



Troup County School System

Back to School

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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1. As a teacher with high risk factors, how can I be assured I will receive a choice to virtually teach in order to best maintain my health during these times of COVID? I also help care for family members who are high risk.

*School principals will decide which staff members will serve as virtual teachers. These decisions will be based on subject needs, class sizes, staff skill sets, medical information provided, and employee choice. If a staff member has underlying health conditions, they should contact Human Resources after speaking with their building administrator. He/she may qualify for FMLA which has several requirements for qualification and limits on compensation and duration of FMLA.*

2. If a teacher is required to quarantine because his/her child's daycare closes will he/she be allowed to virtually teach from home (with a sub in the classroom) until the daycare re-opens?

*Teachers who teach virtually will still be expected to report to their respective school buildings and work from their classrooms or from office spaces provided. If daycare facilities are closed, an employee should contact his/her principal as their first point of contact. The principal will discuss options, which may include FMLA.*

3. How will teachers adequately social distance students within their classrooms and during the day-to-day activities that take place within school?

*Parents will make their decisions regarding the appropriate learning model by next Friday. Classroom setups will be developed after traditional enrollment numbers are gathered from the parent selection process. At this time, masks are required and we will provide face shields for any teacher who requests one.*

4. Will the school system be providing plexi-glass stand-up shields to aid in social distancing students who share tables and teachers to use during small group instruction?

*Face shields or masks will be provided to any teacher requesting them.*

5. The American Academy of Pediatrics first recommended schools should re-open, but since have rescinded that statement (on Friday). Is this something our school district is aware of as it is a recent change?

*We are fully aware of the most recent communication from the American Academy of Pediatrics and we will continue to include their recommendations, as well as those from the CDC and public health officials, as we make decisions. The organization is now saying, in much more detail, that while they believe all students should be in school, it should be done with all safety precautions in mind and decisions should be made by local officials.*

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2020/07/13/trump-administration-cites-american-academy-pediatrics-make-its-case-school-reopening-heres-what-aap-really-said/>

6. When will school start:

*Students will return to school on Monday, August 17<sup>th</sup>. At this time, all other 2020-2021 calendar dates will remain the same.*

7. Will students be required to wear masks?

*Everyone (students, staff, and visitors) will be required to wear masks.*

8. Will students and staff be required to have their temperature checked?

*To identify and isolate those who may be running a temperature, the district has purchased hand-held digital thermometers and high volume walk-through temperature devices for each campus and central offices. Upon arrival to a TCSS facility, students and staff will be required to go through a daily screening process which includes temperature checks.*

9. If my child is sick, what should I do?

*If your child is sick, he/she should remain at home and you should schedule an appointment with your primary care physician. Contact your child's teacher to obtain assignments.*

10. How will each school handle students who become sick at school?

*Students who are sick will be sent to the school nurse clinic. They will be isolated from other students who are in the clinic for routine reasons (e.g. medication, first aid, or other regular treatments) either in a section of the clinic or in another isolation room. Students who are sick must be promptly picked up and are subject to the Return to School Guidelines document.*

11. What will be used to determine a future school closure?

*The TCSS Superintendent and his Cabinet will meet daily to monitor confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases. Decisions to open and to remain open will be based on the safety of staff and students using the latest guidance from external agencies (e.g. Department of Public Health, Center for Disease Control, Georgia Department of Education, etc.).*

12. Will elementary students be allowed to participate in recess?

*Yes, schools may consider staggered times for recess.*

13. Will students be able to participate in physical education, band, and other electives?

*Yes, TCSS is offering electives in both traditional and virtual models.*

14. How is TCVA going to be different from distance learning that parents and teachers experience during the spring 2020 school closure?

*TCSS recently purchased a Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas. Canvas is a more robust online learning system that allows for interactive lessons and classroom work submission. Teachers, students, and parents will receive training on this system at the beginning of the school year.*

15. Will my child automatically be accepted into the virtual learning academy?

*Parents who apply for the TCSS Virtual Academy and agree to support their child in the virtual learning process will be allowed to attend. Parents must complete the [Troup County Virtual Academy Request Form](#).*

16. Can students who are enrolled at THINC participate in virtual learning?

*Yes, THINC will offer virtual learning classes.*

17. How will virtual learning support a student with a disability, 504 plan or English Learner?

*A support team meeting will be held to discuss strategies needed while enrolled in the virtual learning program.*

18. Will my child be able to eat in the cafeteria?

*Cafeteria spaces will be sanitized by the custodial staff prior to students eating meals and after each student group leaves the cafeteria. Students may pick up breakfast and lunch from the cafeteria and eat in the cafeteria or other designated areas. Socially distancing practices will be incorporated into meal serving processes.*

19. Can my child ride the school bus?

*Bus transportation will be provided as normal. Additional sanitization methods will be used, and all passengers will be required to wear a mask while being transported. Hand sanitizing stations will be provided for students as they board the bus.*

20. Will water fountains be available for student and staff use?

*Water fountains will be turned off. Students will be allowed to bring water bottles to school. Water stations will be strategically located throughout the school.*

21. Educators not comfortable bringing their own children back to school really have no option as it stands now. If this teacher is the Virtual teacher, would it be possible for him/her to choose Virtual for their personal child and keep their personal child in their classroom while they are teaching virtually?

*Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis. Employees need to discuss their specific circumstances with their immediate supervisor.*

22. If a teacher has a compromised immune system and is chosen as the Virtual teacher, coming into the building would still potentially expose them to the virus. If this teacher can meet the requirements for teaching virtual lessons from home, would that be an option?

*Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis. Employees need to discuss their specific circumstances with their immediate supervisor.*

23. If teachers don't feel safe with the plan will they be allowed out of contract without any penalties?

*The Professional Standards Commission will be consulted on a case-by-case basis.*

24. I read that students need to face the same direction in the classroom to help mitigate the spread of the virus. That may work at some schools, but we only have tables that are not traditional shapes. How can we keep our students and ourselves safe under these circumstances?

*Desks and other seating will be arranged in classrooms to maximize distance between students as much as possible. Building level administrators may decide to make changes to furniture arrangements that will support social distancing.*

25. I am concerned about how our teaching schedule will be impacted if students are allowed to eat in the classrooms and teachers and students clean the rooms during the day. Will we, as teachers, have a daily planning time to enable us to make sure we are staying on track to provide our students with the instruction they each need? If a "special area" teacher such as P.E. or Music comes into our room for their class, who will make sure our teaching area is sanitized for us before we return to our room?

*Teachers' schedules will include planning time.*

*Sanitization of learning spaces will be the responsibility of all – students, teachers, and custodial staff. Between learning activities, teachers and students should utilize system-provided wipes to clean desks, tables, and frequently touched surfaces.*

26. I read in the proposed plan that if we are exposed to the virus, staff members will be required to stay home. How will this impact our sick leave? If we are exposed at work, it doesn't seem right that we would lose days from our sick leave.

*Employees that are required to stay home due to a positive test result or direct contact will adhere to FMLA guidelines. The Human Resource Department will assist employees with EPSLA and EFMLEA guidelines.*

27. I know there are many students that are either being raised by elderly grandparents or are in multi-generational households. I don't want to lose the life of any one of these that our teachers and students return home to each day. Why is this a risk TCSS is willing to take?

*Virtual learning is an option for students with medically fragile family members.*

28. Students who opt for virtual learning will have the opportunity to take "open book/electronics" tests and quizzes. I think to make it fair and "equal", the students in school should be given the opportunity to also use books, notes, etc. when testing.

*Teachers (virtual and traditional) of the same subject will collaborate in their Professional Learning Communities to collaboratively design assessments and to review data for instructional purposes.*

29. If my personal child must quarantine due to exposure, will the teachers of his other non-quarantined classes film and post their classes so he can keep up?

*With the purchase of Canvas (TCCSS's new Learning Management System), teachers will be able to record lessons, and students will be able to view the lesson asynchronously (not in real time) so your child will be able to view the lesson and keep up when needed.*

30. If I want to give my students the CDC recommended 6 foot distance, I have enough space for approximately 16 students (using all available tables: including computer tables and my teacher table). This isn't bad, but I know it most likely will still not accommodate the number on my roster (even with TCVA students factored out). I just want to make sure that there will be availability of other tables or desks to bring into classrooms to ensure students and parents feel comfortable.

*Desks and other seating will be arranged in classrooms to maximize distance between students as much as possible. Building level administrators may decide to make changes to furniture arrangements that will support social distancing.*

31. The AAP and the CDC have stressed that schools should only reopen with proper safety protocols in place. Can we say we are doing this?

*Yes, TCSS is offering Traditional Instruction with enhanced safety protocols in place and offering the option of Virtual Instruction for families who are unwilling or unable to return.*

32. What if a teacher has decided that the risks of doing this job during a deadly pandemic outweigh the benefits, and they do not want to return this school year? Will they be let out of their contracts with no penalties? Or will they have to surrender their teaching certificate in exchange for their life, or the lives of others?

*The Professional Standards Commission will be consulted on a case-by-case basis.*

33. Could we at least push back the opening of traditional schooling until after Labor Day and re-evaluate then, as some other districts are doing? They aren't even facing the larger quantity of positive cases as we have been, but have made the decision to err on the side of safety and caution.

*TCSS has delayed the first day of school to Monday, August 17th.*

34. Your plan says that face shields are acceptable as an alternative to masks, with the science being that face shields are not an adequate substitute. I think the school system should be prepared to answer why shields are okay in place of masks for teachers, bus riders, students in class, graduates, etc. Personal opinion: I am okay with just face shields, but know we all have different opinions.

*We are providing Face Shields for people who say that masks restrict their airflow or if they have some condition that makes mask wearing difficult.*

35. Will student group work and projects be eliminated? Labs? Will learning be the more traditional lecture style? How will band and chorus work? Physical education classes?

*It depends on the teacher with group work. If the content can be learned in groups electronically, it can happen. PE and Band can be done, but it's going to take some creativity. We are relying on the professional school teacher to work through assignments and curriculum that best fit the needs for student learning.*

36. What are some concrete ways that students with disabilities will be supported if they opt for virtual learning?

*We are providing services for Students with Disabilities. Each student is different and we will work with individual families to ensure all students are accommodated. In a virtual environment, the services will look different, however, we are ready to serve based on student needs.*

37. Who decides if face masks of students need washing? Who makes sure they are wearing them correctly since they will be required.

*Teachers and principals will recognize the need and help assist and/or call upon the parent to make sure the student has clean clothes and gear. Some of our schools have laundry facilities when needed.*

38. Will school nurses and staff charged with working most closely with staff and students who may have COVID be given more protective equipment to wear, similar to what workers in the COVID-testing lines wear?

*Yes, they are well trained and well equipped. We are having separate spaces for students exhibiting COVID symptoms versus the chronically medically fragile students who see nurses regularly for routine medical matters.*

39. What additional cleaning precautions are you doing to keep the buildings and classrooms clean?

*There will be regular cleaning and disinfecting. Additionally, all facilities will be disinfected with Surface Guard 90. The product bonds to high touch surfaces eliminating 99.99% of all bacteria that causes illness and odors for 90 days. Our daily sanitizing methods will enhance the effectiveness of Surface Guard 90.*

40. Are student temperatures going to be checked before they get on the bus? Is this something a bus monitor can do?

*It is not recommended for bus drivers to take student temperatures because by federal guidelines, bus drivers are to assess the environment when the bus is stopped to pick up students. This means they are looking for surrounding traffic, cross streets, and whether all vehicles in the area have stopped. We don't have bus monitors on every bus. Students will be required to wear a face covering on the bus and hand sanitizer will be provided.*

41. Who will sub for teachers when they are out? During a non-COVID-year, teachers are often pulled from planning to sub for other teachers because of the lack of available subs. During this year, more time will be taken for non-instructional things like cleaning, making actual instructional time more important than ever.

*We are currently planning for additional substitute workshops now and during the course of the year to increase the substitute pool.*

42. If a wing has to be closed because of COVID, where will those staff and students go? If a school has to be closed because of COVID, how much notice will parents have, and how will they be notified?

*The closing of a wing or school depends on the level of exposure. For example, if many people were indirectly exposed, they would all be sent home. Another example would be if one positive case that happened to visit several spaces after school, we might shut the wing down and move the classes to an alternative learning space while the rooms are being disinfected.*

*Staff and parents of students will be notified if they have been directly exposed via a phone call from the building level administrator with information about next steps. A complete school or district closure will be communicated via mass communication messaging system. Each case is different and we will work to notify those impacted once a case is confirmed and we know students/staff have been directly exposed.*

43. For Virtual School Attendance: Are there considerations for a student having difficulty with technology attending synchronous sessions? Also, as far as regular communication with teachers, will teachers be expected to check things within a set amount of time?

*Yes, there will be support available for students having difficulty with technology. For elementary students, an adult must be at home with the student and they can receive help from the teacher and the adult. In addition, teachers and students are expected to have contact on many occasions. For example, contact may be in synchronous (live) learning activities, collaborative video conferencing sessions, emails, phone calls, or other appropriate methods.*

44. If the school system has to modify the calendar and takes away scheduled breaks, what about students whose families have already booked trips?

*Currently, all scheduled breaks will remain as listed in the 2020-2021 school calendar.*

45. What about Pre-K?

*Pre-K is a state grant-funded program and subject to the guidelines established by Bright from the Start. As definitive information becomes available, it will be shared with the TCCS preschool community.*

46. Will parents and students be trained on the Canvas? Many parents are going to have a harder time with this than a lot of teachers.

*The schools are currently preparing for parent and student orientation to Canvas during the week of August 10-14. More information will be shared as we get closer to those dates.*

47. What about students who have dual enrollment?

*For students who are in dual enrollment, contact your school counselor as they will be working out the details based on the course, university, high school schedule, and virtual schedule.*