

South Conway County School District Continuity of Services for the 2021-2022 School Year Revised 8/9/21

District Families and Students,

Enclosed in this Continuity of Services Plan is information on procedures and protocols for buildings and buses that will be implemented by the South Conway County School District to provide a safe learning environment for our scholars during these unprecedented times. We have also included information on ways your family can help us to maintain healthy schools; when your student should stay home from school and when it may be safe for them to return; and how schools will handle procedures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Our goal is to ensure that all parents, students, teachers and staff members feel safe and secure while navigating through the complexities of the "new normal."

With direction from the Arkansas Governor's Office, Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the District is preparing as much as possible to provide safe and meaningful learning opportunities for all scholars. Each campus in the District will be producing its own ***Continuity of Services Plan*** with more specific procedures and protocols to maximize the safety of all students and staff.

The purpose of the District is to Love, Serve, and Care. The mission of the South Conway County School District is to maximize the safety, learning, and achievement of every scholar. The South Conway County School District knows and understands that each family is entrusting the South Conway County School District with your family's most precious gift, your children. Thank you for your belief in the District's ability to care for your child(ren). It is the District's desire for all to know that we will do our best. We are Devil Dogs and we will get through this TOGETHER!

Respectfully,

Shawn Halbrook
Superintendent of Schools

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The South Conway County School District (SCCSD) will follow the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) guidelines and the Arkansas Ready for Learning guidance issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in planning for the 2021-2022 school year.

School districts are advised to continue practicing preventative measures such as appropriate masking, physical distancing, screening, testing, ventilation, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection to the extent practical.

The District's mission is to maximize the safety, learning, and achievement of every scholar. Our goal has always been to provide as safe an environment as possible which includes a rich educational experience, with opportunities for social interaction and extra-curricular activities while adhering to guidelines provided by the Arkansas Department of Health.

What is the first day for students?

School will begin on August 16, 2021. This date will only change if ADH, DESE, or the Governor of Arkansas sends updated guidance with this requirement.

Will face coverings be required?

Yes. On Friday, August 6, 2021, Judge Tim Fox issued a temporary injunction on Act 1002. Act 1002 of 2021 states a state agency or entity, a political subdivision of the state, or a state or local official shall not mandate an individual in this state to use a face mask, face shield, or other face covering.

With the injunction on Act 1002, schools can require students and staff to wear face coverings during times of extraordinary circumstances, such as a declared public emergency by the governor of the state. The state of Arkansas is under a declared public health emergency by Governor Hutchinson due to the rise of COVID-19 cases in the state.

Face coverings will be required indoors and on busses by all students and staff members during the school day when physical distancing of 6ft cannot be achieved. The District will utilize the data located at <https://achi.net/covid19/>, to determine when the District will be able to allow face coverings to be optional.

The building administration will determine the appropriate physical distancing when enforcing the wearing of face coverings.

When the COVID infection rates average 0-9 new known infections for two weeks, the District may recommend face coverings to become optional.

Do we need to provide masks for our student or will one be provided?

Students must provide his/her own mask that meets the student handbook dress code policy. The District may be able to provide disposable masks.

What about vaccinations?

Schools are encouraged to help students ages 12 and older, their families, and all school staff with getting vaccinated.

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Individuals who are fully vaccinated may not have to quarantine. The CDC recommends that COVID exposed fully vaccinated individuals wear a mask and test 3-5 days after exposure. They should continue to mask until they have received a negative test.

Will bus transportation be provided?

Though school districts are not required to provide transportation to school, the SCCSD will provide bus transportation for all students. **Face coverings will be required indoors and on busses by all students and staff members when physical distancing of 6ft cannot be achieved. The District will utilize the data located at <https://achi.net/covid19/>, to determine when the District will be able to allow face coverings to be optional.** The District is not planning changes to bus schedules or bus stops at this time. All busses will be disinfected and sanitized after every use.

Bus drivers will assign seats for all students riding a bus. Family groups will be assigned to sit together. This will allow contact tracers to know what families to contact in the event of a known COVID-19 case. As stated previously, when details from the state level are revised, the District will continue communicating requirements with our learning community.

How normal will the day be for a student?

The District's goal is for your student(s) to have as normal of a day as possible while we also provide as much safety as possible. School leaders will work diligently to create a schedule and transitions to minimize close physical interactions and to maximize physical distancing, while also allowing for normal school activities. More details about daily schedules will be provided in each school's Continuity of Services Plan.

Will students in grades K-6 still have extra classes like PE, art, music, guidance and library?

Yes, students will continue to participate in activity classes, check out library books, and receive guidance and gifted instruction. In some cases, the teacher may present his/her lesson in the student's classroom to reduce the amount of transitions. This will help the District keep the cohorts of students together in K-6 as much as possible. The activity classes will be disinfected as much as possible during the school day to maximize safety.

Will my elementary student have recess?

Yes, elementary students will have outdoor play time with restrictions that may limit the number of students they come in contact with.

Will physical distancing guidelines be observed?

To the degree that is possible, physical distancing recommendations will be observed based on the guidance we receive from the CDC and ADH between now and the first of school. Under current guidelines, during times when physical distancing would be a challenge, such as during transitions and moving to other areas of campus, face coverings indoors are encouraged for adults and students.

The CDC recommends schools maintain:

- at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms, and
- at least 6 feet between students and adults, and between adults who are not fully vaccinated.

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It is suggested that both of these recommendations be combined with indoor mask wearing by people who are not fully vaccinated to reduce transmission risk. Mask use by people who are not fully vaccinated is particularly important when physical distance cannot be maintained.

Reorganization of classrooms, cafeterias, and other learning spaces will also take place in order to increase space between students. The District will balance this with not limiting students' needs to interact and communicate with their teachers and classmates.

If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, what will happen?

In the event an individual tests positive, we will follow the latest guidance from the ADH and DESE. The District will be in direct contact with ADH.

Will students and adults be screened daily?

No. The District asks parents/guardians to complete this screening in the morning prior to taking the student to school or placing the student on the bus. Individuals should answer the following questions:

- 1.) Have you had a fever of 100.4°F or greater 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?

If 7-12 students choose to do full-time virtual, will they be able to participate in extracurricular activities?

Yes, students in grades 7-12 do have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities.

Will schools in the District have an open house?

Yes. The K-8 buildings will have a come-and-go onsite open houses. Dates are being communicated on social media, school signs, websites, and will be published in the newspaper. The 9-12 building is planning on-site open house. The goal is to meet with parents/guardians safely to communicate important information utilizing physical distancing.

What will breakfast/lunch look like for my student(s)?

The District is preparing to adjust lunch schedules and/or use alternative areas if needed. The District will maximize the physical distancing of students in the cafeterias. Other measures will include sanitation and revised meal distribution protocols. All cafeteria staff will be trained in ServSafe, which is intense food safety training. Parents are encouraged to send a water bottle with their students.

Due to safety, the District is not allowing meals to be delivered to campuses unless they are in the personal lunchbox of the student. There will be no microwaves in the school for students to use. This is to reduce the risk of spreading illness through contact with the same surface.

What special precautions will be implemented in regard to cleaning and sanitizing?

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Sanitation and disinfecting have always been a high priority for the District. The District will be emphasizing cleaning high touch surfaces (door knobs, light switches, etc.) and restrooms on a continuous basis throughout the day. The District has also purchased disinfectant sprayers to quickly sanitize all rooms between usage. The District will also provide time for hand washing and hand sanitizing throughout our campuses. Students may be asked to sanitize their hands each time they leave and enter a new space.

If a student comes to school sick, what will happen?

If a student comes to school sick, the school nurse will screen the student and check his/her temperature. If temperature is over the ADH guidance, the student will be isolated and sent home. The student will need to be fever free for 48 hours without medication before returning to school. The parent/guardian may be advised to have the student tested for COVID-19. When the child returns to school he/she will check in with the school nurse.

How will you help fill any gaps my student has from the previous year?

Curriculum teams have developed plans to accelerate the learning of all students. Additionally, students will be assessed to determine individual strengths and areas of improvement. These assessments will determine if students need additional acceleration support.

What happens if we have school closure?

If schools must close due to communicable disease, weather or other events, the District will utilize off-site digital learning, we will utilize a “Blended Learning” strategy that allows for students to receive direct instruction (whether in person or through recorded lessons) in combination with digital content and lessons. The District has created a detailed digital learning plan for all students to move from on-site to at-home instruction at any time. Digital and blended learning has become part of our “new normal” on campus as teams work to greatly increase and improve our digital content on Google Classroom Learning Management System (LMS) for grades K-8 and Canvas LMS for grades 9-12, including resources and recordings of lessons.

Students and teachers will use blended teaching and learning on a regular basis on campus in order to better prepare for another closure if necessary. The District has scheduled two (2) digital learning days in the school calendar on November 22, 2021 and February 7, 2022 with flexible attendance (students have the option to learn offsite or onsite at school. Busses will run and breakfast/lunch will be served) where students and teachers will use digital learning

Our digital learning approach will also allow a student who becomes ill or must be quarantined to continue learning grade level and content standards even when he/she cannot be physically present in the classroom.

If I feel uncomfortable about my student returning to a traditional classroom, what are my options?

The District currently has two (2) instructional options for students for the 2021-2022 school year:

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1. Traditional On-site instruction at the school buildings for grades preK-12.
2. Devil Dog Virtual Academy for Grades K-12 – This is an off-site instructional delivery method for students in grades K-12. Students enrolled in grades K-6 will be provided instruction by a licensed teacher in the state of Arkansas through the Arkansas River Educational Cooperative. Students in grades 7-12 will be enrolled in Virtual Arkansas, using the Canvas LMS, with instructional content delivered by licensed teachers employed by Virtual Arkansas. Parents/Guardians choosing this option of instructional delivery will have more of the educational burden to ensure a schedule is followed and work/assessments are completed on time. Students will need reliable Internet and be able to follow a schedule. The District will provide a computer (if needed) to each student enrolled in Devil Dog Virtual Academy.

Will there be a Point of Contact at the District to determine “Close Contacts”?

Yes, the District will have an appointment Point of Contact to work with the ADH to report positive COVID-19 cases and close contacts.

If an individual who has been in a school has tested positive for COVID-19, districts are still required to continue to follow the established ADH reporting processes and requirements for isolation and quarantine.

Ms. Vicki Brannon, RN, will serve as the SCCSD Point of Contact (POC). Ms. Brannon may be contacted by the following methods:

1. **Office Phone:** 501.354.7608
2. **Email:** brannonv@sccsd.k12.ar.us
3. **Text or Voice message:** 501.613.7834

What is a “Close Contact”?

The CDC defines a close contact as an individual confirmed to have been within six feet for 15 cumulative minutes or longer within a 24-hour period during the infectious period of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

1. Individuals who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 and recovered and who are subsequently exposed to someone with COVID-19 within three months of their original diagnosis do not have to stay at home or get tested again, as long as they do not develop new symptoms. Individuals who develop symptoms again within three months of their first instance of COVID-19 should see their physician as they may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.
2. Individuals exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will not need to be quarantined if they have no symptoms and both the infected and exposed individual consistently and correctly were wearing a mask.
3. Individuals who are fully vaccinated may not have to quarantine, unless the individual is symptomatic (without a negative test) and/or tests positive for COVID-19. The CDC recommends fully vaccinated individuals who are exposed to COVID should mask and test 3-5 days after exposure. They should continue to mask for 2 weeks or until their post-exposure COVID test is negative.

What is the length of time a person will have to quarantine after being identified as a close contact?

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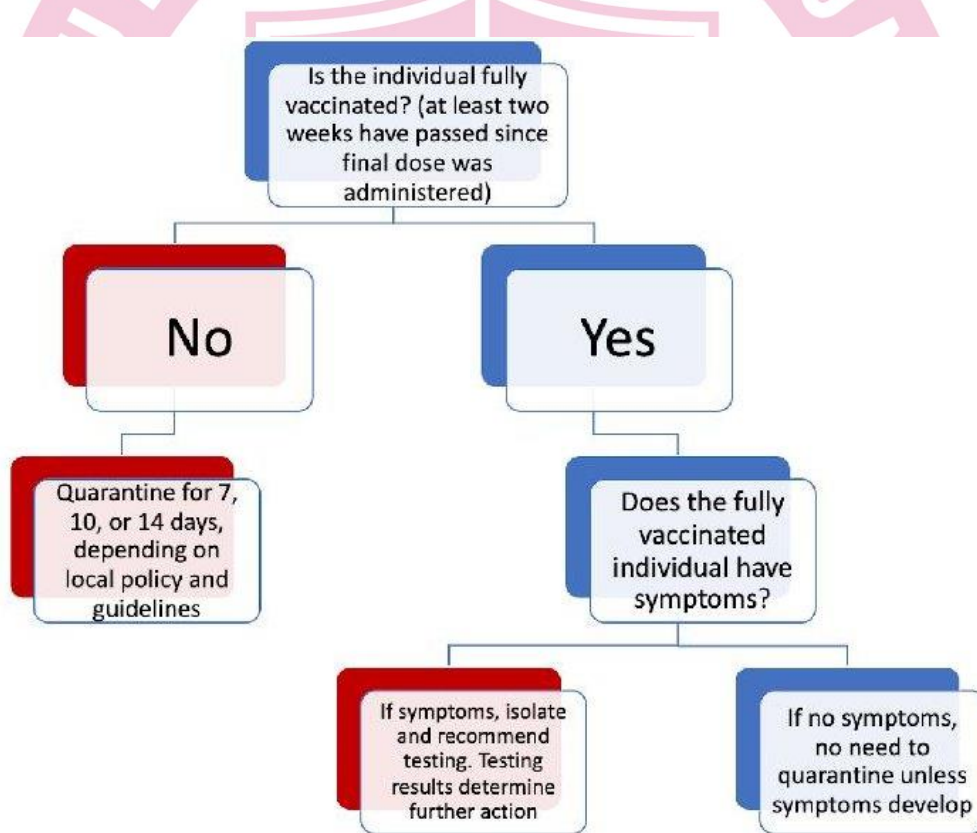
As of December 2, 2020, the CDC amended its guidance to allow two shorter options for the quarantine period. Based on current CDC guidance, the quarantine period can end for individuals experiencing no symptoms according to the following guidelines:

1. After 10 full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure without testing, or
2. After seven full 24-hour periods since close contact exposure and after receiving a negative test result (sample taken no earlier than five 24-hour periods after exposure).

If individuals return to school from these shorter quarantine windows, they should regularly monitor themselves for symptoms to ensure they remain symptom-free and take appropriate precautions (e.g., consistent mask usage) for the duration of the 14-day incubation period.

What about persons that test positive for COVID-19?

The person who tests positive for COVID-19 is still required to isolate at home for 10 days from the onset of symptoms or, if asymptomatic, 10 days from the positive test date. A person who is immunosuppressed or was hospitalized may need a longer isolation period of 20 days.



How can I mitigate the spread and protect myself from COVID-19?

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The South Conway County School District respects families' choices they believe is best to protect themselves. The following are ways to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19:

1. Vaccinations for persons 12 years of age and older. Please consult a health care professional you trust for guidance. The Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine available for persons in the 12-17 age range.
2. Utilizing Masks/Face Coverings that cover the mouth and the nose for people age 3 or older indoors. The CDC recommends that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other people who are not fully vaccinated.
3. Physical Distancing of more than 6ft between people not in normal family groups.
4. Hand washing and hand sanitizing frequently.
5. Screening for symptoms of COVID-19 at home.
6. Ventilation/Air Circulation: Evidence suggests that improved air circulation is beneficial in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Open windows or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in a building, and thereby lower the concentration of viral particles.

Public Health Considerations

The COVID-19 Delta variant is now the predominant COVID-19 strain in Arkansas. The Delta variant is two-to-three times more transmissible, which means that an infected person can spread COVID-19 to twice as many people as observed earlier in the pandemic. The COVID-19 Delta variant appears to cause more severe disease and a greater likelihood of hospitalization in unvaccinated young people than we observed earlier in the pandemic. While adolescents over 12 years of age and adults can be protected from the Delta variant by the COVID-19 vaccines, children under 12 remain at high risk. Children represent an increasing proportion of new COVID-19 cases, including hospitalizations and severe disease.

The South Conway County School District is committed to providing a high quality education program to all of our students. At the same time, the District is also committed to maximizing the safety of every student and staff member. Each building is creating a more specific "Continuity of Services" plan specific to that building to be able to maximize the safety of every student and staff member. The SCCSD will continue to work with DESE and ADH to prepare for the 2021-2022 school year to ensure we are ready for learning. We will continue to communicate as much information as possible to our great learning community in a responsible manner. Thank you for your continued support of the South Conway County School District.