



2021-22 Health & Safety Protocols

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Masks are optional. Please [click here](#) for the Executive Order by the Governor of Florida. The district has thousands on hand if someone voluntarily would like to wear one at school or school events.
- Signs will be in common areas to remind staff and students of risk mitigation strategies.
- Continued issuance of an EPA approved disinfectant to every school/site for enhanced cleaning purposes.
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitization following incidents of reported cases in District schools/sites.
- Students, staff, and visitors will not be required to complete temperature screening upon arrival on campuses. However, temperatures may be taken when visiting the school health clinic.
- COVID vaccinations are optional. It is a parent or staff member's choice to be vaccinated. If you would like to have your student vaccinated, medical staff will be available at Okeechobee High School and Osceola Middle School during open houses for voluntary vaccinations. Parents must be present to provide permission and sign appropriate documents. For all other students, you may call and set up an appointment at Heartland Discount Pharmacy, Walmart or the Dr. Fred Brown Clinic or your pediatrician.
- Students and staff should check their symptoms daily. Anyone with a fever, or symptoms related to COVID-19, should not attend work, school or ride the bus if they are feeling ill. [Click here](#) for a symptom checklist.
- We will return to the traditional Open House. [Click here](#) for the schedule. If you choose not to attend Open House, your student's schedule may be viewed from the Skyward Family Access portal. [Click here](#) for access or to sign-up for access.

BUSES

- Buses will transport students at full capacity.
- Face coverings are optional at this time.
- Parents and students are to monitor their symptoms each day. Students should not come to the bus stop if they are feeling ill.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers are installed on every bus for students to use as they enter and exit.
- Students will be assigned seats which will assist with contact tracing if needed.
- Weather permitting, buses may travel with several windows open to allow fresh air to circulate.
- School buses will be sanitized multiple times a day.
- Social distancing is encouraged at the bus stop.
- Buses will continue to be disinfected with electronic sprayers.
- You may find your student's bus stop at the following website: [Infofinder](#)

CAFETERIAS

- High-touch points throughout the kitchen and cafeteria will be frequently sanitized.
- Disposable trays and utensils will be utilized to prevent cross contamination.
- Tables will be sanitized between lunch periods.
- All staff will be trained on food safety and COVID-19 protocols prior to school opening.
- Students will be seated in identified groups when possible to assist contact tracers.
- Designated entrances and exits will control traffic flow and minimize exposure.
- All condiments will be pre-portioned. No self-serve dispensers will be used.

- Prepackaged food may be utilized for ease of preparation and sanitation.
- Additional lunch period times added last year may be eliminated.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

- The parents or legal guardians of students who have come into close contact with a positive case (within six feet for 15 minutes or more) will be notified by an automated telephone call.
- Students who are identified as a close contact to a positive case must quarantine from school for a minimum of 14 days from the last date of contact unless they have been vaccinated. They cannot test out of quarantine — meaning a negative test will not remove the quarantine period.
- Fully vaccinated students and staff (as verified by the Okeechobee County Health Department) will not be required to quarantine if they are identified as a close contact as long as they do not develop symptoms.
- Students who have COVID-like symptoms should stay home. They may return when one of the following criteria is met:
 1. They are fever free for 24 hours without medication and symptoms are improving.
 2. They have no gastrointestinal symptoms for a period of 48 hours without medication and symptoms are improving.
 3. Signed medical clearance is provided stating the symptoms are not due to COVID-19.
- Unvaccinated staff members who are identified as close contacts will not be excluded from work until they become symptomatic. While at work, these staff members will adhere to social distancing guidelines and will be encouraged to wear a mask.
- Students and staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 must isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days. They may return to school after 10 days if they are fever free for 24 hours without medication and symptoms are improving.
- If your child or a family member in the home is awaiting a COVID test result, all unvaccinated students in the household MUST remain home. However, per DOH, if your child is vaccinated and asymptomatic they can still attend school. Students and staff who have been tested as a result of a COVID-19 suspicion must stay home until the results are confirmed.
- Students who are quarantined will be able to work while at home. The district continues to explore other learning options for students who are quarantined.

ATHLETICS

- Athletics participation will return to pre-pandemic conditions.
- Face coverings are optional at this time for students and spectators.
- We ask spectators to check their symptoms before attending an event. Anyone with a fever, or symptoms related to COVID-19, should not attend the event if they are feeling ill.
- Events in Okeechobee will be back to full capacity.
- Physical education will resume pre-COVID activities. However, students and staff shall maintain social distance to the greatest extent possible. Face coverings are not required during PE and playground equipment can be utilized.
- Due to the ease of money collection and efficient accounting, the online purchase of tickets for events will continue as the new normal.

SCHOOLS & CLASSROOMS

- Students and staff will be reminded throughout the day to practice proper hygiene, and signage promoting proper hygiene will be posted on campuses.
- Hand sanitizer will be available throughout each campus.
- Social distancing will be encouraged to the greatest extent possible in schools and classrooms. If there is space, it will be utilized to socially distance.

- In order to accommodate effective instructional practice and strategies, small groups of students may work together collaboratively, however, seating charts and records shall be readily available to contact tracers.
- Seating charts will be used to assist with social distancing as well as contact tracing efforts in the event of a positive case.
- Students should avoid sharing devices and supplies when possible.
- Facilities will be cleaned thoroughly and regularly, and high-touch areas will be disinfected regularly.
- Deep cleaning will take place when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Air conditioning filters will be changed regularly.
- The District will no longer transfer students to remote learning when self-isolating/quarantined as required by DOH. A student who tests positive or is quarantined by DOH, must remain home and access assignments as directed by the teacher.
- Absences relating to isolation/quarantine/exclusion will be marked with a “Q” for attendance purposes. All work can be made up according to the student progression plan.

SCHOOL CLINICS

- Clinic staff should wear masks when interacting with students within 6 feet.
- Temperatures may be taken when entering the clinic.
- Isolation areas will be established to separate symptomatic individuals from standard clinic operations. Individuals with symptoms or those identified as close contacts will be offered a face mask to wear in the isolation area.
- [Click here](#) to see the decision tree when assessing potential illness when visiting the clinic.
- Parents/guardians will pick up ill students from school. Students sent home with symptoms that are not pre-existing or explainable, must remain home the following day and may return after that if they are symptom free without medication.

COVID VACCINATIONS

- COVID Vaccinations are strictly voluntary and not required to attend school or school functions. Students will not be segregated based upon vaccination status.
- The Pfizer vaccine is available to those ages 12 and up.
- Staff and students are considered fully vaccinated once two weeks have passed since their final vaccine dose.
- Free vaccinations can be obtained through various entities, such as the Wal-Mart Pharmacy, Heartland Discount Pharmacy or the Dr. Fred Brown Clinic.
- If a student or staff member is identified as a close contact, vaccination status may be shared by the parent or staff member to prevent the exclusion at the discretion of the Okeechobee County Health Department.

VOLUNTEERS/VISITORS

- Volunteers who provide essential services to students and staff will be allowed on campus.
- Volunteers and visitors will be advised that face coverings are optional.
- Volunteers and visitors will continue to follow normal check-in procedures.
- Volunteers and visitors will track and log their movements while on campus to be able to effectively collaborate with contact tracers.
- Principals are encouraged to avoid visitors and volunteers from visiting multiple classrooms without social distancing so as to avoid the entire classroom or grade level being excluded.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

- Health or safety plans are written for students that may need additional support throughout the school year. If your child experienced any sort of trauma or hospitalization this summer and could benefit from such a plan, please contact your child's guidance counselor.
- The school district contracts with many mental health agencies to provide service at most of our schools. If you would like to learn more about options for mental health support, please contact your child's school.