical reason they cannot attend school in person.

Can I walk my Kindergartner to class on the first day of school?

We understand that the first day of Kindergarten is an important milestone. Schools will be given flexibility to stagger the arrival time of Kindergarten students on their first staggered day in order to meet the guidelines for physical distancing and gathering restrictions. Parents will be allowed to walk students to the classroom on the student's first assigned staggered day. This will be considered a visitor with an appointment. Temperature checks will need to occur prior to adults visiting the classroom. On the second staggered day, parents should not walk their children to class.

When does staggered Kindergarten start? Schools will be conducting staggered days for Kindergarten, beginning on August 25. Schools will be sending letters to parents of Kindergarten students with specific dates for each child who has been enrolled. The first full day for Kindergarten students will be September 8. The hours during the staggered days will be 7:45 - 12:00.

Will my K-6 student be assigned to a specific teacher if they're in the virtual learning program?

Yes. K-6 students in the virtual learning program will be assigned to a specific teacher.

Besides the start date of August 24, are any additional changes being made to the school calendar?

At this time, no other changes to [the calendar](#) have been made.

What are my options for sending my child back to school?

The district reopening plan calls for schools to reopen on August 24, with new measures implemented to protect the health and safety of our students, employees, and school communities. (Please see our Health and Safety FAQ for more details about these changes.)

Students who did not feel comfortable returning to school for the fall semester could enroll in our virtual option by July 22. The Virtual Learning Program will run primarily through the base school. Knox County has expanded the district's QuEST Program* (see below) to supplement classes that cannot be provided by the base school.

The virtual school will combine synchronous and asynchronous learning methods, so students will have a 7-hour school day with some digital, personal interaction through Microsoft Teams and some group and independent work through the Canvas platform. Depending on the grade level, students will also have homework to prepare for the next school day. Student attendance will be required daily.

- Class size will mirror that of the traditional classroom.
- Classes will meet remotely through Microsoft Teams and Canvas will be the digital backpack.
- Aspen will be the digital report card and communication tool for parents/guardians and teachers.
- Students may need to come to the school at designated times (with physical distancing and mask protocols) for state-required assessments (AimsWeb Plus, TNReady, etc.)
- Instruction will be a blend of direct instruction, practice, inquiry, group meetings, small group, and whole-group support as dictated by the academic standards and the students' learning needs.
- Students will earn grades that will become part of their permanent academic history. For high school credit-bearing courses, grades will contribute to the formation of the students' GPA.
- Students enrolled in either the school's virtual classes or the district's QuEST Program remain enrolled in their assigned school and will be allowed to participate in after school and extracurricular activities.

Is this opportunity available for all students?

Yes. Please see the Special Education / ELL FAQ for more information about services.

When will I have to make a final decision about my child's learning path?

Virtual Learning Program registration was open from July 15 - 22, 2020. An in-person parent orientation at your child's school will be scheduled prior to the start of school.

Will I be allowed to change my child's learning option before the first semester ends?

Students who enrolled in the Virtual Learning Program by July 22 will be expected to continue in the program until the semester break in December. There will be an option in December for students to either continue in the Virtual Learning Program or return to their assigned school in January.

There will be exceptions made for students who are required to quarantine or other special circumstances. For quarantine or short-term absences, whenever possible, teachers will work with the students as they do with students who are absent for any other reasons. In other cases, the virtual learning program might be beneficial. However, those students would be expected to return to face-to-face instruction once released from the quarantine.

If a student enrolls in the Virtual Learning Program, will they be able to participate in extracurricular activities such as marching band or athletics?

Yes, students who enroll in the Virtual Learning Program will be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities.

If a student is quarantined or isolated, will they be able to receive online instruction while they are out of school?

Students will have access to instruction via virtual learning opportunities.

If students choose the Virtual Learning Program, will they lose their school transfer spot for the next year?

Because students will remain enrolled in their assigned school, their school transfer would continue to be in effect through the terminal grade of their assigned school.

When will I know my child's schedule for the fall?

All student schedules will be released on August 14, 2020.

Will my child need to be in attendance during regular school hours or can they work on a flexible schedule?

The expected school day schedule for elementary school students will be 7:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. for Kindergarten students and 7:45 a.m. - 2:45 p.m. for students in 1st through 5th grade. The expected school day schedule for students in 6th through 12th grade will be 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., depending on the class schedule. Some of the classwork will be scheduled for regular meeting times through Microsoft Teams. These times will be scheduled to prevent students from having conflicts. Students will not be on the computer for the entire day. Teachers are planning instruction that blends online and independent practice and inquiry.

What online tools will be used for this program?

The platforms that will be consistently used for virtual instruction are Microsoft Teams and Canvas. Aspen Family Portal is the primary tool for communication and grades. Teachers will have the flexibility to use additional tools depending on accessibility and subject matter. (Example: Edgenuity, Moby Max and IXL to name a few.)

Will staff be trained in these new learning models?

Staff had the opportunity to complete *Reimagine Canvas with Trauma-Informed Practices*, *KCS Connect 101*, and *KCS Connect 102* professional development opportunities over the summer. These courses covered the vision for blended and virtual learning practices, technology training for Canvas, Aspen, and Microsoft Teams, and the academic recovery plan. The Teaching and Learning Division and the school principals will continue to provide professional development opportunities as they determine the needs specific to buildings and teachers.

What measures are you taking to ensure the social, emotional, and mental health of my child?

School counselors will be available for any students who need social, emotional, and mental health support. Teachers should be made aware of parent concerns and those concerns can be addressed by the school principal or the district QuEST principal.

Will virtual program students be assigned to a particular teacher for the entire semester?

At the elementary level, students will be assigned a teacher for the semester. Depending upon demand for virtual learning, students may be assigned a teacher at their assigned school or a teacher within the District QuEST learning program.

At the secondary level, students will be assigned a teacher for each course taken during the semester. The teacher will be certified in the subject area. Depending on the demand for virtual learning and subject availability, the teacher may be a teacher at the student's base school or a teacher within the District QuEST learning program.

Will virtual program students be able to interact with some classmates?

Students in the virtual learning program will have opportunities to interact with other virtual students through the varied methods utilized during the virtual program. Teachers in the virtual program will plan for the social, pedagogical, organizational, and managerial aspects of online teaching and learning.

How many students will be assigned to each virtual program teacher?

Knox County Schools is required to follow the state BEP ratios for each grade band for both virtual and face-to-face classrooms. K-3rd grade is 1:20, 4th-6th is 1:25; and 7th-12th is 1:35.

Will students in the Virtual Learning Program have live interactions with their teacher, or will the teacher provide pre-recorded videos that can be watched at any time? In other words, will students be able to ask questions in real-time, via video or chat?

The teacher will provide answers to questions in both real-time during synchronous class sessions and through written and pre-recorded video electronic means of communication when students are working asynchronously. All virtual program teachers will hold office hours through Microsoft Teams to answer individual student questions.

Will the Virtual Learning Program be available for all students, including students with disabilities?

Yes, the virtual option is available to all students. Students who require additional support will work with their IEP team to develop a plan for delivering services virtually. Additional information will be provided by our Student Supports department. Additional guidance is also available on the Student Supports FAQ.

Will the virtual option be entirely online, or will students be asked to print out material?

Virtual program students will not be asked to print materials; however, they may need to write on notebook paper or use other commonly used school supplies. Students will be provided appropriate textbooks as needed.

Is KCS developing the virtual material, or are we getting it from a third party?

KCS has invested in high-quality instructional materials, and our virtual teachers will work with the same materials that their on-campus counterparts are using. Teachers use the state standards and the adopted materials as the starting point for planning, but they will modify, adjust, and add as they need to support the students in their classrooms.

At the high school level, KCS teachers have developed all courses that are on Canvas and that will be delivered through the QuEST program. Edgenuity, a third-party platform, may be used in some cases at the high school level, but course-specific certified KCS educators have vetted every course offered through that platform.

My child does not speak English. Will they be able to utilize the virtual option?

English Language Learner services will be provided in the virtual learning program as required by law.

Will virtual program students be able to receive free and reduced meals?

Students who are enrolled in virtual school may receive meals through their base school, and families should contact the School Nutrition Department to facilitate meal pickup details.

*[QuEST](#) has been in operation for high schools since 2017. Its mission has been to give students access to classes that they otherwise might not be able to take if their school does not offer what they need. The main way of offering our QuEST courses is asynchronously -- meaning online learning through Canvas.

How does this teaching happen? Knox County supports the learning management system called Canvas. Canvas would be used for our asynchronous or online provision.

Since its inception, QuEST has continued to grow each year. For the 2020-2021 school year, we planned to offer twenty-four asynchronous or online courses. With the onset of COVID-19 and the need for a district virtual program to support our schools, KCS has decided to expand QuEST offerings and to extend into elementary and middle schools for 2020-2021.

Students enrolled in elementary schools will have daily synchronous instruction from a certified teacher for their specific grade level. There will be additional instructional resources available to students and teachers provided in Canvas, the district learning management system, that students will access for additional asynchronous learning as assigned by their teacher. Their learning times will be 7:45 - 12:15 for students in Kindergarten and 7:45 - 2:45 for students in 1st through 5th grade. Individual teachers will provide parents the specific daily schedule for online lessons in ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Related Arts. Grades will be assigned by the QuEST teacher. Attendance will be taken each day based on the student's participation in daily classes.

Health And Safety

Will temperature checks be conducted every day?

Every person who enters the school building will be required to have a temperature check. For more information about temperature checks, school closures, and decisions about quarantining students and staff, please see our COVID-19 Protocols FAQ.

Will students be required to wear masks?

All students will be required to wear an appropriate mask while on campus when physical distancing isn't possible unless a student is unable to remove a mask without assistance or has a medical condition or other need preventing it.

Will masks be provided?

Masks will be provided to staff and students if needed.

Will teachers and other school employees be required to wear masks?

All staff will be required to wear an appropriate mask while on campus when physical distancing isn't possible or there is a medical condition preventing it.

How will schools ensure physical distancing in classrooms?

Physical distancing at the recommended distances will not always be possible in every classroom due to the differences in classroom and class sizes. The district is taking steps to otherwise mitigate the risk of an infection being shared. These include:

1. Physical distancing will be observed to the greatest extent possible in each classroom.
2. Daily temperature checks for all students and staff.
3. Regular disinfection of high contact surfaces, common areas, restrooms, and classrooms.
4. Providing hand sanitizer to all classrooms.
5. Use of masks.

How will schools ensure social distancing in common areas?

Mass gatherings such as assemblies and pep rallies should not be held unless appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.

If a COVID-19 vaccine is created, will it be a requirement for enrollment?

Vaccination requirements are determined by the state, so KCS would follow their guidance.

Will visitors be allowed on campus?

Visitor access will be restricted to essential personnel and those who have scheduled appointments for school business that cannot be conducted over the phone or by email.

- Visitors will be required to wear a mask.
- Visitors will be expected to adhere to physical distancing requirements.
- Visitors will be subject to temperature checks. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or greater must reschedule.

How often will schools be cleaned?

Buildings will undergo daily sanitizing for high-touch areas such as doorknobs, handrails, and countertops using a COVID-certified disinfectant. Common areas such as administrative areas, libraries, cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and hallways will be misted with a COVID-certified disinfectant daily. Classrooms will be cleaned per the district's standing protocols and as needed; they will be misted

at least every other day. Restrooms will be monitored and disinfected multiple times each day. Additionally, each classroom will be provided with hand sanitizer and disinfectant.

Buildings will also be disinfected either in part or in their entirety as may be necessary following a positive COVID diagnosis of a student or staff member.

Custodial shifts and hours may be adjusted to support these requirements.

Is KCS relying on students to clean classrooms?

No.

Will secondary students be moving between classrooms?

This will be determined by each school's administrative team.

Where will students eat lunch?

This will be determined by each school's administrative team. Food Service personnel are prepared to support plans devised by the school administration.

Will students be allowed to use playgrounds?

Yes.

How will teachers ensure that supplies such as crayons, scissors, and other items are not shared?

KCS teachers will determine what strategy they implement to ensure materials are not shared.

Will students have access to hand sanitizer? How often will they be able to wash their hands?

Yes. The frequency of use will depend upon the specific classes and the activities in which they are engaged.

Will before- and after-school organizations still have access to school campuses?

Yes.

Student Quarantine

Updated on 9.24.20.

What does quarantine mean?

Quarantine is used to keep close contacts of infected individuals (within six feet of someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 or more minutes) away from people who have not been exposed in order to slow the spread of the disease. Students who have been exposed may become infectious at any time within 14 days of their last exposure to an individual with COVID-19.

If your child must quarantine, it means your child should stay home and stay away from people, to the extent possible. If your child must leave home, they should wear a cloth face covering or mask, remain at least six feet from others and, if seeking medical care, notify the facility prior to their arrival that they are currently in quarantine for COVID-19.

I've been contacted by a school nurse or the Knox County Health Department with news that my child has been quarantined from school. What are my next steps?

If your child has been identified as a close contact for COVID-19 exposure and must quarantine, you will get a phone call to pick up your child from school. You will also receive an exposure letter that includes a

return-to-school date. During the quarantine, your child will not be allowed on school campuses and will not be allowed to participate in sports or extracurricular activities. Your child's principal / teacher will communicate expectations for online learning during this time.

How will my child receive instruction while quarantined?

All students must sign in and complete assignments provided to them through KCS online platforms, including Canvas and Microsoft Teams.

Who do I contact if I am having difficulty supporting online learning for my quarantined student?

If parents or guardians are having difficulty supporting your student during online learning, you are encouraged to reach out to your child's teacher first. Depending upon the need, there is support from the IT department help line at (865) 594-8410, the school guidance counselor, the EdTech liaison at the school, the school principal, and others. The teacher can begin the process to offer support once the specific need is identified.

Who do I contact if I need help with internet access at my home?

In order to best use your laptop, it is very important that your home has access to the internet. A customer service line for assisting families with accessing affordable internet services at home can be reached at (865) 594-4484. Additionally, our [Internet At Home flier](#) has a list of service providers that may be available in your area.

As a parent, how do I get support for Canvas?

You can find information about Chromebooks, Microsoft Teams, and Canvas at www.knoxschools.org/techhelp. Click on "I'm a parent / guardian" to find an introductory flier and slide presentation, along with a series of videos about topics including monitoring your child's learning and remote learning tips for parents.

That page also includes a [troubleshooting document](#) with common problems related to Canvas and possible solutions.

What steps must be taken before bringing my child back to school after the quarantine period has ended?

If your child has been quarantined, you should receive an exposure letter from their school or from the Tennessee Department of Health with a date that they can return to school. Your student should bring that letter with them on their first day back after the quarantine period.

Will my child be counted absent during the quarantine period?

Attendance will be taken daily during the quarantine. This will be confirmed when your child signs into the district's online platforms and completes assignments provided to them.

If my child is quarantined because of a potential exposure to COVID-19, can my other children who live in the house still attend school?

If a student is quarantined because of a potential exposure, their siblings who live in the same house can still attend school. However, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, other members of their household must also quarantine.

My special-education student has been quarantined, how will I receive information about their specific needs?

Your child's case manager will reach out with additional information related to their instruction during the quarantine period.

My ELL student has been quarantined, how will I receive information about their specific needs?

Your child's case manager will reach out with additional information related to their instruction during the quarantine period.

Transportation

Will students receive a temperature check at their morning bus stop?

Temperatures will be taken when students arrive at school. For more information about temperature checks, please see our COVID-19 Protocols FAQ.

How will physical distancing be enforced on buses?

While it is possible to physically distance on a bus, it is not operationally feasible due to the extreme loss of capacity that results. Buses will operate on a normal schedule on all designated routes. If parents elect to use bus transportation, they should ensure their children are fever-free prior to boarding the bus each day and students who have a fever or are otherwise ill should stay at home.

Weather and other conditions permitting, all windows on non-air conditioned buses will be open. Buses with air conditioning systems will not operate those systems in the recirculation mode.

Since physical distancing is not operationally feasible, what other safety precautions will be taken on buses?

Students will be required to wear an appropriate mask while in transit, and siblings should sit together when possible.

Buses will be disinfected following morning and evening runs with a COVID-effective agent provided to contractors by the district. KCS will also provide training in the proper use of the disinfectant.

Bus contractors will be responsible for implementing a pre-route driver temperature check to ensure no driver has a fever of 100.4 degrees or greater.

Will bus drivers be wearing masks?

Yes. Bus and shuttle drivers will wear an appropriate mask at all times while operating a vehicle.

My student rides the bus, and I work during the day. How will my student get home from school if the temperature check determines they have a fever?

Parents should ensure that students are fever-free prior to boarding the bus. If a fever is detected at school, parents will be asked to make arrangements to pick their child up just as they are any other time a child becomes sick at school.

What precautions will be taken to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at bus stops?

The expectation is that parents will ensure that physical distancing and the use of masks are observed as appropriate at bus stops. Hand sanitizer will be made available.

Chromebooks

Updated on 7.23.20.

Is assistance available for families who can't afford Chromebook insurance?

Once families have completed the [device registration form](#) and [insurance form](#), the district will provide a notification if they are eligible for an insurance subsidy. All families who receive free and reduced-price meals qualify for the subsidy. Families can visit [LunchApplication.com](#) to apply for free and reduced-price meals.

Where can families submit payment for the insurance?

Families can visit [SchoolCashOnline](#) to pay the insurance fee online, or submit a check, made payable to "Knox County Schools Device Insurance", to P.O. Box 314, Knoxville, TN 37901.

What electronic device will be provided under this initiative?

The district will provide touch-screen Chromebooks for students in grades K-2, and standard Chromebooks for students in grades 3-12.

When will students receive their device? How do students receive a device if they're utilizing the virtual option?

Chromebook [registration forms](#) and [insurance forms](#) are now available, and printed copies will be available at schools beginning on July 24. Once the forms are submitted, each student's base school will contact them with details about how and when the devices will be distributed.

Will there be any cost for families to participate in this program?

All devices will be provided free of charge, but families will be given the option to buy insurance for \$30.

How are parents charged for repairs if they do not have the insurance?

If repairs are needed, parents will be provided with a schedule of costs. Typical repairs range from \$30-\$80 and will be charged as a fine if the parent did not purchase insurance. A total loss of the device will result in a charge of \$200.

Will there be parent training and workshops?

The district will provide tutorial videos and guides, and schools will provide specific training for any technologies that are school-specific.

Will there be any training for younger students who have never used a computer keyboard?

The plan calls for deployment of touch-screen Chromebooks for grades K-2, because that device has a "tablet" mode that does not require keyboard skills.

How will the district prevent students from accessing inappropriate material on their device?

The district will issue clear policies about acceptable use and parents will need to sign, indicating their agreement. There will be filtering software that will prevent students from accessing inappropriate or harmful content in most cases. However, no software is foolproof.

I'm concerned about the effects of screen time on my child. How will the district ensure that students aren't spending too much time on devices?

Technology in the classroom is a tool for a teacher to enhance their teaching. KCS does not believe traditional teaching techniques and activities should be replaced by screen time. During a "normal schedule", teachers will have the autonomy to develop their classroom model and determine what percentage of a student's learning will be online and what will be face-to-face.

We also believe students need to learn from an early age about usage and time management of technology in the learning environment. We are encouraging teachers to talk with families about the importance of managing screen time for students.

If a student already owns their own device, could it be used instead?

The district will not allow students to use their own device instead of one issued by the district. Allowing students to use their own devices at school raises concerns about security and appropriate usage. With district-managed devices, we can limit access and monitor content in a way that would not be possible on student-owned devices.

Will students be able to take the devices home after school?

Under normal circumstances, the district will give flexibility to school administration regarding device usage, including whether devices can go home with students.

Will students be able to use the devices for non-school activities? For social media, video games, or movies?

The device is being provided to students for educational uses. Access to internet sites should mirror access while in the school setting, which is subject to the district's [Acceptable Use policy](#) and content filtering restrictions.

Will students be able to download programs such as Grammarly or Photoshop to help with their assignments?

In general, software cannot be downloaded onto the Chromebook. District or school subscriptions will be available if the software is web-based.

How will families access tech support?

Technicians will respond based on tickets submitted by a school staff member. Each school will have surplus Chromebooks that can be swapped out quickly, allowing students to continue work by simply logging in to a new device. Extended hours of Help Desk support will be available during the months of August and September.

Is there a troubleshooting document that provides assistance with common problems?

A troubleshooting document is being developed to cover basic questions.

What if my family doesn't have access to WiFi or internet service?

In order to best use your laptop, it is very important that your home has internet by the start of school in August. Families will receive a flyer beginning July 20 detailing options for Internet access, including those for low-income households.

Special Education & Section 504

My student has an underlying health condition and cannot be in school during COVID-19. How will the virtual learning program accommodate their needs?

Teachers and service providers will work with families to prioritize services that provide access to the general curriculum and enable student progress toward IEP goals/Section 504 Service Plans. Services for students will be addressed in collaboration with families on an individual basis.

Accommodations and modifications are provided regardless of the educational setting. The IEP and 504 teams will work collaboratively with families to identify alternative solutions if it is determined an accommodation or modification is not appropriate or successful in a particular setting.

Knox County Schools will continue to provide families the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the IEP/Section 504 processes. Staff will work with families to determine if virtual or in-person meetings are appropriate. KCS will make every effort to balance parent preference and public health guidelines.

My student is unable to use a Chromebook. Will KCS provide an alternative device option?

If the IEP/Section 504 team determines that a student requires a different device, yes.

How will IEPs and 504s be addressed for students who use the virtual learning program?

Knox County Schools will continue to provide families the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the IEP/504 processes. Staff will work with families to determine if virtual or in-person meetings are appropriate. KCS will make every effort to balance parent preference and public health guidelines.

My student needs help toileting and eating. How will this be done safely in the classroom?

KCS will follow the recommended health guidelines to meet student-specific needs. We will use personal protective equipment for our staff and students to the greatest extent possible.

My student requires special transportation. How will my student be transported safely?

The KCS Transportation Department has guidelines for all buses. These will be followed by our vehicles providing special transportation as well. We will use personal protective equipment for our staff and students to the greatest extent possible. Parent reimbursement is also a form of special transportation and will be utilized as appropriate.

My student participates in community-based instruction as part of their educational program. Will that continue this year?

Community-based instruction will continue as soon as it is safe to do so based on Health Department guidelines. In the meantime, teachers will provide opportunities for hands-on learning within the school environment to support the IEP goals and objectives.

My child may require physical assistance at times to keep them from harming themselves or others. How will this be done in the context of social distancing?

Our goal is always to keep students safe from harming themselves or others. We will utilize de-escalation strategies and follow behavior plans developed by IEP/Section 504 teams. We will use personal protective equipment for our staff and students to the greatest extent possible.

My child receives related services. Will this continue safely?

In-person related services will be delivered according to IEPs. We will use personal protective equipment for our staff and students to the greatest extent possible. IEP teams will meet to discuss the appropriate services for students that utilize the virtual learning program.

My child has sensory issues and can't wear a mask. What can be done in this situation?

KCS has consulted with the Knox County Health Board and reviewed all guidelines set forth by the Tennessee Department of Education and the CDC. Based on all stakeholder input, KCS has included the following statement in the KCS re-opening plan: *All students should wear a mask/face covering while on campus when physical distancing isn't possible unless a student is unable to remove a mask/face covering without assistance or has a medical condition or other need preventing it.* IEP teams will meet to discuss the appropriate accommodations based on individual student needs.

Can my student attend part-time in-person and virtual for the remainder of the day?

No, parents must select either the in-person or virtual learning program provided by the district.

What is the difference between Homebound Services and the virtual learning program?

Homebound Services are an IEP team decision based on temporary or chronic medical conditions with the input of a child's medical physician. The virtual learning program is a parent choice based on COVID-19 and not an IEP team decision.

How will my child receive their accommodations and/or modifications if they utilize the virtual learning program?

Special education teachers/Section 504 case managers will continue to work closely with general education teachers and/or students to support all provisions. School staff and families should communicate regularly to determine the appropriateness of specific accommodations for students with IEPs or Section 504 plans.

The school provides a nurse to assist my child with his medical needs at school. How will this be done if my student utilizes the virtual learning program?

An IEP/Section 504 team will make this decision based on the unique needs of your child.

My child has a paraprofessional to assist in some of their classes. How will this be done if my student utilizes the virtual learning program?

An IEP/Section 504 team will make this decision based on the unique needs of your child.

English Language Learners

My student does not speak English. Will they be able to utilize the virtual learning program?

Delivery of ELL instructional services will continue to be provided by a licensed ELL teacher, both within the classroom and via online learning. In addition, the teacher may utilize digital resources that are designed to increase language development and literacy.

How will KCS ensure that masks and social distancing don't prevent my ELL student from understanding their teachers or classmates?

Student Supports will provide alternative face coverings in these circumstances. In addition, ELL teachers will incorporate the use of visuals and comprehensible input strategies to increase student comprehension.

How will my child be screened for ESL services?

Your child has three options for being screened for ESL services:

1. Your child may be screened at the Welcome Center during enrollment, or you may schedule an appointment.
2. You may request the ELL teacher at your school to screen your child.
3. If the district has to go to on-line instruction only, your child will be screened on-line with the SOLOM Rubric (Student Oral Language Observation Matrix). If they qualify, they will receive on-line support. Once classes resume, the student will be screened with the WIDA Screener.

COVID-19 Protocols

During drop-off, can I accompany my student inside the school building?

No, families should drop students off and pick them up using the car rider line or drop off at the front door if walking.

Will temperature checks be conducted every day?

Every person who enters the school building will be required to have a temperature check. For more information about masks, social distancing, handwashing, and other health-related questions, please see our Health And Safety FAQ.

Where will temperature checks be conducted? Will students be gathered in large groups while they wait for a temperature check, or will they be taken in classrooms?

Each school will have a plan in place for checking temperatures prior to students entering classrooms. Schools will also take steps to ensure that students do not congregate in large groups while awaiting screening.

The drop-off line at my school is always long. What steps is KCS taking to avoid even longer lines caused by temperature checks?

Most campuses experience traffic issues for 20-30 minutes twice a day. Drop-off and pick-up are managed by the administration at each campus, and how they are conducted will vary from campus to campus due to the physical differences in facilities. We expect increased personal vehicle traffic at all campuses, and parents should be prepared for longer waits as staff works to ensure safety and security for all concerned.

What happens if a student or employee has a fever?

All students and staff will have their temperature checked prior to the start of classes each day. Students with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater will be isolated, and parents will be called to pick them up. Schools will be provided thermometers at the ratio of 1 per 40 students to facilitate the completion of this task.

Employees with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater will return home.

I work during the day. How will my student get home if they have a fever?

Parents should ensure that students are fever-free prior to boarding the bus or arriving at school. If a fever is detected at school, parents will be asked to make arrangements to pick their child up just as they are any other time a child becomes sick at school.

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, will their teacher or other students in that classroom be quarantined or isolated?

Our Health Services Department will work closely with the Knox County Health Department to execute contact tracing in order to determine who might need to be quarantined or isolated. There are multiple variables that must be considered such as proximity and duration of exposure that will be considered in making the determination. We will work with the KCHD to determine who needs to be quarantined.

If a student is quarantined or isolated, will they be able to receive online instruction while they are out of school?

Students will have access to instruction via virtual learning opportunities.

If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19, will students in that teacher's classroom be quarantined or isolated?

Our Health Services Department will work closely with the Knox County Health Department to execute contact tracing in order to determine who might need to be quarantined or isolated. There are multiple variables that must be considered such as proximity and duration of exposure that will be considered in making the determination.

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. A student or 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 student or 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.

Will KCS notify me if a student or school employee at my child's school tests positive for COVID-19?

KCS will notify families if there is an incident that results in potentially being exposed to COVID-19.

Employees

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.

