



Decatur County School System 2021-2022 REOPENING PLAN

Updated: September 24, 2021

*Please be aware this document will be continuously updated based on the latest guidance from GaDOE and the Department of Public Health.

Overview

Decatur County Schools has continuously monitored federal, state, and local guidance regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the specific information that has been reviewed includes the [Georgia Department of Education and Georgia Department of Public Health guidance](#) and [CDC guidance](#). In addition to this guidance, Decatur County Schools is constantly meeting with local and state health officials to ensure that our approach is in accordance with the most recent data available.

Learning Options

Two instructional models are available for students: traditional (face-to-face) and remote learning (digital). All current students are enrolled in traditional learning and no further action is required. If you chose the remote learning option you should have already enrolled your. Every parent needs to remember to visit Decatur County School's website and sign up with Parent Portal to stay up to date on the latest information pertaining to your child's school and classes.

Option 1: In-Person Learning Model

Parents selecting Option 1 are choosing for their child to begin the school year with a return to the Traditional Learning Model of in-person instruction just as it was provided prior to the COVID pandemic with infection mitigation measures in place.

Traditional Learning Model:

This is a traditional school experience with students beginning school in person and attending five days a week on a regular Monday through Friday schedule. However, if there is a significant increase in community spread of COVID-19, a system wide Distance/Digital Learning Model may be utilized. The degree of increased community spread will be based on data from the CDC and Department of Public Health.

Full-Time Distance/Digital Learning Model:

In the event of increased community spread of COVID-19, schools may be closed to students and the Decatur County Schools Distance Learning Plan would be implemented. This plan was revised to incorporate lessons learned from our experience in the spring of 2020. All K-12 students will have a device to take home during a school closure. External WiFi access points will be available in all school parking lots and buses parked around the county.

Option 2: Remote Learning Model

Parents selecting Option 2 are choosing for their child to learn remotely from home. It is important that students and parents understand that remote learning for the 2021-2022 school year will not be structured like that from 2020-2021. Expectations in terms of attendance, grading, and accountability will be the same for those students participating in remote learning and in-person learning. Parent involvement is key to successful remote learning as students will need parental assistance during the digital learning school day. Please carefully read the information below as a significant commitment will be needed by both students and parents in order to facilitate successful remote learning.

For students who choose to begin the year with a Remote Learning model, 3-12 students must commit to the entire year. Students enrolled in full-time distance learning can participate in most extracurricular activities at their school (for more information about extracurricular activities please contact your child's school for more details).

- Reliable internet access is required in order to participate in digital learning and a district-issued device is available for each student. Every student, regardless of grade level, will be expected to attend and adhere to the school board-approved academic calendar. Attendance will be recorded and assignments will be graded.
- Core academic courses (social studies, science, math, and language arts/reading) will be available for all grade levels.
- The school district will remain responsible for the education of students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for remote learning. Because remote learning may affect how special education and related services are provided, the student's IEP team will work to develop a temporary Remote/Distance Learning Support Plan for students with IEPs.
- Students will be taught according to the Georgia Standards of Excellence and grades will be based on academic performance.
- Students will be responsible for adhering to the procedures and guidelines of the Decatur County Technology Usage Agreement.

Grades PK- 2

There is no option for Remote learning

Grades 3-12

- Students will be enrolled in content/grade level courses via Edgenuity for a semester time period. A teacher will be assigned to the student to provide support and digital resources, but the student will move independently through the Edgenuity assigned course. Google Classroom participation will be required as part of the remote learning option. Transitions back to a traditional face-to-face learning schedule can be requested at the beginning of the next school year.
- All courses needed for graduation will be available through Decatur County's Remote Learning Option. The options for electives and vocational classes will be available for Remote Learning but are more limited than the course option on campus at BHS. For more information about course options contact Bainbridge High School.
- All NBLC/PLC students will use the Odysseyware software platform.

Gifted/Honors/Advanced/Accelerated

- At all levels gifted resources will be provided for Remote learning students that request additional resources.
- At the high school level, students can choose Advanced Placement courses depending on availability that particular semester.

Grading

- A Decatur County teacher will assign grades for all students.

Meal Service

Meals will not be available for students enrolled in Remote Learning.

Action Plan for Traditional Instruction

Details are below and organized alphabetically by topic.

Afterschool Program

There will be after school programs at the primary, elementary, middle and high school levels during the school year for face to face learners. All GHSA activities will continue unless cancelled or changed by GHSA.

Attendance

. Decatur County Schools cannot completely waive truancy requirements per Georgia law. However, schools will work with parents to resolve attendance issues.

Cafeteria

Students will eat in the classroom and/or the cafeteria depending on the situation and rise in COVID in order to keep all students safe. We will make every attempt to allow for social distancing by rotating lunch groups and/or reducing the number of students in the cafeteria where possible.

Contact Tracing

Individuals (employees or students) who meet the Georgia Department of Public Health's contact tracing guidelines will be notified by the school system. Due to privacy laws, individuals with COVID-19 will not be identified, and we ask that others not speculate about such instances.

Decatur County Schools will not dictate any testing requirements for students or staff. Those decision are to be made by the Department of Public Health and/or medical professionals based on the individual's circumstances and symptoms.

Devices

Decatur County Schools will be checking out devices for all students at the beginning of the school year. Those devices will be allowed to take home from grades 3-12 at any time during the normal school year. Grades K-2 devices will remain at school unless a specific need arises. If the school system shifts to a Distance learning environment, ALL students will be allowed to take their devices home.

Employees

Employees will be provided guidelines and procedures regarding:

- What to do if they are symptomatic/test positive for COVID-19
- What to do if they are in close contact with a person with COVID-19
- Contact Tracing
- Return-to-Work Protocol

Extracurricular Activities (Including Athletics)

The continuation of athletics is determined in large part by the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). Most available athletics and other extracurricular activities will be available to students regardless if they are enrolled in the traditional or remote learning instructional models.

Field Trips

State and local guidance will be utilized in making decisions based on the spike in COVID cases.

First Day of School

Parents are our most important visitors and we understand their desire to have that moment with their child. We ask that parents wear a mask if they wish to walk their child to class and drop them off at the classroom door. Parents will not be able to walk their child to class beyond the first day of school.

Illness at School

It is imperative the parents do their part and check their child for symptoms and do not send them to school if they have a fever. If a child is running a fever or exhibiting other COVID-19 symptoms, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child. Students with COVID-19 symptoms will be separated while waiting for their parents.

Instructional Model Changes

Systemwide:

Decatur County Schools will use state and local guidance in making decisions regarding any needed switching between instructional models, i.e. - traditional or fully distance learning model, during the school year.

Internet Access

Decatur County now offers new outdoor access points to provide a significant improvement in outdoor WiFi at every Decatur County campus. Internet at these locations will work on Decatur County provided devices only. In the event we shift to distance learning Decatur County Schools will publish a map of additional WiFi spots available throughout the county.

Masks

Are strongly encouraged anytime social distancing isn't possible. Students and staff are allowed to provide their own mask or one will be provided for them if needed.

Meet the Teacher/Open House

Decatur County Schools will not have one large open house this school year. Parent Teacher conferences will be staggered across 2 days. Schools will schedule individual grades and teams to keep group attendance smaller.

Quarantining

All decisions on quarantining is based on the guidance from the Georgia Department of Public Health Guidelines and the Center for Disease Control.

Recess

Outdoor play is essential for elementary students. Therefore, schools will stagger the number of classes at recess at any given time and will spread out classes on the playground where appropriate to allow for social distancing. Playground equipment will be cleaned daily.

Safety Protocols

To mitigate the spread of infection and viruses, the following measures will be put in place:

- Staff and students are agreeing that by virtue of coming to school, they do not have a fever above 100.3 and do not have any symptoms of illness. It is imperative the parents do their part and check their child for symptoms and do not send them to school if they have a fever.
- A mask will be provided to all staff and students if requested. All staff will be encouraged to wear masks when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Students will also be encouraged to wear masks.
- All bus riders will be encouraged to wear masks.
- Social distancing will occur when possible.
- Enhanced hand-washing and sanitizing protocols will be in place.
- School buildings and playgrounds will be thoroughly cleaned on a daily basis.
- Water filling stations or water fountains designated as filling stations will be available for students to refill water bottles.
- Every classroom will have a hand sanitizer station. Hand sanitizer stations will also be in common areas of the school.
- Transitions will be minimized and coordinated at the school level.
- School drop-offs will be adjusted to minimize hallway congregating before, during, or after school.
- School supplies will not be shared among students.
- Seating will be assigned within classrooms. Class transitions will occur at all levels, with schools utilizing a variety of disease mitigation measures.

Social Distancing

The following steps will be implemented to provide social distancing wherever possible:

- Flexible seating is being adjusted to provide the maximum possible spacing between student desks.
- Desks will face the same direction and will not be clustered together.
- There will be hallway markers to streamline hallway traffic and to limit congregating in common areas.
- Social distance markers will be in the cafeteria line and in the main lobby.
- Students will be distanced in cafeterias as much as possible.
- Any small group instruction occurring will not involve shared toys or supplies. Students will be as distanced as possible and masked are encouraged anytime you cannot be more than six feet away from someone.

Special Education

The Decatur County School District remains committed to providing students eligible for special education services with an individualized education program (IEP) that opt for Remote learning. Since instruction will be very different in the Remote Learning, option compared to the Traditional Instructional option each IEP team will work to prepare a Remote Learning Support Plan to provide support for students with IEP's that chose the Remote Learning Option.

Specials/Connections Classes

The school system will hold special/connection classes, while still encouraging social distancing and following DPH and CDC guidelines.

Testing (For COVID-19)

Decatur County Schools will not dictate any testing requirements for students or staff. Those decisions are to be made by the Department of Public Health and/or medical professionals based on the individual's circumstances and symptoms. Any negative test does not change the quarantine period for asymptomatic individuals with known exposure.

Transportation

As students will not be socially distanced on buses, they are strongly encouraged to wear masks.