

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: COVID-19 and REMOTE LEARNING

Updated August 25, 2020

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District response to COVID-19

Are CPS schools going to reopen in the fall?

The district announced on August 5 that all CPS students will begin the year learning at home through the end of the first quarter. Prior to the beginning of the second quarter, we will assess the state of COVID-19 and the safety of switching to a hybrid learning model.

Are school buildings open for students and staff?

School buildings are closed; environmental cleaning experts and emergency personnel are allowed in school buildings. Families should not send their children to schools.

Will the district provide food services to students during remote learning?

Yes. Families can pick up free grab-and-go meals for every student in each household throughout the summer and remote learning. Lunchroom staff will prepare and provide meals outside of school buildings. Visit cps.edu/mealsites to check meal site hours and find a meal site near you.

If you are unable to pick up meals in person, please contact the CPS Command Center to schedule meal delivery at 773-553-KIDS (5437) or email familyservices@cps.edu.

Which staff members are designated as emergency personnel?

Emergency personnel are staff members who perform **essential district functions**, such as designated payroll and accounting employees. Emergency personnel who are required for **food distribution, cleaning, and core operations** at schools are listed below:

- **School administrators** (principals and assistant principals)

- At least one administrator must report to each school unless sick or caring for a sick dependent. If no administrator is able to report to the school, the principal can request another employee from their school staff who has an administrative license to cover.
- **Lunchroom managers**
- **Nutrition workers**
- **Facilities** (all custodians and engineers)
- **Security staff**

Who can I contact with questions?

Please call the CPS Command Center at 773-553-KIDS (5437) or email familyservices@cps.edu.

How will CPS update families, staff, and students on the district’s response to COVID-19?

CPS is updating cps.edu/coronavirus and sending regular emails to families and staff to provide the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19. The district will also post notifications on social media. If you have any questions, please contact the CPS Command Center at familyservices@cps.edu or 773-553-KIDS.

Remote learning

Overview:

What will students’ school schedules look like during remote learning?

Every K-12 student will be engaged for the entirety of a typical school day. Pre-K students will receive live instruction, but given the unique needs of our youngest learners, more time and focus will be spent on small group interaction and parental support.

To ensure schools design a school day that best meets the needs of their unique student body, the district has created parameters that define a set of district standards, and also give schools flexibility in designing the school day to best meet the needs of their school community. The specifics of students' schedules will be provided to families by school staff.

How has CPS supported teachers with remote learning?

In the spring of 2020, CPS provided educators with guidance, tools, resources, and professional learning to support with remote learning implementation. In July, CPS launched the SY20-21 Instructional Priorities Summer Learning Series, designed to focus on clarifying the CPS instructional vision and providing shared, flexible learning opportunities for teachers and administrators. CPS will also produce a SY21 Remote Learning Guide that provides updates to remote learning expectations and useful information on how to strengthen the remote learning experience for all students. Finally, CPS is committed to providing ongoing professional learning support to help schools transition to remote learning, including resources on instructional technology best practices, content-specific learning, and [preliminary](#) digital curricular resources.

Are families expected to pay school fees this year?

No student fees should be collected unless vital to the facilitation of remote learning until further notice.

Instruction, Curriculum, and Technology:

What will grading look like in the fall?

CPS will return to the district's regular grading policies, with students earning letter grades based on standards mastery. The district will provide additional guidance on unique grading scenarios that could arise due to the impacts of COVID-19.

Who should families contact if they do not have reliable internet access?

The district's Chicago Connected initiative will provide free high-speed internet service to approximately 100,000 CPS students for four years. Eligible families will be contacted over the summer through direct mail, emails, robocalls, and text messages. Families should contact their school for assistance. Principals have been provided a roster of students who are eligible for Chicago Connected.

Who should families contact if they need devices for the upcoming school year?

Families should contact their school's principal to request a device. They can also contact the district's IT Helpdesk at 773-417-1060 for additional assistance.

Why are all schools expected to use Google's learning tools?

Having a common platform ensures that the district can accurately track and support student engagement. Google's tools, such as Google Meet and Google Classroom, are synchronized with other district platforms and meet the district's acceptable use policy and security requirements.

Will teachers be able to use platforms for teaching and learning other than Google?

Schools will be able to use approved non-Google ed-tech tools that meet the district's acceptable use policy, but teachers and students will be expected to log onto Google on a daily basis for a homeroom style check-in and utilize Google for live video instruction.

What is the plan for career and technical education (CTE) courses?

The district has created pathway-specific [recommendations](#) for CTE courses. Most courses will combine in-person opportunities for students to work in the CTE labs with virtual coursework and work-based learning.

Will students in gifted and classical programs continue to receive curriculum and instruction that is above their grade level?

Yes.

Sports:

What is the plan for fall sports?

Per guidance from the IHSA, some sports—boys and girls golf, boys and girls cross-country, girls tennis, 16" softball, and girls swimming—are approved to compete this fall, starting on August 17. Contact days will begin on September 7 and end on October 31. There is a 20-day limit on contact days during that time period for any sport not in season.

Other sports—boys football, boys soccer, and girls volleyball—have been moved to compete in the spring of 2021.

CPS teams will only compete against other CPS league teams. They also have the option to practice without competing. Teams can only compete if they follow the guidelines for COVID-19 prevention and safety.

What is the required coach-to-student ratio for sports teams to be approved to participate in fall sports?

One coach is required for every 25 students.

Hybrid learning model

Overview:

What is a hybrid learning plan?

A hybrid learning plan includes a mixture of in-person instruction; independent, at-home learning; and real-time instruction at home. This learning plan will look different for students based on grade:

- Pre-K students will receive in-person instruction only, based on age and developmental learning needs.
- Students in grades K-10 will learn at school two days each week, learn at home independently two days each week, and receive one day of real-time virtual classroom instruction with their teacher via Google Classroom.
- Students in grades 11-12 will learn-at-home only. Due to the complexity of junior and senior class schedules, it isn't possible for students and adults to remain socially distanced in fixed pods. Additional opportunities to learn in person may be able to be provided for diverse learners, English learners, CTE students who require access to specific resources, and students who require additional social and emotional academic support.

A combination of learning models will allow the district to adapt alongside Illinois' public health response to COVID-19 and the diverse needs of school communities. A hybrid approach will also allow learning to continue uninterrupted should students need to learn-at-home full-time for health reasons.

How will students practice appropriate social distancing during in-person instruction?

To maintain a safe environment during in-person instruction, students will be assigned to pods. Student pods will be small, fixed groups of approximately 15 students. Each pod will have minimal interactions with students and staff in other pods. If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed at the school, this model minimizes the potential number of exposures to the virus and allows for timely and efficient contact tracing—if a COVID-19 case is identified, only that person's pod may need to be quarantined instead of the entire school.

How will teachers and staff safely provide instruction and student services to multiple pods?

Students will remain in their pod throughout the day and additional teachers may rotate across pods to provide instruction across multiple subjects and breaks for classroom teachers. Students and teachers will wear masks and socially distance during instruction and meetings.

What will the typical learn-at-home day look like?

Per guidance from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), students learning at home will have a minimum of five hours of instruction and assigned work per day. Activities and assignments could include pre-recorded lessons, independent work to build skills, and accessing digital curriculum resources. Student attendance will be tracked.

Will students who choose remote learning be graded differently than students who choose the hybrid model?

No.

Why are eleventh- and twelfth-grade students learning through an entirely at-home plan?

The district is proposing a learn-at-home-only plan for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students so they can benefit from being able to take their diverse, full array of course offerings. Due to the complexity of their class schedules, it isn't possible to keep eleventh- and twelfth-grade students and teachers in fixed pods.

If I choose to opt-out of in-person instruction, will my child still retain their seat in their school?

Families choosing the learn-at-home-instructional model will continue to be affiliated with their schools and will not lose their seats. If families opt out of public school entirely and choose to enroll in private school or home school their child, they will not retain the seat at their current school.

How will students access digital learning resources at home?

Students will access assignments through Google Classroom as part of a wider transition to Google platforms.

In the spring of 2020, we distributed over 128,000 devices to support students. To continue narrowing the digital divide for our high-need families, we launched Chicago Connected: a groundbreaking program that will provide free high-speed internet to approximately 100,000 CPS students and their families. We continue to work with schools to identify and provide computing devices to students who still need them.

Eligibility for Chicago Connected is determined using a weighting of factors including: free and reduced price lunch status, Medicaid qualifications, community hardship index, special student populations such as diverse learners, English Learners and students in temporary living situations (STLS). We are also extending hotspot coverage for STLS.

To obtain a device or internet service, please contact your school first. They will provide you with a device and help you determine if you are eligible for Chicago Connected. If you need additional assistance, please contact the IT Helpdesk at 773-417-1060. .

Health and Safety Protocols:

What precautions will be taken to screen students and staff for COVID-19 before they arrive at school or upon arrival at a school building?

All students, staff, and approved visitors need to complete a symptom and risk screener online, and wash their hands each day before they enter a CPS building. Upon entering a building, students, staff, and approved visitors will undergo a temperature check.

The symptom and risk screener needs to be completed daily before a child arrives at school; we're currently working to ensure all of a student's approved guardians will be sent the screener automatically each day.

To conduct temperature checks, schools will be equipped with more than 22,000 infrared thermometers for health screening. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4°F or higher will be sent home. Protocols for temperature checks are being developed internally and will be discussed with key stakeholders, including union partners, school leaders, and network staff, in the near future.

What options are available for students and staff who are high-risk for COVID-19?

Students who are at high-risk for COVID-19 may choose to learn through the fully at-home model. Staff at high-risk for COVID-19 may request an accommodation for a leave of absence or to work remotely.

When do parents complete the daily symptom screener for their child?

Parents or guardians need to complete the symptom and risk screener for each child every day before they arrive at school. Staff will be able to view which students have been screened, and any child who does not have a completed screener will be screened upon arriving at school.

Will the daily symptom screener be translated into multiple languages?

Yes.

If someone besides a guardian takes care of getting a child to school in the morning, can that person complete the symptom screener on the guardian's behalf?

The district is currently working to ensure all of a child's approved guardians will be sent the online screener automatically each day.

Will visitors be allowed? If yes, for what purposes and what will their screening process look like?

Visitors may be restricted. Any permitted visitors will be required to follow the same safety protocols as students and staff, including completing a symptom screener, temperature check, and wearing a mask/appropriate PPE inside school buildings.

Will students and staff maintain at least six feet of distance between each person?

Yes. The number of people who can be in any room at the same time will be based on the size of the room to ensure students and staff can maintain social distancing.

Will students and teachers be required to wear masks in school?

In accordance with ISBE's guidance, anyone over the age of two is required to wear a face covering on school grounds. The district has purchased three reusable face coverings for all students and staff and will distribute disposable masks for emergency use.

Will schools provide staff with face masks and/or face shields?

Every school will have face masks for all staff members. Staff members who provide personal, one-on-one support for students will receive a face shield. A face shield should only be worn in addition to a mask.

What protocols are in place regarding masks for students who have sensory or respiratory conditions?

Students with certain medical conditions can apply for a mask exemption.

Can parents supply their own face masks for their students?

Parents may supply their children with their own cloth face coverings as long as they cover the child's nose and mouth and have at least two layers.

Is a face shield an acceptable alternative to a mask for students?

Face shields are not acceptable for students unless they have a documented medical reason that is approved by the district.

How will staff members be expected to enforce mask compliance?

The district's Office of Social-Emotional Learning will be providing guidance for staff to help students adhere to health protocols.

What happens if students forget their masks?

All schools are being provided with disposable face-coverings for emergencies in which students forget their face-coverings at home.

How is the district preventing COVID-19 transmission in bathrooms?

Pods will be assigned to designated bathrooms and will be cleaned frequently throughout the day. Schools must remind students to wash their hands thoroughly often and use hand sanitizer anytime they return to their classroom.

How will the district ensure students are washing their hands and using hand sanitizer properly?

In addition to signage and public awareness campaigns that will help all students understand when and how to properly wash their hands and use hand sanitizer, schools should teach health protocols to students directly.

What additional cleaning and disinfection procedures will be implemented in school buildings?

Based on recommendations from the CDC and EPA, we will enhance nightly cleaning and develop a COVID-19 breakout plan with a trained response team. Full cleaning activities will be scheduled daily (versus once a week like pre-COVID-19), and spot cleaning will be performed as needed throughout the day.

To ensure the safest possible learning environments, we've purchased more than 1.2 million reusable cloth face masks to support every student and staff member, 42,000 hand sanitizer dispensers, more than 40,000 containers of disinfectant wipes, 22,000 infrared touchless thermometers, hospital-grade disinfectant sprayers, and additional PPE for specialty roles. We're also hiring nearly 400 additional custodians to help carry out stringent cleaning and disinfection protocols every day in every school.

How often will shared spaces such as hallways and bathrooms be cleaned throughout the day?

Staff will conduct enhanced cleaning on an hourly basis. High-touch areas will be wiped down throughout the day and on an as-needed basis.

How often will Pre-K and cluster rooms undergo enhanced cleaning?

Pre-K and cluster rooms will undergo enhanced cleaning on an hourly basis.

How will the district measure air quality and ventilation in classrooms and school buildings?

CPS will implement a building air system flush this fall, which will allow the air within a school building to be replaced with fresh air daily. This implementation, along with daily cleaning and disinfection, will create a clean and healthy learning and working environment.

Will classrooms have access to air conditioning?

Air conditioning will be available in all classrooms for the start of the school year.

Will plumbing issues be addressed if hot water is not available in some areas of the school?

Providing hot water for students is a priority for next school year and plumbing issues will be addressed whenever possible.

How will shared resources such as textbooks be cleaned?

Textbooks and other shared resources can either be assigned to individual students or can be wiped down with a disinfectant between uses. Students should be encouraged to use their own materials whenever possible.

What happens when a student is diagnosed with COVID-19?

School community members with COVID-19 may not be present at school until at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and symptoms have improved, per CDC/CPDH guidelines.

Individuals who **did not** have direct contact with the person who is sick (were six feet apart from the individual with COVID-19 and spent less than 15 consecutive minutes with them) can return to work immediately after disinfection of the relevant space.

Those who had direct contact with someone with COVID-19 (were within six feet of the person with COVID-19 for 15 consecutive minutes or more) should quarantine at home and monitor their symptoms for 14 calendar days from the last time they were in direct contact with the ill person.

What happens if a student is identified as sick during the school day?

If a student arrives at school exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, or begins to exhibit symptoms during the day, they will be moved to the school's designated Care Room to wait until they are promptly picked up (within one hour).

What happens if a student who takes the bus becomes sick or the school cannot reach a parent to pick up a sick student?

If a student takes the bus and arrives at school sick, or becomes sick during the school day, the school must contact a parent or legal guardian to come and pick up the student. If a parent or legal guardian cannot be reached, the school must exhaust the list of contacts on the student's emergency contact form until an adult is reached and comes to pick up the sick student. Students will not be allowed to return home unaccompanied.

What happens if a student arrives at school on a day they are scheduled to learn at home?

The student will need to stay socially distant until a parent or guardian picks them up. The district is developing a push notification system to remind parents which days their student is scheduled for in-person instruction.

If a staff member not assigned to a certain pod—such as the principal or a security guard—tests positive for COVID-19, would the entire school need to quarantine?

No. Only close contacts would need to quarantine for 14 days. Close contact means being less than six feet apart from the individual who tested positive for more than 15 minutes.

What cleaning protocol will be followed in a school after a case is identified?

Should a student or staff member get sick, a trained custodial response team will disinfect the area in accordance with CDC guidelines using EPA-approved cleaning and disinfecting products. They will wear PPE where appropriate and close off the affected areas for 24 hours to allow for proper ventilation and

viral load reduction.

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, do they need to test negative before they can return to in-person learning?

Students and staff will need to quarantine for 14 days if they test positive for COVID-19, but current public health guidance does not require retesting for clearance of COVID-19 and returning to school. However, they should remain at home if they are still sick or show any symptoms.

Will I be advised when a case is confirmed at my student's school, regardless of if the diagnosed student or staff member is part of my student's pod?

As CPS has done since the first cases were recorded in Chicago, CPS will notify school communities—including parents and staff—of COVID-19 cases, and whether or not they have had direct contact with the sick person.

Is the district considering requiring daily or weekly COVID-19 testing for all students and staff?

No. CDPH does not recommend regular testing because it does not guarantee future wellness. However, the district's screener will cover both symptoms and risks for exposure to help students and staff determine if they should be tested.

How much and what kinds of PPE will be distributed to schools?

The amount of PPE the district will distribute to schools is based on the number of students and adults at each school, and sizing and type of PPE will be age- and position-appropriate.

How will overcrowded schools adopt a hybrid learning model?

The district will work with schools to identify auxiliary spaces that can be used for teaching in order to ensure students and staff can practice proper social distancing.

Will the district increase the amount of handwashing stations?

No. In restrooms, every other handwashing station will be closed in order to allow individuals to stay six feet apart. The district is currently looking at potential options for bringing more handwashing stations to schools.

Instruction and Technology:

Will students who opt out of in-person learning form a separate pod? How will their learning plan differ from a student following the hybrid model?

CPS is developing a plan to provide students who opt out of in-person instruction with the highest-quality learning experience possible. More details will be provided soon to help schools and families plan for at-home learning.

How many hours of instruction will be required for the learn-at-school model?

The learn-at-school model will follow the same time requirements as a typical year.

What grading system will CPS use during the 2020–21 academic year?

CPS plans to return to the district's regular grading policies, with students earning letter grades based on standards mastery.

Will the school calendar need to be altered so all pods have the same number of days off?

The district does not expect to alter the calendar because of the hybrid model. As it stands, all students should have access to approximately the same number of in-person instructional days.

Pods and Scheduling:

What is a pod?

Pods are small, designated groups of approximately 15 students (a socially-distanced classroom) that will attend in-person instruction and activities together.

What are the advantages of the pod system?

Pods will minimize interactions between students and staff and reduce the potential for spread of COVID-19. Pods will also allow for more efficient contact tracing—if a COVID-19 case is identified, only that person’s pod may need to be quarantined instead of the entire school. This hybrid learning plan is designed to adapt to changing public health conditions and allow an easy transition to full at-home learning or full at-school learning should public health conditions change.

How large will pods be?

Each pod will contain approximately 15 students, depending on the physical size of each classroom. Principals will be given access to a school planning tool that will enable them to determine the size of a given classroom’s pod based on the square footage available while adhering to social distancing requirements.

How will school-based staff safely provide instruction and services to multiple pods?

Students and teachers will wear masks and socially distance during instruction. Students will remain in their assigned pod throughout the day and additional teachers may rotate across pods to provide instruction across multiple subjects and breaks for classroom teachers.

How will the pod system work for high school teachers who teach multiple subjects and multiple groups of students each day?

Students will be placed into pods based on shared courses so that high school teachers can provide instruction across a set of several pods.

If a student in pod A contracts COVID-19, will both pods A and B need to quarantine if they have the same teacher?

No. If a student in pod A contracts COVID-19, their teacher and classmates in pod A have had first-degree exposure and need to quarantine and monitor their symptoms for 14 days—even if they test negative for COVID-19. Any person who had contact with someone in pod A but not the person with COVID-19 themselves are classified as second-degree exposures and do not need to be quarantined. However, anyone who is sick should stay home.

If a teacher contracts COVID-19 and teaches pods A and B, will both pods need to quarantine?

Yes.

Why is Wednesday the day when all pods will learn remotely?

Having all students learn at home on Wednesdays allows for more enhanced cleaning and creates a standardized schedule across the district.

How will students access learning resources?

Students will access assignments through Google Classroom.

Can families switch from at-home to at-school learning at any time?

Families will have the opportunity to switch between learning models at set intervals (e.g. a new quarter) during the year to ensure there are not constant scheduling changes. These intervals will be shared clearly with parents prior to the first window prior to the first day of school.

Will student pods be organized according to academic ability?

Pods will be created so that students can maintain their regular schedules as much as possible. Typically, schools will effectively split each classroom in half to allow for social distancing. Teachers will rotate across a limited number of pods.

How should schools schedule core subject areas versus specials classes such as art and physical education?

The district will work with each principal to build out schedules that meet their school's unique needs and allow for as many classes to be offered in-person as possible.

Will supports be provided to help schools develop schedules that comply with all of the guidelines?

Schools will be provided with sample schedules to help support their scheduling efforts. Additionally, Central Office support will be provided upon request.

How should students maintain their pods and stay socially distant after dismissal but prior to being picked up?

Schools can use the district's [arrival and dismissal guidance](#) to design appropriate plans for students at the beginning and end of each school day.

Will schools still be expected to complete fire drills and other evacuations that are typically required?

Based on ISBE requirements, all schools are still required to schedule and conduct all emergency drills. Schools should prioritize following all social distancing guidelines during these drills.

Will the district ensure that families who have students at different schools are able to align their students' schedules so their pods attend in-person instruction on the same day?

The district is unable to manage this alignment centrally, but principals are encouraged to work together to accommodate families in this situation as much as possible.

Pre-K, Diverse Learners, and English Learners:**How will diverse learners be supported under a hybrid learning model?**

If schools have the space and staffing available to bring students back for additional in-person instruction, they will be asked to prioritize diverse learners for daily in-person learning instead of the two-days-per-week shift schedule. All scheduling decisions for diverse learners will be made in accordance with the student's IEP. These decisions will be made with the support of scheduling tools provided to school leaders this summer and will be approved by network chiefs prior to the first day of school.

How will students who are not in cluster programs, but may be receiving SPED minutes for all (or most) core subjects be supported in a hybrid model?

If schools have the space and staffing available to bring students back for additional in-person instruction, they will be asked to prioritize diverse learners for daily in-person learning instead of the two-days-per-week shift schedule. All scheduling decisions for diverse learners will be made in accordance with the student's IEP. These decisions will be made with the support of scheduling tools provided to school leaders this summer and will be approved by network chiefs prior to the first day of school.

How will students who have a hearing impairment be supported in a hybrid learning model?

The CPS Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services has provided the district guidance on meeting students' diverse learning needs both at home and at school. A hybrid learning model allows students to have access to the delivery method that best meets their academic, functional, and medical needs; all scheduling decisions for diverse learners will be made in accordance with the student's IEP. For students with a hearing impairment, remote instruction has been shown to provide the clearest communication in this situation because educators do not have to wear face masks when teaching virtually and can use closed captioning as a supplemental aid. If remote learning is not an option for this student, clear masks will be provided for all classroom support staff and their classmates.

How will English learners be supported under a hybrid learning model?

If schools have the space and staffing available to bring students back for additional in-person instruction, they will be asked to prioritize English learners for daily in-person learning instead of the two-days-per-week shift schedule. All scheduling decisions will ensure English learners have access to bilingual education services. These decisions will be made with the support of scheduling tools provided to school leaders this summer and will be approved by network chiefs prior to the first day of school.

Will Pre-K students learn-at-home or learn-at-school on Wednesdays?

Pre-K students will learn-at-school every day, including Wednesdays.

What protocols are in place for Pre-K staff when cleaning manipulatives and other classroom objects that are shared by multiple students?

The district's Office of Early Childhood Education will share recommended cleaning protocols for teachers and teacher assistants to clean toys and manipulatives on a regular basis. It is also recommended that schools use a portion of their early childhood education budget to purchase additional high-touch items so that they can be assigned to individual students when possible.

What should a school do to support students with multiple instructional models required per their IEP?

Diverse learners should learn in the least restrictive environment according to their IEP. Inclusion services will continue to be provided while maintaining social distancing. Schools should prioritize selecting a location for resource classrooms that ensures transitions are as quick and infrequent as possible for students to access the appropriate instructional model. Resource teachers should also serve classrooms that are in close proximity whenever possible.

Will IEP meetings be able to be held in-person?

IEP meetings will be able to be held in-person if social distancing and other health guidelines are able to be followed. If health guidelines cannot be followed due to space or occupancy limitations, meetings will need to be held virtually.

Recess, Lunch, Sports, and Out-of-School Programming:

How should schools stagger lunchtime schedules and arrange tables in a cafeteria to ensure social distancing?

CPS Nutrition Support Services and the Office of Student Health and Wellness are working to ensure cafeterias are rearranged appropriately (i.e. removing tables) and develop recommendations for how to schedule meal times. Each school's nutrition operations specialist and food service director will support with making plans for mealtimes prior to the start of SY20–21.

What will lunch and breakfast service look like during at-school learning?

Students will eat breakfast and lunch with their pods in their classrooms or in the lunchroom at staggered times. Lunchrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Will students receive hot or cold lunch? Where should they eat?

The district is working to develop three models to offer hot and cold lunch options:

1. Lunch delivered to classrooms in packaging with lids.
2. Lunch served in the cafeteria with socially distanced seating and appropriate, guiding signage.
3. Students come to the cafeteria to pick up lunch and take their food back to the classroom.

Will students be required to wear masks during lunch?

No, but they will need to stay socially distant from each other.

Will recess be permitted?

Yes; students will remain in their pods and equipment will not be shared.

Will after-school activities continue?

Students will be able to attend OST programming with additional health precautions. Schools will need to schedule OST to maintain existing student pods or form additional, fixed pods specifically for OST programs. Virtual OST programming is encouraged in order to minimize the need for additional pods.

Social and Emotional Wellness

Will students or staff have access to mental health services if there is a severe sickness or death within a school community?

The CPS Crisis Team will be available to support school communities in the event of severe sickness or death. This support includes collaborating with the school staff to develop school support plans and ensure clinical and emotional support for the school community.

Staffing:

Will the district hire more school nurses and custodial staff?

Yes. The Board approved 400 additional custodial positions for SY21, and the district is working to recruit as many of these positions as possible for the start of school. The Board also approved 55 additional

nurse positions for FY21, and 24 have already been hired. The district is sourcing additional candidates in case the Reopening Taskforce adds additional positions.

Will there be a nurse in each school building every day?

Every school has a nurse assigned to them for support. However, current staffing models do not ensure a full-time nurse in every school.

Can schools plan in-person professional development (PD)?

Cross-school professional development must be virtual. Schools can plan in-person professional development for their staff, but it is recommended that teachers only interact in-person with other teachers who work with the same pods of students as them. Per state guidelines, professional development sessions cannot exceed 50 people.

What guidance is available on using substitute teachers to support schools?

Please refer to the district's [guidance for principals on substitutes](#).

Transportation:

Will buses operate? What safety procedures will be implemented on buses?

Buses will be in service when schools reopen; students will be required to use hand sanitizer before they board, wear masks while they ride, and follow ISBE social distancing guidelines (no more than 50 students per bus; students will sit alone or with a member of their household). Bus aides will be required to wear appropriate PPE.

What happens if a student who takes the bus becomes sick?

If a student takes the bus and arrives at school sick, or becomes sick during the school day, the school must contact a parent or legal guardian to come and pick up the student.

What will bus cleaning schedules look like?

Buses will be cleaned after each run.

What will happen if a bus aide or student who rides the bus contracts COVID-19?

Buses will be pulled out of service, cleaned, and disinfected if anyone riding contracts COVID-19.

Where do students go if a bus drops them off early?

If a bus drops students off early, principals will determine a designated area where students can maintain social distancing while waiting for school to start. Possible options include the lunchroom, auditorium, or designated classrooms.

Will students from multiple schools take the same bus?

Some bus routes may have students from multiple schools, but the district will try to limit these routes as much as possible.

What precautions are in place for students taking the CTA to and from school?

CPS is working with the CTA and the city to ensure students are aware and compliant with social distancing and wearing masks on CTA buses and trains and throughout the city.

General Health Guidance

What is Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Symptoms include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

How can students prioritize their health and safety outside of school?

Outside of school, students should maintain social distancing, wash their hands frequently, and follow public health guidance.

Who is at higher risk of severe illness caused by COVID-19?

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

How can I find the latest news about COVID-19?

CPS will be sending out regular updates on COVID-19 and will notify the district as this situation develops. For communication purposes, please ensure the district has your up-to-date emergency contact information. For the most reliable information about COVID-19, please visit chicago.gov/coronavirus or cdc.gov/coronavirus. For district-specific updates, visit cps.edu/coronavirus.

Contacts and further resources

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?

The Chicago Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public at coronavirus@chicago.gov or 312-746-4835. Phone lines are currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day. Please note that this call center can not access COVID-19 testing results. For testing inquiries or results, please contact your healthcare provider.

If you have any CPS-specific or school-related concerns, please reach out to the CPS Command Center by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437) (staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday) or by emailing familyservices@cps.edu.

What are the minimum health requirements for the 2020-21 school year?

Information on the minimum health requirements can be found here in [English](#) or [Spanish](#). These requirements must be completed by October 15, 2020 or upon enrollment. Families who need support obtaining health insurance or finding a provider can call the district's hotline—773-553-KIDS (5437)—or visit <https://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>.

How do I find medical care?

If you need help locating medical care, please reach out to the CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness at oshw@cps.edu or by calling the Healthy CPS Hotline 773-553-KIDS (5437).

What should I do if I or my child is being bullied or experiencing stigma and discrimination because of COVID-19?

Bullying, harassment, and discrimination are always unacceptable. COVID-19 does not distinguish between race, nationality, or geographic borders. Stigma and discrimination against people who have the virus or who have family members with the virus discourages early reporting of symptoms and further perpetuates community spread.

- If there is a concern related to student discrimination or bullying, please reach out to the Office of Student Protections (OSP) by calling 773-535-4400 or by emailing osp@cps.edu. You can also contact the Student Safety Center at 773-553-3335.
- If there is a concern related to staff discrimination, please reach out to the Equal Opportunity Compliance Office (EOCO) by calling 773-553-1013 or by emailing eoco@cps.edu.

What support is available to CPS employees?

If you are experiencing increased stress related to the COVID-19, please contact our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at 1-800-424-4776 or visit magellanascend.com. If you need assistance locating a primary care provider (PCP), please contact BCBSIL at bcbsil.com/members or 1-800-331-8032. Blue Cross Blue Shield and CVS Caremark have made some modifications to their policies to ensure members can easily access the right care and prescriptions. If you participate in these plans, please [click here](#) for more information.

Where can I find further resources?

- For the most reliable information about COVID-19, please visit chicago.gov/coronavirus or cdc.gov/coronavirus. For district-specific updates, visit cps.edu/coronavirus.
- Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick: ([Amharic](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Burmese](#) | [Dari](#) | [English](#) | [Farsi](#) | [French](#) | [Haitian Creole](#) | [Nepali](#) | [Pashto](#) | [Russian](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [Somali](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Swahili](#) | [Tigrinya](#) | [Ukrainian](#) | [Vietnamese](#))
- Caring for yourself at home: ([English](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [Korean](#) | [Vietnamese](#))