

Guidelines for Reopening Thomas County Schools

6/24/2020

This document is a draft of guidelines for reopening Thomas County Schools. These guidelines are subject to change to enhance safety and security for students and staff.

Based on the latest guidance from the Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Department of Public Health recommendations and in consultation with state/local officials, Thomas County Schools will follow the guidelines listed for reopening schools:

- Student/staff/community safety is the priority when schools open.
- The school nurse will be the school's main point of contact concerning COVID 19. The school system will conduct temperature checks of students and staff daily. Students and employees with COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature of 100.4 and above will be immediately isolated and sent home. Local health officials will be notified immediately for guidance on next steps, including closures.
- Students and employees must stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms, tested positive for COVID-19 or had close contact with a person with COVID-19 within the last 14 days. Employees and parents/guardians are asked to self-report to the school nurse. A written physician's release will be required for return. Quarantined students will have access to their education through virtual learning; Thomas County Schools will not have perfect attendance awards or programs for the school year.
- Students and employees will be reminded to wash their hands throughout the day. We encourage all to be sure to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and to place the tissue in the trash and immediately wash their hands.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout each building. Students and staff are also encouraged to bring hand sanitizer from home. To promote COVID-19 protective measures, signs will be posted in highly visible locations and schools will broadcast daily messages. Schools and departments will develop a schedule for increased cleaning and disinfection. Buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Students will be provided reusable masks by the school system. Disposable masks will be provided for students who lose or forget their reusable mask until they are able to find or replace their reusable mask. **The wearing of masks will be required on school buses and in hallways during class changes. Masks will be optional in classrooms.** The guidance on masks is subject to change based on public health guidance and the community spread rate.
- Based upon classroom configuration and to the extent possible, student desks will face in the same direction and students seated at tables will sit on the same side. The sharing

of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect will be discouraged. While ensuring the safety of children, to the extent possible, student meals may take place in ways that allow safe distancing including classrooms, cafeteria, and outdoor areas. Traditional water fountains will be closed. Students and staff are encouraged to bring bottled water. Non-essential student movement throughout the school day will be limited. Outdoor recess will be continued but the number of students gathered in one area will be limited.

- Nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations will be limited. In lieu of field trips, assemblies, special performances, and school-wide meetings or events, including open house and curriculum nights, virtual activities will be pursued. Parent/guardian teacher conferences will be held virtually, if possible. Guidance from the Georgia High School Association (GHSA) will be followed for school athletics.