

## **DERMOTT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19 FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

Following guidelines from the Arkansas Department of Health and the Arkansas Ready for Learning report from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the DSD is preparing to re-open school in August. The information provided below should be helpful to you so that you know what we are doing to prepare for our school year, including social interactions, extracurricular activities, afterschool programs, transportation, and much more.

#### **1. WHEN DOES THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR BEGIN?**

Our school calendar has our students returning to school on Thursday, August 24, 2020. School will begin on this date, unless future guidance prohibits districts from starting on this date.

#### **2. WHO WILL BE REQUIRED TO WEAR FACE COVERINGS?**

Currently, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) recommends that all individuals 10 years old and over wear a face covering when in public areas. DSD STRONGLY RECOMMENDS that adults and students age 10 and up wear face coverings when physical distancing cannot be achieved. This is particularly important in large group settings, such as on a school bus, hallways, etc. where social distancing is nearly impossible. A face covering is, at this time, considered a safety measure and the ADH has authority to require them for all individuals 10 years old and over. Students under 10 years of age and those with health issues or special needs will not be asked to wear face covering. In the event of an increase in the number of positive cases in our district/region, the ADH could require face coverings in public areas, like our schools.

#### **3. DO PARENTS OR EMPLOYEES NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR OWN FACE COVERINGS?**

The DSD will provide disposal face coverings (masks) for every staff member and student. Washing and care of these face coverings is the responsibility of each individual.

#### **4. WILL BUS TRANSPORTATION BE PROVIDED?**

YES, the district will provide bus transportation for all students. Based upon current guidance, bus drivers and any student 10 years of age and over will be REQUIRED to wear a face

covering/mask when on a bus. At this time, we anticipate that there will be no changes to existing routes or schedules, with the exception of running additional routes if needed. Please realize that students will not be allowed on a school bus without a face covering/mask.

**5. WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DAY LOOK LIKE?**

Our goal is for our students and staff to have as normal of a day as possible while keeping everyone safe. Movement around the buildings might look different, and large group congregations might not occur as much, but we are aware of our new ‘normal’. School staff will all play a role in keeping our facilities safe and sanitized to reduce the likelihood of transmission.

**6. WILL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS STILL HAVE ART, MUSIC, PE, GIFTED, GUIDANCE/COUNSELING, RECESS, AND LIBRARY CLASSES?**

YES! Our plan is for all students to continue to participate in these classes and activities, but they might look a little different! We will limit opportunities for students to share materials and resources, as well as limit movement to different classrooms. This will help us limit the need to sanitize repeatedly. Recess with restrictions on the number of students in a given space at one time will help us limit exposure. Equipment, materials, supplies, and classrooms will be sanitized multiple times in a day, as well as after school.

**7. WILL SOCIAL DISTANCING BE PRACTICED?**

YES, as much as possible! We will do everything we can to keep students at least 6 feet apart. During times when this isn’t possible, students will be expected to wear face coverings. We are redesigning classroom and cafeteria spaces to increase the space between students, but cannot always guarantee that it will be 6 feet apart.

**8. WHAT WILL CLASSROOMS LOOK LIKE?**

Classrooms will be arranged to provide more space between students. This could include all desks facing the same direction, the reduction of reading areas that house bean bags, couches, or chairs, and the use of dividers on tables used for student seating. We will try to provide students with distancing, but still allow them to interact and communicate with others in the classroom. Materials, supplies, books, and other items used for learning will not be shared by students.

**9. WILL STUDENTS ATTEND SCHOOL EVERYDAY OR WILL WE FOLLOW AN ALTERNATE SCHEDULE?**

We plan for students to attend school daily following a schedule very similar to a traditional school day. If needed, DSD may offer virtual learning for students. Please contact your school principal if you feel this may benefit your student.

**10. WHAT HAPPENS IF AN EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?**

In the event an individual tests positive, we will follow the latest guidance from the ADH. We will have direct contact with the ADH, who will guide us through the situation. This could result in a brief closure of one or both schools to allow for additional cleaning and sanitation, among other things as directed by ADH.

**11. WILL STUDENTS AND STAFF BE SCREENED DAILY?**

Both students and staff will complete a daily screening tool. You will be provided a link to the tool prior to the start of school. Individuals will be asked the following questions:

- (1) Have you had a fever of 100.4 F in the last 2 days?
- (2) Have you had a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell?
- (3) Have you been in contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days?

**12. IF I DON'T WANT MY STUDENT TO RETURN TO A TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?**

DSD is extremely concerned about our student's access to high-speed internet at home. The administrators in our district have repeatedly voiced this concern to our state education leaders, but no solution currently exists. The district is making plans for online/blended learning, should health conditions require that type of instruction. Requests from parents for students in grades 4- 12 to attend school in a totally online format should be directed to the school's principal. Parent and students must ensure the district that they have adequate high-speed internet (connectivity beyond a cell phone hot-spot) in order to attend digitally. If this request is granted, parents and students should understand that they are committing to this type of learning for a minimum of one semester. At the end of one semester, administrators will review each request before granting an extension into the following semester.

**13. IF PARENTS AND STUDENTS CHOOSE TO ATTEND SCHOOL IN THE ONLINE/BLENDED LEARNING FORMAT, WILL THEY BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES?**

No, students concerned about returning to our schools for learning will not be involved in any activities on campus.

#### **14. WILL WE HAVE AN OPEN HOUSE AND HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE PICK-UP TIME?**

We are planning to have an Open House on each campus for students new to our District and kindergarten students only. Here are the times and dates for these events:

- Kindergarten students - August 12, 2020 Time-TBA
- High school students to pick up schedules - August 12, 2020 Time TBA (Drive thru in front of the High School Building)

#### **15. WILL DSD HAVE EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS IN THE FALL?**

YES! Student athletes have already returned to campus to begin practice. We do anticipate sports activities in the fall with possible modifications as required by the ADH and in coordination with the AAA. At this time, we are awaiting ADH guidance for band and choir.

#### **16. HOW WILL STUDENTS EAT BREAKFAST AND LUNCH?**

At this time, DSD is proud to announce that we have renewed our Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) status with the Child Nutrition Unit at DESE. So, we will once again be providing free breakfast and lunch for EVERY student in the district. Based on current guidance, the ADH is recommending that we limit the number of students in our cafeterias. We anticipate that we will serve breakfast in the classrooms and that we will implement a lunch schedule that reduces the number of students in the cafeteria at any given time and allows for sanitization between groups of students. At this time, we are not allowed to have self-serve (salad bar, etc.), have students pick up utensils (will use pre-packaged utensils), or allow students to share ANY food, either from our cafeterias or brought from home. DSD will not allow parents to drop off food at school for students near lunchtime, so food from home should be brought with the student. Water fountains will be available to fill water bottles ONLY, so students are encouraged to bring UNOPENED water bottles from home.

#### **17. WHAT SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN REGARD TO CLEANING AND SANITIZING?**

Sanitation and cleanliness will be an even higher priority for our district as we return to our school buildings. Every adult on campus will be helping us with this! We have

purchased new disinfectant foggers to use in our buildings and on our school busses multiple times daily. We will have plenty of sanitizing wipes and sprays, soap, and hand sanitizer available to be used multiple times during the day. In order to keep our buildings as clean as possible, we will limit access to our buildings by visitors. Please understand that we are taking many extra precautions to keep everyone safe!

**18. WHAT PROTOCOL WILL BE FOLLOWED IF A STUDENT OR STAFF MEMBER BECOMES SICK AT SCHOOL?**

It is very important that parents monitor the health of their student on a daily basis. Please DO NOT send your student to school if they exhibit signs of sickness. Any person with symptoms will be screened by the school nurse and their temperature will be checked. If the temperature is over the ADH guidance, the student will be sent home and must be fever free for 48 hours without medication before returning to school. Students and staff who have been away from school due to illness must check-in with the school nurse before returning to a classroom. The nurse's office at each school will have a place to keep students separated as much as possible.

**19. WHAT WILL ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL TIMES LOOK LIKE?**

Procedures will be put into practice to maximize social distancing during arrival and dismissal times. These practices will be monitored depending upon guidance from the ADH.

**20. WHAT ABOUT THOSE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (ASTHMA, WEAKENED IMMUNE SYSTEMS, ETC.)?**

The district will be prepared to accommodate students with special needs through onsite and offsite (digital) learning. Our Special Education teachers will be taking extra precautions when working with students. If parents have concerns about their students, they should reach out to the school principal.

**21. IN THE EVENT OF A TEMPORARY SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO COVID-19, HOW WILL THE DISTRICT SERVE STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (SPECIAL EDUCATION, SPEECH, 504, DYSLEXIA)?**

As we did in the spring, in the event of a school closure, students will participate in live instruction with scheduled Zoom sessions.

