



Class Size/Spacing Requirements, Movement Operations

(UPDATED September 8, 2021)

Updated to reflect mask requirement extension enacted by Johnson City Board of Education during September 7 meeting. The requirement may be reconsidered at January board meeting if COVID-19 infections in region significantly decrease.

Return to In-Person Protocols

- All desks will be arranged to face the same direction toward the front of the classroom with as much space between them as possible.
- Starting on Tuesday, August 17, masks will be required for all students and staff. Parents can opt their students out after completing a form that will be available on their school's website. Students who are 18 and older are also able to opt out of the requirement.
- Teachers will wear appropriate masks which cover the mouth and nose and/or shields and maintain three feet of spacing between themselves and students as much as possible. Teachers will not need to wear masks when teaching from the front of the room or in small groups when appropriately distanced.
- Strict seating charts will be maintained to help identify close contacts. In schools where students move from class-to-class, universal seating charts will need to be implemented.
- Appropriate masks will be provided for any student or staff when requested.
- Classroom windows will be open when possible and conditions allow.
- Teachers may utilize small groups/centers as long as it is consistent with seating charts.

Movement Operations

- Flow of foot traffic within the building will be directed in only one direction if possible.
 - If one-way flow is not possible, hallways can be divided with either side following the same direction.
- Staggered movements of groups at incremental intervals will be used when feasible to minimize the number of people in the hallways.
- Teachers should use all appropriate green spaces/play areas when taking students outside to help support social distancing.

Protocols for Screening Students

The CDC does not recommend temperature screening of students. If any screening does occur, it will comply with privacy and HIPAA requirements.

- Students are allowed to enter the building at designated sites and must egress from other exits to keep traffic moving in a single direction.
 - Parents/visitors are not allowed in the school building except with prior appointments; adults entering the building will wash or sanitize hands prior to entering, practice social distancing.
 - Any volunteers working with students will be required to wear a mask.
 - Strict records, including day and time, will be kept of all people entering the building.
- Parents should check the student's temperature at home every morning using oral, tympanic, or temporal scanners; students with a temperature of 100 or above will stay home and consider coronavirus testing if no other explanation is available.
- Parents will monitor any cough, congestion, shortness of breath, or gastrointestinal symptoms every morning. Any positives will require the parent to keep the student home from school.
- Children who become ill at school will be placed in an area of isolation. Nurses will wear appropriate PPE when caring for these students.
- When students return to school after an illness, they will check in with the school administration to ensure proper communication with health officials.

Testing Protocols for Students and Responding to Positive Cases

- Students who develop fever or fall ill at school will be kept in an area of isolation until they can be transported off campus. They will be transported by a parent, or ambulance if clinically unstable, for off-site testing. If any student tests positive, immediate efforts will be made to identify any close contacts (those who spent more than 15 minutes in close proximity to the student.) Information about close contacts will be shared with the Tennessee Department of Health, Northeast Regional Health Office (the "Health Department") which will determine if contacts are required to quarantine. At this time, testing of all students in the class is not recommended; only those who develop symptoms require testing.
- Parents will check the student's temperature at home every morning using oral, tympanic, or temporal scanners; students with a temperature of 100 above are required to stay home and consider coronavirus testing if no other explanation is available.
- Parents will monitor their children for any cough, congestion, shortness of breath, or gastrointestinal symptoms every morning. Any positives will require the parent to keep the student home from school and seek out testing.

Dining

Non-school system adults will be allowed to enter the school to eat with their child at a designated area separate from any other families if space is available. Parents/guardians may leave meals for students in the office.

- Students may wear appropriate masks that cover the nose and mouth while in the cafeteria except while they are seated and eating.
- Efforts will be made to decrease the number of students in the cafeteria when possible.
- Students, teachers, and cafeteria staff will wash their hands before and after every meal.
- Students may bring food from home.
- School-supplied meals will be served through the serving areas with disposable utensils.
- Serving lines will be sanitized after each group of students.
- Mealtimes will be staggered to create seating arrangements with three feet of distance.
- Disposable utensils will be employed and presented per child (instead of children reaching and selecting them themselves).
- Serving and cafeteria staff may use barrier protection, including gloves, face shields, and surgical masks.
- Open selection of food (salad bars, self-serve stations) will be closed or manned by an adult to avoid multiple surface touches.
- Selection of food will be monitored by an adult to avoid multiple surface touches and by methods recommended by public health officials.

Gathering and Extracurricular Activities

- Students and teachers will wash their hands before and after every event.
- Off-site field trips are discontinued.
- Inter-school activities may continue if bus transportation is provided and students wear masks throughout the transport period. Schools may elect to discontinue these activities if community transmission rises.
- After-school programs may continue with optional face masks. Schools may elect to discontinue these activities if community transmission rises.

Protocols for Athletic Activities

We will follow guidance from the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA).

Personal Protective Equipment and Cleaning Protocols

Use of physical distancing measures is designed to create layers of redundancy, recognizing that students are unlikely to be able to maintain full compliance at all times. They are designed to minimize the risk of transmission as much as possible while still allowing for feasibility, flexibility, and ease of use.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment and Hand Washing

- All staff and students may always wear appropriate face masks; staff and students may provide their own masks and masks will be made available for those who need one. Masks must be appropriate and will be worn to cover both the mouth and the nose.
- Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after changing classrooms.
- Students and teachers will have scheduled hand washing with soap and water every 2-3 hours, when practical.
- Gloves are not required except for janitorial staff or teachers cleaning their classrooms.

Cleaning Protocols

Coronaviruses on hard surfaces can survive for hours to days. Exposure to sunlight and higher temperatures is expected to diminish their survival, but the exact amount of time required remains unclear. At this point, more aggressive cleaning practices are recommended in order to err on the side of caution.

- Routine cleaning with standard soap and water will remove germs and dirt and lower the risk of spreading SARS-CoV-2.
- School campuses will undergo cleaning on a daily basis.
- Frequently touched surfaces, including lights, doors, benches, bathrooms, etc., will undergo cleaning with either an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) or diluted bleach solution ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup bleach in 1 gallon of water) at least twice daily.
- Libraries, computer labs, arts, and other hands-on classrooms will undergo standard cleaning procedures per normal operating status.
- Student desks may be wiped down with either an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#)

Busing and Student Transportation

There will be an anticipated increase in car rider traffic; please allow for additional time at drop-off and pick-up locations.

- Appropriate face masks will always be worn by all staff and students. Masks will be worn to cover both the mouth and the nose.
- Windows will be open when possible and conditions allow.
- Unloading and loading of buses at school will be staggered to minimize mixing of students as they enter school and to allow three feet of distance while entering through designated entry points.

Seats and handrails will be wiped down with either an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#) or diluted bleach solution before and after every ride.

Conclusion

These procedures establish a framework to plan and implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school. While informed by evidence and global best practices, it is limited by the boundaries of scientific knowledge about the COVID-19 virus. There remains epidemiological uncertainty, a lack of established precedent, and insufficient data to make recommendations that entirely remove risk from returning to school. It is likely, despite implementation of all the recommendations in this report and the safety protocol appendices that follow, educators and students may still be infected and develop COVID-19. The risk cannot be driven to absolute zero.

In those instances, there is clearly a risk calculus that will have to be considered by Johnson City Schools and the Health Department. These risks will need to be communicated to the public so that an informed decision can be made on whether the benefits of returning to school outweigh the risks.

The recommendations provided within are in line with best practices being used in the state of Tennessee. Our hope is that these procedures provides those leaders with the information needed to make the difficult decisions ahead in the safest and most informed manner possible.