

Long County School System

2020-2021 Reopening Schools: Parent & Community FAQs

General Safety

1. **Will students be allowed to wear a mask?** Yes, students will be permitted to wear masks provided by parents/guardians. Masks must be school appropriate and cannot contain inappropriate, scary, or gory images or messages. We highly recommend that students wear masks on buses and during times of transitions at school.
2. **What are the procedures if a student/staff member has a positive test result?** Guidelines provided by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will be followed. (See Screening for and Responding to COVID-19 in K -12 Schools below.)
3. **Will social distancing be enforced? How?** Yes, to the extent possible. Student desks/tables will be separated as much as possible. Students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms. Schedules are being developed so that transitions are limited as much as possible.
4. **Will schools coordinate with DPH for contact tracing?** Yes, we have been in close communication with the Long County Health Department and Coastal Health District since the pandemic began and will continue to coordinate with these agencies to gather their recommendations for keeping our schools and community safe.
5. **What will be the policy for a child to return who previously had a fever?** Guidelines provided by the Georgia Department of Public Health will be followed. (See Screening for and Responding to COVID-19 in K -12 Schools below.)
6. **Will temperature checks be conducted at the schools and how will this be done?** Yes, staff and students will participate in temperature checks as they enter the buildings each morning.
7. **Why would we go back and put students at risk?** It is our goal to meet the physical, social, emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of our students. We plan to do this as safely as possible. At this time, State and Federal officials have recommended that schools open.
8. **Will students be required to use hand sanitizer when entering/exiting classrooms?** Hand sanitizer will be provided in classrooms and hallways.

Students will be taught the importance of using hand sanitizer and encouraged to use it throughout the day.

9. **How will mental health be addressed for those students displaying fear or anxiety?** Counselors have received training that will be utilized to support students and staff. Counselors will provide training during pre-planning to provide school employees with strategies and skills needed to support the social and emotional needs of children during a pandemic.
10. **If and when a vaccine is available, will it be mandatory for students who return for in-person schools?** We will follow State guidelines and rules for student immunizations.
11. **Will students be required to have a negative COVID-19 test result in order to come back to school?** Guidelines provided by the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) will be followed. (See Screening for and Responding to COVID-19 in K -12 Schools below.)
12. **How often will the schools be cleaned and disinfected?** High-touch spots will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. Deep cleaning will occur daily. Locations in which a sick student or staff member has been will be closed, deep cleaned, and sanitized before reopening.
13. **Can you guarantee that my child will not get COVID-19 if they return to school?** No, unfortunately, we cannot. We will closely monitor our students and staff and adhere to DPH guidelines in an effort to limit the spread.
14. **Will students need to bring their own hand sanitizer?** No. Students will be permitted to bring their own, but it is not required since the schools will provide it.
15. **If masks are not mandatory, what will be done to address students that are bullied who wear a mask?** Principals will follow disciplinary procedures and administer appropriate consequences.
16. **How often will manipulatives (blocks, games, etc.) be cleaned during the day for the younger grades?** These types of materials will be cleaned in between uses by different groups of students.
17. **For family members with health conditions, how can you assure that children that go to school will not infect these individuals?** We can only assure you that we will closely monitor our students and staff and adhere to DPH guidelines in an effort to limit the spread.
18. **Will each school have a designated place to quarantine students/staff with suspected sickness?** Yes, an isolation area will be established at each school.

Transportation

1. **How will transportation (buses) work? Social distancing?** The distance between bus riders will be determined by the number of students on the bus. We are asking parents/guardians to transport their children, if possible. We are also offering a virtual learning option. We expect these two factors to reduce the number of bus riders, which will allow for increased spacing between students on buses.
2. **How many students will be on each bus?** We cannot determine that number at this time due to factors included in the question above.
3. **Will parent pick ups and drop offs be at the normal times?** Parent drop off time has been extended. Parents can drop off students at schools beginning at 7:10 a.m. Afternoon parent pick ups may be staggered to avoid large congregations. Schools are working on schedules and procedures for parent pick up and will share those with parents when finalized.
4. **Will bus monitors be provided to help on the buses?** Our Board of Education has approved the hiring of bus monitors for elementary and middle school buses. We will advertise these positions soon.

School Nutrition

1. **Will students be required to socially distance during lunches/breakfast?** For a minimum of the first nine-weeks of school, students will eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms with as much social distancing as possible.
2. **Will meals be provided to students who enrolled in the virtual learning option?** This cannot be determined until after the enrollment period for our virtual learning option ends on July 21st.
3. **How will lunches be served and what type of foods will be provided?** Students will walk to the cafeteria (practicing social distancing as much as possible), pick up their lunches, and return to their classrooms to eat. Menu items will be similar to what students have enjoyed in the past, but will be packaged so that they can be easily carried to the classrooms.
4. **Will students be allowed to bring lunches from home?** Yes. The only change related to bringing food from home is that students will not be allowed to bring homemade snacks to share with their classmates. When a parent volunteers to provide snacks for a class for birthdays, special events, or any other occasion, we will require that the snacks are store-bought, pre-packaged, and individually wrapped.

General Questions

1. **When will the new school year begin?** Students will return to school on August 10th. Students enrolled in our virtual learning option will begin on August 17th. Teachers will return to work on July 24th and paraprofessionals will return on August 3rd. Our student start date was delayed one week to allow additional time for our teachers and support staff to participate in training for new sanitation practices, safety procedures, and facilitation of virtual learning.
2. **Will parents be allowed to eat breakfast or lunch with students?** Unfortunately, the answer is no. Visitors will not be permitted beyond the school lobbies to protect our students and staff from potential exposures.
3. **Will the attendance policy be modified so that parents do not feel pressured to send sick students to school?** Yes, we are currently exploring revised attendance guidelines.
4. **Will students and parents have the option of online or in-person schooling?** Yes, our registration for the virtual learning option is open through 11:59 p.m. on July 21st. Virtual learning will be provided through the Edgenuity platform. Virtual students will be taught by Edgenuity, with a facilitator providing support from the Long County School System. Please see our “Virtual Learning Option Guidelines” at www.longcountyps.com.
5. **Will students be required to make up school work from last year?** No. Our teachers have collaborated across grade levels and developed lesson plans that will address learning gaps from previous grades during the first few weeks of school.
6. **How will safety drills be handled?** We will follow recommendations from the Georgia Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner. These recommendations include following a rotation schedule for drills so that the number of students in hallways and exiting the building at the same time will be limited.
7. **How will the school know if the student is doing online assignments themselves?** Long County Schools staff will be closely monitoring and facilitating the Edgenuity platform.
8. **When is Open House and how will it be conducted?** Principals are currently planning Open House events for each school. Open House will be held outdoors with limited numbers of participants and/or virtually. Dates will be announced as soon as plans are finalized.
9. **Will the school day start at the normal time?** Yes. The only change to our morning schedule will be parent drop-off beginning at 7:10.

10. **If schools are closed again, will student packets be issued?** If schools are required to close, all of our students will be served through the virtual Edgenuity platform. Supplemental packets may be necessary for certain grade levels.
11. **How will grading be processed if schools are required to close?** Long County Schools facilitators will process grades virtually using assignments and assessments completed independently by students at home in the Edgenuity platform.
12. **Will parents be required to purchase school supplies?** For students who return to face-to-face learning at the school buildings, parents will be asked to purchase basic school supplies. Teachers made every effort to minimize the supply lists to avoid financial hardships for families. Supply lists are being shared on our websites and social media. For students who participate in the virtual learning option, parents will be asked to provide the necessary supplies, manipulatives, and materials for experiments and projects. These supply lists will be available at the beginning of each Edgenuity module.
13. **Will I be allowed to walk with my child to class in the mornings? What about on the first day of school?** No. In an effort to limit exposures, visitors will not be allowed beyond the front lobby, including the first day of school.

School Day Procedures

1. **What will the school day look like?** We will make every effort to make the school day as normal as possible for our students while taking necessary precautions. A few significant changes will include eating meals in classrooms, elimination of large group programs and assemblies, limiting transitions, and increased teaching and practicing of good hygiene.
2. **Will students be able to play and interact with other students during recess?** Yes, with social distancing being encouraged by the teachers. Recess schedules are being developed so that students remain with the same group of children throughout the day to limit exposures.
3. **Will extracurricular activities (AR parties, trunk-or-treat, dances) continue?** As of now, there will be no extracurricular activities that involve large groups of students and/or adults. Extracurricular activities may be planned within individual classes or small cohorts of classes. If our community spread of COVID-19 improves during the school year and it becomes safe to have large group gatherings again, we hope to return to hosting normal extracurricular activities.

4. **Will students be able to play sports?** All athletic activities and events are dependent upon the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) recommendations.
5. **Will students be able to go to PE and other exploratories?** Yes. Students will remain with their individual classes or small cohorts of classes, to the extent possible. PE locations will be divided between gyms and outdoor spaces (when weather permits) to avoid large groups of students in the gyms at the same time.
6. **What is the procedure for students using the restrooms?** Restroom procedures will remain similar to what they have been in the past, with age-appropriate variations depending on the grade level. This year, social distancing will be promoted by school staff and increased training on proper handwashing will be provided.
7. **Will water fountains be open? If not, what are the procedures for students to have water?** Water fountains will be closed. Parents are encouraged to send water in refillable bottles or disposable bottled water with students. Disposable bottled water will be provided to students with school lunches.
8. **How will band classes be conducted?** Band students will social distance as much as possible. There will be no sharing of instruments.
9. **Will the Georgia Milestones be given next year?** Georgia has requested a waiver from the US Department of Education for state-mandated testing. At this time, we do not know whether the waiver has been granted.
10. **Is the online curriculum different from in-person instruction?** Yes, virtual students will not receive direct instruction from Long County Schools' teachers. Virtual students will be assigned digital learning modules available in the Edgenuity platform. For more information about the platform, please visit [edgenuity.com](https://www.edgenuity.com) or view the Edgenuity video posted on our websites and social media.
11. **How will dual enrollment work this year?** Dual enrollment courses will continue to be available to eligible high school students. Students will be required to satisfy guidelines established by the participating colleges and universities.
12. **What will the procedure be for changing classes?** Teaching assignments and schedules have been developed to limit the number of times students must transition as much as possible. During times of changing classes, students will be encouraged to social distance to the extent possible. We highly recommend that students bring masks from home to wear during transitions.

Virtual Learning

1. **Would computers and internet access be provided to families who enroll students in the virtual learning option?** Parents who elect for their students to participate in the virtual learning option will need to provide a computer/device, internet, and access to a phone for their students. (Please see Virtual Learning Option Guidelines) posted on our websites.
2. **Will students have access to their teacher?** Students participating in the virtual online option will have pre-scheduled times to contact their teachers. These times will be dependent upon the teacher's daily classroom schedule.
3. **If students choose online education, do they have to commit to this option for a certain amount of time?** Yes, we are requesting that students who are enrolling in the virtual learning option remain virtual learners until the end of the first semester (December 18, 2020)
4. **What support will be offered to family members of students enrolled in the virtual learning option if they cannot help their child academically?** Teachers will be available during designated times to answer questions. However, our Virtual Learning Option General Guidelines indicate that "Courses will require a significant commitment by parents/guardians to help facilitate virtual learning." The Edgenuity platform requires each student to have a learning coach in his/her home to provide support.
5. **How many hours per day should students participating in the virtual learning option expect to spend working in the Edgenuity platform?** The amount of required time will depend upon the pace at which each individual student works.

We understand that parents and students may have additional questions that have not been addressed. Therefore, we will continue to update this information as new community questions and guidance from health officials are received. If you have additional questions concerning the reopening of schools, please email Ms. Dana Green, our Parent/Family Coordinator, at dgreen@longcountyschools.org. Please understand that the responses to our FAQs are subject to change based upon information and recommendations from the Georgia Department of Education, as well as local and state health officials.

Screening for and Responding to COVID-19 in K-12 Schools:

https://www.georgiainsights.com/uploads/1/2/2/2/122221993/dph_-_screening_for_and_responding_to_covid-19_in_k-12_schools.pdf