

# ARKADELPHIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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## COVID-19 Guidelines School Year 2020-2021

Do you have questions about APSD learning options for the fall semester? The Arkadelphia School District will follow the Arkansas Department of Health guidelines and the Arkansas Ready for Learning report issued by the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education plan for re-engagement in the fall. Several Learning Options will be provided for families for the fall semester. A full Arkadelphia Ready for Learning District Support Plan will be available sometime in July, with comprehensive details about how all protocols and procedures will be implemented. To help our families begin making decisions, an FAQ document is provided here with information to be included in the support plan following input from the Arkadelphia Ready for Learning Committee.

The Arkadelphia School District has created a Ready for Learning Committee of APSD educators and administrators from each school to provide input on the district support plan. Our goal for the APSD Ready for Learning District Support Plan is to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for all of our students while adhering to guidelines provided by ADH.

The Arkadelphia Ready for Learning District Support plan will not be completed until late July, as it requires input from the APSD Ready for Learning Committee, continued updates and guidance from the ADH, and feedback from staff, parents and district officials regarding learning options for the 2020-2021 school year.

### ***Frequently Asked Questions***

#### ***1. What is the first day of school for students?***

School will begin on Monday, August 24, 2020.

#### ***2. Can you guarantee students and staff will not become ill?***

No. While the well-being of our students, staff, and families is of utmost importance, we cannot guarantee no one will get sick. Every risk cannot be mitigated, but we will do all we can to ensure everyone's safety.

#### ***3. What are the requirements for face coverings?***

We will receive guidance regarding COVID-19 topics weekly if not on a daily basis. Currently,

the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) are *strongly recommending* all individuals 10 years old and over to wear a face covering. However, the ADH has not issued a directive to **require** face coverings. Based on this guidance, Arkadelphia Public Schools will be *strongly recommending* students in 5th grade and above to wear a face covering.

**4. Will face coverings be provided for students?**

The district will provide cloth face coverings for every student. If they are not required, face coverings will still be made available.

**5. Will bus transportation be provided?**

Yes, the district will provide bus transportation for students. If there are any changes to bus schedules, stops, or routes, information will be communicated to parents.

**6. Will students have to wear face coverings on the bus?**

Due to the bus being a confined area where physical distancing is not feasible, it is strongly recommended that students under age 10 wear a face covering where practical. All students age 10 and over are strongly recommended to wear a face covering at all times while on the bus. We will follow ADH and DESE directives and guidelines.

**7. What will the school day look like for my child?**

Administrators are working diligently to create schedules that include minimizing close physical interactions. Our goal is to maintain as normal of a day as possible while mitigating risk.

**8. How will students socially distance in the classroom?**

Classrooms will be arranged to maximize spacing between students and teachers to the extent possible. We will make every effort to conform to social distancing guidelines.

**9. Where will my student eat lunch?**

Based on current ADH guidelines regarding limited capacities in cafeterias, we are working on adjusting lunch schedules and possibly using alternative areas if necessary. Other measures will include proper sanitation of all areas after every meal service.

**10. Will my student still be able to have recess or play on the playground?**

Yes, students will have outdoor play time.

**11. Will students still have extra classes like P.E., art, music, and library?**

Yes, students will still have the opportunity to participate in activity classes.

**12. Will students be able to attend field trips?**

We anticipate field trips in the fall will be limited. We will follow ADH and DESE guidance.

**13. Will water fountains be available?**

Students are encouraged to bring filled water bottles as water fountains will not be available. Hydration stations will be available for students to fill their water bottles if needed.

**14. Will extracurricular activities and sports be offered in the fall?**

Yes. Many student athletes have currently returned to campus to begin practice based on ADH and Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) guidance. We anticipate there will be sports activities in the fall with possible modifications required by ADH and AAA.

**16. Will there be any restrictions on band and/or choir?**

We are still waiting on guidance from ADH.

**17. What precautions will be taken for cleaning and sanitizing?**

Disinfecting, sanitation, and cleanliness continue to be a high priority on all our campuses.

Extra attention will be given on high touch surface areas. Restrooms will also be continuously cleaned throughout the day. Students will be expected to wash or sanitize their hands throughout the day.

***19. Will students and adults be screened daily?***

At this time guidance from ADH and DESE does not include taking temperatures.

***20. What happens if a student comes to school sick?***

The student will be screened by the school nurse. If the student has a temperature over the ADH guidance, they will be sent home and will need to be fever free for 48 hours without medication before returning to school. The student will be required to check in again with the school nurse upon returning to school.

***21. What happens if an individual tests positive for COVID-19?***

The district will be in close contact with ADH directly and follow ADH's guidance.

***22. Can I visit the school, classroom, or eat lunch with my student?***

Under current ADH guidance, visitors will not be allowed in the school except for the reception area. Parents will not be allowed to eat with their child. Visits to the school will be limited to essential activity.

***23. Can I walk my child into the school?***

No, parents and guardians may not walk them into the school, but they may walk their student to the school entrance.

***24. What about students who have special needs or students with compromised immune systems and pre-existing conditions?***

The district will be prepared to accommodate students with special needs through both onsite and remote instruction. Our Special Education instructors will be taking extra precautions when working with students. If parents have concerns about their students who may be at high-risk for COVID-19, they may be interested in exploring our digital option which allows the students to continue their education from the safety of their home.

***25. How will you help fill any gaps in learning for my student from the previous year?***

The district curriculum team, along with classroom teachers and administrators are continuing to work in order to revise district curricula so that missed essential standards and skills will be addressed when students return.

***26. What happens if schools are mandated to close again?***

This is where "blended learning" for traditional students comes in. With blended learning, students will learn content through in-classroom instruction with their teachers as well as through Google Classroom. Students will learn how to use these digital learning systems by participating in lessons throughout the week while at school. In the event of a school closure, or if a student becomes ill, students will be able to easily pivot or transition to online learning at home. Blended learning will become part of our new normal.

***27. If I do not want my student to return to school in this traditional format, what are my options?***

A survey was sent out recently in order for us to collect data.

***28. I understand that I will not be able to walk my child into school and only to the front entrance.***

***Will there be someone who can help them get to their classroom, especially on the first day?***

Our principals know they will need to be prepared for these situations. While at this point we are not able to allow large groups of parents in the school, we understand this is an important part of the first day of school and we will work on a way to make it as positive as possible. Once we have a plan we will share with parents. We want to assure you that we will take care of your kids.

***29. Will there be an open house, will we be able to meet the teacher, or see the classroom?***

We are working on a modified open house. We understand that parents and students need to meet teachers and become familiar with their classroom before we open on August 13. This will also help with students and parents who are new to our district, to that school, and/or are feeling anxious about the first day.

***30. When and how will students be receiving their schedules and learning where classrooms are located?***

Schedules are typically ready 5-10 days before the first day of school. We will work on a plan to have buildings open so that students can find classrooms in advance of the first day. Once those plans are finalized we will communicate with parents.

***31. Will kids be allowed to play together or have to stay 6 feet apart?***

We will do our best to encourage the six foot rule for kids, but we all realize that we must be reasonable in how we work through those types of issues. We want school to be a safe and caring place and have to be careful about making it too “institutionalized.”