



*RETURN TO SCHOOL*  
**GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR BULLDOG FAMILIES**

## ***PROTECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES***

The following guidelines are shared with our school communities, including students, families, and staff, in an effort to mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Over the past several weeks, Altus Public Schools has been researching the constantly evolving guidance from the education, medical, and public health professionals. Our goal has been to create carefully layered, flexible, and developmentally appropriate practices that will ensure the strongest advice given by the American Academy of Pediatrics: All policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school. (<https://tinyurl.com/yc4stuh8>)

Numerous reasons support this AAP recommendation, from the importance of in-person learning to the damage of social isolation; and Altus Public Schools is in complete agreement. The truth remains, however, that ensuring this goal will require all of us to work together.

The information presented in this document is shared so that all of our community can begin school with a shared understanding of our responsibility in keeping our students and staff safe from COVID-19. We know we cannot eliminate the virus; but with wise choices, we can mitigate it.

## ***LAYERED MITIGATION PRACTICES***

**DAILY TEMPERATURE CHECKS** - Each morning, families are asked to take their children's temperatures, as a fever of 100 or greater may be an indication of an active case of COVID-19. If this is the case, please keep your child home to monitor for additional symptoms. Additionally, APS will take students' temperatures at their first point of contact with Altus Public Schools.

**RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS** - While many children will present with fever initially, many will not. Other symptoms that may develop initially include the following: chills, cough, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Any of these are cause for keeping a child home.

**HYGIENE** - Handwashing is one of the best means of protection against infection. Students will be reminded to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing their noses, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating. They will also have access to an alcohol-based hand sanitizer throughout the school building when hand-washing opportunities are not readily available.

**SOCIAL DISTANCING** - While it will be difficult to maintain distance between the students at school, each site will be devising plans to provide for this precaution in the common areas of hallways, classrooms, cafeterias, & gyms.

**FACE COVERINGS** - Evidence continues to mount on the role and importance of face coverings in interrupting the spread of COVID-19. The latest indication is that the use of face coverings protects both the wearers and those with whom they come in contact.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** - Details on the above practices and expectations for their implementation in Altus secondary schools follow herein.

***Plans above are subject to change as new information becomes available or as new situations arise related to COVID-19.***

# ALTUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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### EXPOSURES, DIAGNOSES, & RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER COVID-19

According to the CDC:

- Anyone who has had close contact with someone positive for COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after exposure, based on the time it takes to develop the illness.
- Any child who tests positive or has COVID-19 symptoms may return to school after three days with no fever and diminished respiratory symptoms and ten days since symptoms first appeared. Two consecutive negative COVID-19 tests given 24 hours apart would also indicate that a child may return to school. The negative test results should be provided to the school upon return.
- A child who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms can return to school after 10 days have passed since the test. Two consecutive negative COVID-19 tests given 24 hours apart would also indicate that a child may return to school. The negative test results should be provided to the school upon return.
- As always, be sure to call the school to report your child's absence.
- For more information, visit the following website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>

### ***MASKS FOR JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS***

Face masks for students are highly recommended. Masks will be encouraged anytime social distancing is difficult to accomplish; therefore, all students are asked to have a mask available at all times. Masks will be considered an essential school supply. To the extent possible, schools will promote and reinforce the use of face coverings for all students.

### ***BREAKFAST & LUNCH***

Students will be reminded to access lavatories for handwashing or access hand sanitizer dispensers prior to meal service. Because mealtime, by its very nature, presents many opportunities for the spread of germs, schools will be offering students a variety of seating options to provide safer situations than the typical cafeteria setting would allow. Students will be reminded that sharing food is not a safe practice.

### ***SCHOOL ACTIVITIES***

Extra activities such as marching band, vocal music, STUCO, drama and athletics of all descriptions are vital elements of a secondary student's experience. Responses to COVID-19 in these environments will vary, always with a keen eye to proven practices in prevention and protection. Research is presently under way by the National Federation of State High School Associations to help us know and apply the best precautions to take in order to protect our students involved in extra-curricular activities.

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#### ***ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL***

Arrival routines will look different this year in an effort to allow students to maintain a safe physical distance from one another as they wait for the first hour bell to begin class. Each site will work with the layout and options in their specific building to maximize opportunities for distancing in the minutes before school begins.

#### ***ALL-SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES***

All-school assemblies will be limited at the beginning of the school year. If possible, the football stadium and auditorium will be utilized with social distancing practices in place.

#### ***LOCKER USE***

For those students who choose to use their school lockers, it will be highly encouraged to make as few trips to the locker as possible throughout the day. At every opportunity, we will be seeking ways to minimize unnecessary material and items being brought into the school.

#### ***MEDIA CENTERS***

Honoring the importance of reading for both pleasure and research, the school media centers will remain open for student use. While there may be some changes in routines and scheduling, it is our intent to keep our media centers open and available to our students and staff. Books will be sanitized before being reshelfed.

#### ***FALL SPORTS AND BEYOND***

Knowing the importance of extra-curricular activities to the student experience, it is our hope to continue sporting events and other activities in a manner as safe and normal as possible. We will seek assistance from the Oklahoma Secondary School's Activity Association, abiding by their guidance for safe play. Locker rooms that are being utilized during the season as well as practice and playing areas will be sanitized daily. Athletes must have their own water bottles and towels labeled with their names. The sharing of individual equipment will not be allowed.

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