

Appling County School System
2022-2023
Return to School Plan
Revised 5/31/2022



1. ACSS COVID-19 Safety

Protocol

- a. [Cleaning and Hygiene](#)
- b. [Monitoring for Symptoms](#)
- c. [Immunization Requirements](#)
- d. [Transportation](#)
- e. [Serving Meals](#)
- f. [Clinics and Student Health](#)
- g. [Coping and Resilience](#)
- h. [Communication](#)
- i. [Athletics and Extracurricular Activities](#)
- j. [School Calendar](#)
- k. [Attendance](#)

2. Individual School Plans

- a. [School Plans](#)

1. ACSS Opening School

Families and students should use this action plan to understand what health practices will be in place when students return to school. Each of our 6 schools and programs are different; different ages of students, different building layouts, different technology devices, different daily schedules. Therefore, each school will have a slightly different approach to implementing the district's action plan. Individual schools may provide additional information about steps they are taking for their students and staff. Regardless of location, student and staff safety is our number one priority.

a. Cleaning and Hygiene

ABM-Contracted Cleaning Service

- ABM Industries will conduct a reentry diagnostic of the school system
- New workforce protocols / Training of Disinfection Specialist will be put into place
- ABM will deliver and place Communication Tools throughout the buildings
- Trained custodians will wipe down all high touch areas throughout each building at least two times per day; once during occupied hours and then again during the nightly cleaning
- Trained custodians will damp wipe disinfect restrooms at least twice per day; once during occupied hours and then again during the nightly clean
- A trained ABM Enhanced Clean Specialist will conduct Electrostatic Misting of all facilities WEEKLY
- Adequate supplies will be provided by ABM Industries to support proper handwashing throughout the day (ex. Hand soap and paper towels).

Additional Cleaning & Hygiene

Washing hands with soap for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol reduces the spread of disease.

- Adequate supplies will be provided to support healthy hygiene behaviors throughout the day (ex. hand soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, wipes). Parents may also send in donations of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, and facial tissues for their child's classroom.
- Staff will review with students the proper handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and allow for regular handwashing breaks throughout the school day.
- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be provided at main building entrances, in the cafeteria, classrooms, and in strategic areas. These will be systematically checked and refilled. Children will be supervised in the use of these products.
- Staff and students will be encouraged to cough and sneeze into their elbows or to cover with a tissue.

- Applying County custodial staff will clean and disinfect on a regular basis to ensure viral spread via surfaces is minimized.
- Shared items that cannot be consistently disinfected will be discouraged (stuffed toys, balls, etc.)
- Student personal items (such as pens, crayons, and scissors) should be kept separately in individual lockers, cubbies, or containers.
- Doors at main entrances to schools will be held open at the START and FINISH of each school day to limit touching door handles.
- Areas used by a sick person will be closed off and not used before cleaning and disinfection by custodial staff.

b. Monitoring for Symptoms

Conducting regular screening for symptoms and ongoing self-monitoring throughout each school day can help reduce exposure. Staff and students are encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath. If a student develops symptoms throughout the day, they must notify an adult immediately.

Periodic health screenings, including temperature checks, may be applied as directed by the principal and school nurse.

Upon arrival to school each day, temperature checks will be performed using no-contact thermometers for all staff and students. Principals will coordinate screening stations for parent/student drop-offs (temp screened from the car), student walk-ups, student drivers, staff arrivals, etc. Students who ride the bus will have their temperature screened before they are allowed to ride the bus. See transportation section for further information pertaining to students who ride the bus. Also, see each school's individual plan for more information regarding screenings.

The most critical tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19 is any student or staff who is ill or has been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 not attending work/school. Thus, no staff or student who has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, is COVID-19 positive, or has been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 within the previous 14 days will be allowed to be in school, unless they have received both vaccines within the past 90 days. To return to work/school the ill or exposed individual must meet requirements outlined in the **Return to School Guidance** – see updated DPH guidance on the Appling BOE website.

Please also keep in mind that children will still get sick with illnesses that are not COVID-19. To err on the side of caution, additional safety measures will be taken regarding all health issues. All students who are out sick with a fever will be required to be fever-free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine before being allowed to return to school.

By sending your child to school, you are attesting that your child is healthy, has been fever-free for 24 hours, and has met these requirements in the Return to School Guidance.

During this time, limited visitors will be allowed into the schools. If it is deemed necessary to access the building, outside visitors to schools (parents, district office staff, vendors, etc.) will need to make appointments and abide by the following guidelines: wear a mask covering both nose and mouth, complete a symptom checklist, and submit to a temperature screening before entering the building.

c. Immunization Requirements

We understand that many parents were hesitant to take their child(ren) to their doctor or health departments during the height of the pandemic due to concern about viral transmission. While that is understandable, Appling County School System cannot waive state and federal requirements that students be up-to-date on immunizations. Students must be up-to-date on vaccinations to prevent the recurrence of diseases, as bad as, or worse than, COVID-19.

Appling County School System has worked with the local Health Department, and they will be offering opportunities for parents to catch their children up on vaccinations in a safe environment.

Students can be provisionally enrolled at the beginning of the year if they do not have required vaccinations, but only for 30 calendar days. After that, students will be withdrawn until they are in compliance with requirements.

Please note the REQUIRED Meningococcal booster shot for sixteen-year-olds, will go into effect July 1st, 2021. Other required immunizations remain in place and should be reviewed by parents.

d. Transportation

Physical distancing is most challenging on a school bus due to the limited space available. Strict physical distancing between riders of 6 feet is not practical, as it would require as few as 12 riders per bus. **All students must wear a mask while riding the bus** to and from school. ACSS transportation is also taking the following steps:

- All riders will be assigned seats on the bus.
- Buses will be cleaned after each route, each day. To the extent possible, buses will also be sprayed down with disinfecting spray between routes.
- Students' temperatures will be checked by the bus driver before the student boards the bus in the A.M. and P.M. If your child has a temperature, he/she will not be allowed to board the bus. The bus driver will complete the [Temperature Screening Letter](#) and it will be given back to the parent.
- Students will be required to use hand sanitizer (provided) before they board the bus.
- **Masks will be required on the bus for drivers.**
- For confirmed COVID cases, buses will be taken out of service to be disinfected.
- To maximize air circulation, roof hatches and windows will be opened. Air conditioners will be allowed to run.
- Response protocols are in place for how to handle sick students at a stop location and for identifiable illness while students are on the bus.
- Children who become sick during the day may not ride the bus home.

If you would like for your child/children to ride the bus to/from school for the 2021/2022 school year, please complete the form below and return to your bus driver on the first day of school.

[Bus Waiver Form](#)

b. Serving Meals

Cafeteria service will be handled differently at each school location in Appling County. Children's age, cafeteria size, employee staffing, and the principal's input will influence student meal service. The following practices will be implemented across the district:

- Students will be provided the opportunity for handwashing before and after meal service. In addition, hand sanitizing stations will be at the beginning of each serving line, and proper use will be encouraged.
- Various mitigation measures will be used as much as possible during lunch serving times, including:
 - Physical distancing at tables between students
 - Staggered meal times to allow more time between groups
 - Additional cleaning and sanitizing of tables between groups
- All meals will include disposable utensils and will be served on disposable trays.
- Numerical charts will be utilized for meal counting and claiming at all schools so students do not have to use pin pads to enter their lunch number.
- Cleaning of the meal serving area, cafeteria, and high touch surfaces will be conducted throughout the school day.

c. Clinics and Student Health

Clinics at our schools are being outfitted with additional resources. The following steps will also be taken in our school clinics:

- Students/Staff who are sick at school will be sent to school nurse clinic. They will be masked and isolated from others in the clinic for routine reasons (e.g. medication, first aid, or other regular treatments) either in a separate section of the clinic or in another isolation room, depending on the school and clinic size.
- Students who are sick must be promptly picked up and are subject to the **DPH Return to School Guidelines**.
- Sick students will remain isolated until parents arrive for pick up.
- SRO, Principal, Students Services Coordinator, and nurses will coordinate to contact parents/guardians of sick students, if necessary.
- Staff who are sick will be sent home immediately, with administrative support, and are subject to the **DPH Return to School Guidelines**.
- Face masks will be used for sick persons with respiratory symptoms and fever over 100.4, if tolerated by the person and developmentally appropriate.
- Schools are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19. If a school has cases of COVID-19, local health officials will help identify those individuals and will follow up on next steps.
- Students and staff who become ill are encouraged to seek treatment and consultation with their personal healthcare provider or the local health department. If warranted, a COVID-19 test is also recommended.
- Staff and parents of sick students will be referred to their healthcare providers or DPH to determine an appropriate return to school date.
- School nurses will work closely with local DPH and primary care providers and follow their guidance and recommendations in every case.

- Sick staff members and students are not to return to school until they have met state DPH/CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- School nurses in collaboration with principals, will support students, their parents and our staff.
- When cases of COVID-19, either for students or staff, are confirmed, the system will work with local health authorities to respond rapidly. Response will be dictated by the nature of each case. For positive COVID-19 cases, contact tracing will be done by each school's situation team to determine exposed individuals. Exposed persons will be quarantined according to DPH return to school guidelines. Required DPH reports will be submitted by the school nurse for positive and exposed individuals.

d. Coping and Resilience

The outbreak of COVID-19 can be stressful for many. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Schools play an important role in helping students and staff cope and build resilience to support the well-being of the school community.

- ACSS staff will participate in training to ensure they are prepared to support students' social emotional learning. Counselors and student service coordinators will also be on hand to support students as needed.
- We encourage staff, students, and families to talk with trusted individuals concerning their feelings about COVID-19.
- Additional mental health services are available for students, families, and staff. Please contact your school's counselor for more information.

[COVID-19 Information for Students, Parents & Professionals](#)

e. Communication

We are very focused on communicating as clearly and thoroughly as possible during these times. We do our best to share decisions as they are made and additional information about what to expect for the next school year.

- Please ensure that your contact information is up to date for your child(ren). Make sure the school your child is enrolled in has an updated email, phone numbers, and mailing addresses.
- We anticipate sending more communication, as we get closer to school to communicate any changes or updates. Along with your email, we will share updates on our district website, Facebook, Shoutpoint Messenger that should send to your home phone/cell phone/text and email. Signs will be posted throughout all school buildings reminding students and staff of recommended healthy hygiene practices. Students will be reminded of proper hand washing and covering techniques for coughs and sneezes.
- Once school starts, there may be situations where a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. Each case will be evaluated individually. Schools will communicate with the involved students and families as needed. Due to HIPPA and privacy requirements, we will not be identifying individuals with COVID-19, and we ask that others not speculate about such instances.

f. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities

The school district's ability to continue sports programs will be determined in large part by Georgia High School Association (GHSA) rules and regulations, along with guidance from health officials. Each local school will determine in which extracurricular activities students will be able to participate. The school system reserves the prerogative to enforce more stringent guidelines than GHSA.

g. School Calendar

Please note that all currently scheduled breaks (Fall, Thanksgiving, Winter and Spring) will remain as listed in the 2021-22 school calendar. However, the entire calendar may have to be modified during the year to accommodate circumstances or the spread of COVID-19. The most current calendar will be posted to the Appling County School's district website.

h. Attendance

In order to avoid creating any incentives for ill individuals to attend school/work, all perfect attendance awards, school monthly attendance awards, and all other attendance incentives will be waived for the 2021-22 school year. Appling County School System cannot completely waive truancy requirements in Georgia law, but will reduce some of the letters/paperwork sent home due to absences. Schools will work with parents to resolve attendance issues related to illness.

Appling County School System is committed to continuing school in a way that is safe and responsive to the needs of our families and communities. Unless directed to do otherwise by the Governor or Georgia Department of Public Health, school will open on August 2, 2021.

a. Face to Face Learning

- Learning occurs in traditional classroom settings with accommodations for physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting, and symptom monitoring
- Students receive quality instruction on all grade-level standards.
- Full school day, Monday-Friday, students will follow class schedule.

Appling County Primary School

Before school starts:

- Designated school personnel will be located in the front lobby to assist students to classrooms.
- During the school day, all visitors will be required to wear their own mask from home if deemed necessary and have their temperature checked before entering school building.
- Students and staff members with health concerns are encouraged to wear their own mask from home if deemed necessary. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended to students and staff with health concerns.

Instructional Day:

- Students will become familiar with school's digital platforms. Students will complete daily digital platform assignments to ensure familiarity with school's digital platforms.
- Throughout the school day, the use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.

Recess

- A daily recess schedule will be created for teachers to ensure a minimal number of students are on the playground at the same time.

Bathroom

- All classrooms have restroom and sinks for student use.

Lunch

- The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended for students' use prior to eating lunch.

Dismissal of students

- ACPS already has designated areas for each grade for parent dismissal; therefore, this is not an issue.
 - Pre-K and K students will dismiss using Pre-K drop-off area
 - 1st and 2nd grade students will dismiss using ACPS drop-off area
- Bus riders are dismissed by classrooms.

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Appling County Elementary School

Before school starts:

- Students and staff will be allowed to wear their own face masks from home, should they deem it necessary.
- All students and staff are encouraged to wash hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
- During the school day, all visitors will be allowed to wear their own mask from home. Use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.

Instructional Day:

- Students will become familiar with school's digital platforms. Students will complete daily digital platform assignments to ensure familiarity with school's digital platforms.
- Before departmentalized classes switch, teacher and students will clean work area and touched surfaces to prevent the spread of germs.
- Resources classes will dismiss five minutes early for resource teachers to sanitize between classes and prevent groups from encountering each other in the hallways.
- Classes will be assigned entry and access areas to minimize interaction of classes.
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands frequently and use hand sanitizer throughout school day.

Recess

- Classes will be assigned times and designated playgrounds by grade level to aid in outside social distancing.

Restroom

- Teachers will limit the number of students going to the restroom at one time. The paraprofessionals will assist with students going to the restrooms and making sure students wash their hands before leaving the restrooms. Hand sanitizer will be available for students to use throughout the school day.

Dismissal of students

- ACES already has designated areas for parent dismissal; therefore, this is not an issue.
- Teachers will be assigned duty to assist with student dismissal
- Students will dismiss using ACES drop-off area
- Bus riders are dismissed by classrooms and escorted by teachers to the buses.

Altamaha Elementary School

Before school starts:

- Students and staff will be allowed to wear their own face masks from home, should they deem it necessary.
- All students and staff are encouraged to wash hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
- During the school day, all visitors will be allowed to wear their own mask from home. Use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.

Instructional Day:

- Students will become familiar with school's digital platforms. Students will complete daily digital platform assignments to ensure familiarity with school's digital platforms.
- Before departmentalized classes switch, teacher and students will clean work area and touched surfaces to prevent the spread of germs.
- Resources classes will dismiss five minutes early for resource teachers to sanitize between classes and prevent groups from encountering each other.
- Classes will be assigned entry and access areas to minimize interaction of classes.
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.

Recess

- Classes will have scheduled recess times and designated playgrounds to prevent grade levels on the playground at the same time.

Restroom

- Classrooms with sinks are encouraged to have students wash their hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
 - Teachers will limit the number of students going to restrooms.
- Classrooms without sinks, teachers will limit number of students going to the restroom. Students will have designated restrooms to use to keep from groups of students from encountering other groups.

Dismissal of students

- AES already has designated areas for each grade for parent dismissal; therefore, this is not an issue.
- Pre-K dismisses from front office area
- Kindergarten uses the end of their hallway
- 1st – 3rd line up beside the gym in designated areas with them spaced out.
- 4th and 5th grade dismiss from their hallway
- Bus riders dismiss by buses.

Fourth District Elementary School

Before school starts:

- Students and staff will be allowed to wear their own face masks from home, should they deem it necessary.
- All students and staff are encouraged to wash hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
- During the school day, all visitors will be allowed to wear their own mask from home. Use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended

Instructional Day:

- Students will become familiar with school's digital platforms. Students will complete daily digital platform assignments to ensure familiarity with school's digital platforms.
- Resources classes will dismiss five minutes early for resource teachers to sanitize between classes and prevent groups from encountering each other.
- Classes will be assigned entry and access areas to minimize interaction of classes.
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
- Classes will have an assigned Media schedule to limit student movement and face-to-face contact of students. Teachers will have additional books available for student use.

Recess

- Classes will have scheduled recess times and designated playgrounds to prevent grade levels on the playground at the same time.

Restroom

- Classrooms with sinks are encouraged to have students wash their hands frequently. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.
- Teachers will limit the number of students going to restrooms.
- Classroom sinks will be sanitized after student use.
- Classrooms without sinks, teachers will limit number of students going to the restroom. Students will have designated restrooms to use to keep from groups of students from encountering other groups.

Lunch

Before lunch, students will wash their hands. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended.

- FDES will continue with hot lunches because the school has enough areas for students to eat lunch without having to eat in classrooms or having too many classes in the lunchroom at one time.
 - Use outside seating for nice days; classrooms for days that rain

Dismissal of students

- Car riders will continue to congregate in cafeteria for parent pick up. However, grade levels will spread out across the lunchroom, instead of staying in a centralized location.
- Bus riders dismiss by buses.

Appling County Middle School

Before School Starts:

- Parents/caregivers/visitors will be restricted from entering the school building.
- Students with temperature will return home to follow up with proper medical care.
- During the school day, all visitors will be allowed to wear their own face masks from home, should they deem it necessary and have their temperatures checked before entering school building. The use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended prior to entering the school building as well.
- Students and staff members with health concerns will be encouraged to wash hands and the use of hand sanitizer will be highly recommended. Additionally, students and staff will be allowed to wear their own face masks from home, should they deem it necessary.

Instructional Day:

- Students will become familiar with school's digital platforms. Students will complete daily digital platform assignments to ensure familiarity with the school's digital platforms.
- Students' desks will be placed in rows to avoid students being face-to-face.
- Students will be encouraged to wash hands frequently and the use hand sanitizer will be highly recommended throughout the school day.

Restrooms:

- Teams and grade levels will schedule restroom breaks.
- Restrooms and sinks will be cleaned and sanitized after student use as frequently as possible.

Dismissal of Students:

- ACMS will have 2 designated areas for grade level parent pick-ups.
- 6th Grade will dismiss using parent drop-off area at an early dismissal time.
- 7th and 8th grade students will dismiss using the bus circle prior to buses arriving on campus.

Appling County High School

Questions to consider:	Normal Full Return to School
How will students be checked before entering the campus?	Students that are drivers or drop- offs will have their temperature checked prior to entering the building. Students who have a temperature of 100.4 or greater will be isolated in a supervised location until parents are notified and students are picked up. Late students will report to the front office upon arrival to school. Their temperatures will be checked and hand sanitizer will be used.
What safety measures will be in place to prevent spread of germs?	All students will use hand sanitizer prior to entering the building. Hand sanitizer will be available for use any time students enter or exit a teacher's classroom. Students are encouraged to bring their own face masks and sanitizers for additional safety measures. Isolate books and resources checked out to students and staff for 24 hours before they are available for check out. All water fountains will be turned off and students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle to school.
What will student schedules look like?	Students will attend their normal four block classes. ACHS will: Balance classes to maximize spacing in classrooms when possible. Remove unused desks or furniture in classes to help maximize spacing. Reduce the use of shared materials whenever possible in the classroom
How will students change classes in hallways?	Traffic flow will be managed to minimize contact and promote social distancing.
How will students socially distance in the cafeteria?	We will: Allow student hand washing and allow sanitizing before and after meal service Use disposable plates and utensils Implement "grab and go" meals when and if possible Conduct cleaning of cafeteria and high-touch surfaces throughout the school day Allow school flexibility with regard to spacing and allowing students alternative areas to eat meals Restrict parents/relatives from eating lunch with their children at school until further notice
How will students be dismissed?	There will be staggered dismissal to buses and parking lot by hallways via multiple exits.