Peach County Schools
2020-2021
Return to School

Our Mission: To graduate college and career ready students
Our Vision: "Learning Today-Leading Tomorrow!"
Peach County Schools’ mission is to graduate college and career ready students and our vision is to ensure that our students are learning today to become leaders for tomorrow. The safety and well-being of our students is our #1 Priority; therefore, as we begin the 2020-2021 school year, we are implementing protective measures for students and staff as recommended by the Department of Health (DOH), Center for Disease Control (CDC), Governor’s Office, Georgia Department of Education (GADOE), Superintendent and School Board.

Academically and in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the 2020-2021 school year is scheduled in phases and with learning options to accommodate parents/guardians as we continue to navigate in uncharted territory. The school year phases, learning options and safety protocols are contingent upon any new or revised recommendations from the DOH, CDC, Governor’s Office and GADOE are subject to change per the Superintendent and School Board.

The protective measures, school-year phases and learning options are detailed below:

**Protective Measures for Students and Staff**
- Social Distancing
- Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Custodial Services
- School Nutrition
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Transportation
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- School Nursing Services
- COVID-19 Enhanced Mitigation Procedures
- Coping and Resilience
- Guidelines for those who are Sick
- Communication
- Student Attendance
- Athletics and Extracurricular Activities
- School Calendar
- Other Information
- Important Links

**Learning Options**

**Phase I: Hybrid Model**  Aug. 27 – Sept. 25  
A/B Schedule with In-Person Instruction and Distance Learning  
*(Group A students attend In-Person Instruction on Monday and Tuesday and Distance Learning on Thursday and Friday)*  
*(Group B students receive Distance Learning on Monday and Tuesday and In-Person Instruction on Thursday and Friday)*  
(Wednesdays will be for cleaning, Teacher Collaboration and Distance Learning, as needed.)

**Phase II: Hybrid Model**  Sept. 28 – Dec. 18  
In-Person Instruction and Distance Learning  
*(Student attends four days In-Person Instruction and Distance Learning on Monday)*

**Phase III: Traditional School**  Jan. 5 – May 21  
The district will return to the traditional five-day school week.

**100% Distance Learning** is available to students for the entire school year. Commitments will be for a minimum of a grading period for elementary students and a semester for middle and high school students. Parents will be responsible for providing a device and internet service. Students will not be allowed to participate in after school extracurricular activities to include sports, band, clubs, and CTAE (Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education) during that time.
Protective Measures for Students and Staff

Social Distancing

Social Distancing is identified as a key method to prevent the spread of COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus. Social distancing is identified as at least six feet of space between yourself and others.

Schools will work within their buildings to develop practices that minimize crowd flow and reduce crowding during arrival, dismissal and during class change. The following strategies will be used to promote social distancing to the greatest extent possible:

- Directional signage that may include designated entrances/exits, one-way hallways and areas of restricted access
- “Helicopter arms” or other strategies to assist students with special orientation and the need to maintain six feet of separation
- Monitored transitions/class exchanges with staff assigned to discourage congregating. In the morning and during dismissal, students will be directed to go straight from their vehicles, buses and drop off points to their classrooms and vice versa.
- Schools will provide frequent reminders to students and staff to stay at least 6 feet away from each other whenever possible.
- Desks and other seating will be arranged in classrooms to maximize distance between students and student desks will face the same direction as much as possible.
- When possible, students will be kept in small cohorts or groups during the day.
- Outdoor recess will be provided and will be modified in order to reduce the mixing of classes. Items such as balls, will not be shared during recess.
- Plexiglass barriers will be installed for protection at receptionist desks, cafeteria registers and other areas where appropriate.
- Traditional field trips, meetings, assemblies and performances will be modified and may become virtual events whenever possible.
- Large assemblies will be modified or cancelled if determined to be non-essential.
- Parent Meeting (Student Support Team, Section 504 and individual Education Plan, etc.) will be conducted virtual, whenever possible.
- Outside visitors to the school (parents, community, etc.) will be discouraged. In the event that the principal determines the necessity, visitors will need to make an appointment and abide by protective guidelines that may include a temperature check, completion of a symptom checklist, and wearing a mask that covers the mouth and nose for entry to the lobby. Parents dropping off or picking up students will not need an appointment, but will not be allowed beyond the lobby of the building.
- Outside visitors will not be allowed to have lunch with students.
**Face Coverings**

Although facemasks are not required, they will be highly recommended. As members of a school community, students and staff will be encouraged to exercise care for themselves and for the health of the others. The district has purchased a supply of face masks for students and teachers who wish to wear one and who have underlying medical conditions.

Face masks are most essential when physical distancing is difficult. Masks and face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected and should cover the nose and mouth when worn. Face shields are an acceptable substitute for staff and students, but may not be as effective as a reusable face cloth mask.

The district has purchased a supply of face masks and shields for students and teachers who wish to wear one and who have underlying medical conditions.

**Cleaning and Hygiene**

The COVID-19 virus is thought to be spread through respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough or sneeze. The virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. That is why personal hygiene practices (such as handwashing and staying home when sick), social distancing and environmental cleaning and disinfecting are so important. The following practices will be implemented to aid in cleaning and hygiene.

- In an attempt to reduce the spread of the virus, doors at the main entrance to the schools will be held open at the start and finish of each day to limit the need to touch door handles.
- Proper hand-washing techniques for students and staff include washing with soap at least 20 seconds and staff should allow students regular hand washing breaks throughout the day.
- Restrooms will be stocked with antibacterial soap and students will be strongly encouraged to wash their hands during the school day.
- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol will be provided at building entrances, in the cafeteria, on buses and in classrooms. These will be systematically checked and refilled. Children will be supervised in the use of these products.
- Adequate supplies will be provided to support healthy hygiene behaviors throughout the day (e.g. hand soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, wipes, etc.). Parents may also send donations of hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content, disinfecting wipes and facial tissues for their child’s classroom.
- Teachers and students should utilize provided wipes to clean desks and tables at least once per day. Teachers should also use the wipes to clean frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, light switches, computer key board, mouse, interactive boards and telephones.
- Students will be encouraged to sneeze and cough into their elbows or to cover with a tissue.
● Student personal items (such as pens, crayons and scissors) should be kept separately in individual cubbies or containers. Students will be instructed not to share these items with other students.
● Non-essential, cloth covered items such as drapes, pillows, cushions, furniture, areas rugs and all other items not essential to learning may be removed from the classroom or area.
● Shared items that cannot be consistently disinfected will be discouraged (stuffed toys, balls, etc.).

**Custodial Services**

Regular sanitization practices will be adhered to throughout the district. The following custodial cleaning practices will be implemented:

● In addition to regular sanitizing methods, the district will treat classrooms, office spaces, weight rooms, and locker prior to the first day for students and staff to reduce virus transmission.

● Throughout the day, custodial services will sanitize high touch surfaces and restrooms to reduce the possible transmission of the virus. Between classes, teachers will wipe down high touch surfaces and any shared instructional materials.

● Teachers and students will be expected to pick up all items from the floor and clear desktops and tabletops at the end of the day to allow for more thorough cleaning by custodians at the end of each day. At the end of the day, custodians will sanitize high touch surfaces.

● In the event of a possible exposure to the virus, custodial staff will isolate and deep clean impacted classrooms and spaces. Facilities may need to be closed for an extended period of time to deep clean affected areas.

**School Nutrition**

● Additional signage will be used to designate areas and to promote social distancing.
● All cafeteria space will be sanitized by the custodial staff prior to students eating meals and after each student group leaves the cafeteria. Regular cleaning of high touch surfaces will occur between each serving session.

● Safety practices for all cafeteria workers include the wearing of masks/face shields, gloves (where appropriate) and hand sanitizing.

● Students will be required to wash their hands before and after each meal, and hand sanitizer will be available.

● Breakfast and lunch menu options will be modified for easier transport to and from the cafeteria. Students may pick up breakfast and lunch from the cafeteria and eat in the cafeteria or other designated areas.

● Individually packaged utensils, condiments and pre-packaged /boxed lunches may also be provided.
• For Distance Learning students, the School Nutrition Program will establish a process for serving breakfast and lunch.

Water and Ventilation Systems

• All water fountains will be turned off. Students and staff members are encouraged to bring their own water bottles for personal use,
• Heating and air conditioning units are continuously maintained to ensure ventilation of spaces.
• Ventilation systems are frequently checked and maintained.

Transportation

Physical distancing on a school bus is most challenging due to limited available space; therefore, masks are mandatory while riding the school bus. School buses will be sanitized after each route.

Monitoring for Symptoms

Conducting regular screening and ongoing self-monitoring throughout each school day can help reduce exposure. Students and staff are encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms which may include a fever of 100.4 F or higher, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss/change of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. If a student or staff member develops symptoms throughout the day, he/she must notify the nurse immediately.

To identify and isolate those who may be running a temperature, the district has purchased hand-held digital thermometers for each location. In the event a student or staff member is running a fever, he/she will be isolated and sent home.

School Nursing Services

Clinics at the schools are being outfitted with additional resources. Each school has a dedicated nurse. The following steps will also be taken in each school clinics:
Students who are sick will be sent to the school nurse clinic. They will be isolated from other students who are in the clinic for routine reasons (e.g. medication, first aid or other regular treatments), either in a section of the clinic or another isolation room, depending on the school and clinic size. Students who are sick must be promptly picked up.

Students and staff who become ill are encouraged to seek treatment and consult with their personal healthcare provider or the local health department.

When student or staff cases of COVID-19 are confirmed, the district will work with local health authorities to respond rapidly. Responses will be dictated by the specific nature of each case.

The district will follow all relevant student and staff health privacy laws when making this disclosure.
In the clinic, nurses will wear medical grade personal protective equipment and changes as needed. Touchless thermometers will be used in schools or any location with taking a student or staff temperature.

**COVID-19 Enhanced Mitigation Procedures**

District designee will contact the Department of Health (DPH) daily to obtain data on the number of confirmed cases in Peach County. Based on the data, the Superintendent and School Board will determine if the district is aligned under Temporary Closure, Enhanced Mitigation or Preventative Practices as recommended by the Georgia Department of Education.

The following protocol shall be followed for students or staff who exhibit signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19:

- Isolate the person
- Temperature check (Red Alert if the temperature is above 100.4 F)
- Provide a mandatory mask
- Notify parent/guardian for mandatory student pick up
- Consider privacy concerns
- Encourage a COVID-19 Test
- Require student or staff to not return until Department of Health criteria has been met to include:
  - Symptomatic – may return to school 4 days and 72 hours with no fever
  - Asymptomatic – May return to school 10 days after a positive COVID-10 Test
    - If symptoms occur at a later date, follow Symptomatic Guidelines
  - Adhere to DPH Guidelines for test-based strategy for returning to school for children and staff.
- The school designee shall participate in contact tracing by immediately reporting all confirmed COVID-19 cases that occur within the schools to the Central Office designee. The Central Office designee will report any confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the DPH within 24 hours.

**Coping and Resilience**

The outbreak of COVID 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 by offering support in a variety of ways.

Training will be available to district staff to ensure that they are prepared to support student’s social emotional learning. Counselors and social worker will also be on hand to support students as needed.

We encourage staff, students and families to talk with those they trust about their concerns about COVID-19 and how they are feeling. During the first week of school, teachers will be focused on building trusting relationships designed to support students during this difficult time.

Additional behavioral health services are available for students, families and staff. Students should contact their guidance counselor for assistance. Employees should contact the Human Resources Department for assistance.
**Guidelines for those who are Sick**

The most critical tool in preventing COVID-19 is that any student or staff member who is ill or who has been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19 not attend school or work. According to the CDC, any student or staff member who test positive for COVID-19 must remain in isolation at home for 14 days. Once the student’s or staff member’s symptoms resolve AND respiratory issues have improved, AND the student or employee is free without medication for the last three days of isolation, the student or employee can return to school or work on day 15, after the 14-day isolation has ended.

- Any staff member who has a temperature of 100.4 of higher, exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, or has been in direct contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) with someone who has tested positive within the past 14 days is expected to notify their direct supervisor. If employees are not at work when this contact occurs, employees should not return to the building. If the contact occurs while at work, the employee should isolate themselves, be sure their mask is secure and contact their supervisor by phone. Their supervisor will advise them of the interventions necessary which will include quarantine and a Fit for Duty Letter for those who test positive for the virus.

- Students with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or suspected exposure to the virus that are showing symptoms may return to school as described in the DPH document “COVID-19 Pandemic: Returning to School” on page 7.

- Realizing children will get sick with illnesses that are not COVID 19, all students who are out sick will still need to be fever-free for 3 days (72 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine before being allowed to return to school. By sending your child to school, the parent/guardian is attesting that their child has been fever-free for 72 hours.

**Communication**

The district is committed to focused and frequent communication with schools, families and our community during these challenging times. We will do our best to share decisions as they are made. We will share additional information about what to expect throughout the school year on a regular basis. Communication will be sent via the REMIND APP, which is the district’s mass communication notification system. Parents, students and staff members may receive information via phone calls, email message and text message. In addition, the district will use such mediums as the district website, school web pages, and social medial to communicate. Please check to ensure your contact information is up to date in Infinite Campus for all of your children. Your contact information can be updated through Parent Portal and by contacting your child’s school.

Signs will be posted throughout the buildings to remind 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 members tests positive for COVID-19. Each case will be evaluated individually. School personnel will communicate with the involved students and family as needed. Due to HIPPA and privacy requirements, we will
not identify individuals with COVID-19, we will not publicly share their information, and we ask that others not speculate about such instances.

**Student Attendance**

Attendance incentives are waived for the 2020-2021 school year. Attendance policies and the Truancy Protocol will be followed for students attending the In-Person Instruction Model and for those who choose Distance Learning.

Students who are sick should stay home. Staff and students are encouraged to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, which may include a fever of 100.4 F or higher, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss/change of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. For an absence to be excused for illness, students must bring a note from home within three days of returning to school describing the nature of the absence.

Distance Learning Student Attendance will be determined by the teacher based on the following criteria:

Face to face attendance will be taken daily by period in Infinite Campus following our normal attendance procedures. For a student absence to be excused, students must bring a note within three days of returning to school describing the nature of the absence.

Virtual attendance will be determined by the teacher based on the following guidelines:

- Students must attend all synchronous sessions (“real time activities” - video-conferencing, Google Meets, Zoom, etc.)
- Students must log in to the Learning Management System, participate in each class and make expected weekly progress in each class
- Students must communicate regularly with teacher(s).
- Students on the hybrid model are required to complete assignments provided by the teacher and submit them online when due or submit them in person on the days they are at school.

**Athletics and Extracurricular Activities**

The district will follow the Georgia High School Association Guidelines for athletic practices and games. Locker rooms and weight rooms will be cleaned by the custodial staff each day and will be regularly wiped down by coaches and student athletes throughout the day.
Other Information

School Calendar
All currently scheduled holidays and breaks will remain as listed on the 2020-2021 School Calendar. However, the current calendar is subject to modifications during the school year contingent upon guidelines and recommendations by the State Department of Health, Center for Disease Control, Governor’s Office, the Superintendent and the School Board.

Teacher and Designated Staff
First day of Return to Work July 27
Last day of Work May 26
Professional Development, Pre Planning, Collaboration: Beginning July 27 and will be ongoing throughout the year

Students First and Last Day of School
First Day of School August 27
Last Day of School May 21

School Hours
Elementary School
Parent Drop Off Begins 7:45 a.m.
School Day 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Bus Departure 3:35 p.m.

Middle School
Parent Drop Off Begins 7:20 a.m.
School Day 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Bus Departure 2:35 p.m.

High School
Parent Drop Off Begins 7:20 a.m.
School Day 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Bus Departure 2:35 p.m.

Parent Orientation/Open House
Monday, August 24, 2020
Peach County High School: Freshmen & New Students Only 5:00 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

Tuesday, August 25, 2020
Pre-k Only
Group A 4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Group B 4:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.
Elementary Schools: Kindergarten & New Students Only 5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Middle Schools: 6th Graders and New Students Only 5:30 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.

A Virtual Orientation will be scheduled for Pre-k students who are doing 100% Distance Learning.
Important Links

https://www.cdc.gov/

https://dph.georgia.gov/

https://www.gadoe.org/

https://www.peachschools.org/

https://www.facebook.com/PeachSchools/

https://twitter.com/peachschools