



Updated August 13, 2021

Please note this plan may evolve throughout the school year in response to the latest medical recommendations. We will continue to work side-by-side with local, state, and federal medical experts to ensure our plan meets the changing nature of the pandemic. Learn more at jpschools.org/startstrong.

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER

JP Schools Family,

Last school year opened with uncertainty about the challenges ahead. All of us — students, teachers, administrators, support staff, families — entered a school year during a global health pandemic for the first time. This time last year, there was no vaccine and no blueprint for how to educate in-person while keeping students and staff safe from COVID-19.

Things look different as we enter this school year. While we should still expect cases of COVID-19 in our schools, safe and effective vaccines are widely available to adults and children ages 12 and up. We also have a blueprint for how to safely educate students in-person during the pandemic. Medical experts testified that Louisiana schools were among the safest environments for children.

Our priority is to provide the best learning environment possible for students while keeping everyone safe. As educators, we are not experts on the virus. That's why we've continued to work side-by-side with local and state medical experts since before the first case of COVID-19 in Jefferson Parish. We developed our mitigation measures using guidance from the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and local healthcare partners.

Our guidelines are based on the best information available today. We will continue to work with medical experts to ensure our mitigation measures prioritize the safety of students and employees and are appropriate for the current health situation. As the virus and medical recommendations evolve, we will adjust our plans accordingly so we can continue to safely educate children through what we all hope is one of the final chapters of this terrible pandemic.

Last year's success was due to the tireless work of our teachers, administrators, support staff, families, and the unwavering support from our school board and community. We all came together. It wasn't always easy, but the entire JP Schools family kept kids at the forefront. Not only do you have my utmost gratitude, but you have my confidence that we will rise to the occasion once again to meet the needs of all children.

Dr. James Gray, Superintendent
Jefferson Parish Schools



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HEALTH AND SAFETY: HOW ARE WE KEEPING STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES SAFE?

The safety of our students and employees is our top responsibility. In light of the Governor's Roadmap to Restarting Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Education issued [Ready to Achieve! 2021-2022 School Operational Guidelines](#) pertaining to opening public and nonpublic school facilities to serve students in the 2021-22 school year. Should the public health situation worsen, restrictions may gradually tighten, allowing for less flexibility and fewer opportunities for in-person teaching and learning.

The Start Strong Jefferson plan follows guidelines based on Louisiana's [Ready to Achieve! 2021-2022 School Operational Guidelines](#). In addition to meeting the guidelines recommended by the state, we may take extra precautions to increase the safety of our students, employees, and families.

We're implementing the following safety protocols for the 2021-2022 school year:

Face Masks

- Regardless of vaccination status, JP Schools employees, students, and visitors must wear a face mask while inside the school facility.
- All fully vaccinated and unvaccinated adults and students do not need to wear a face mask if they adhere to physical distancing requirements while outdoors.
 - It is recommended that people who are not fully vaccinated wear a face mask in crowded outdoor settings or during activities that involve sustained close contact with other individuals who are not fully vaccinated.
- All drivers and passengers on the school bus must wear a face mask at all times per Presidential Executive Order No. 13998 for Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel.
- Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis for students and employees with health or other concerns that make wearing a face mask difficult.

Social Distancing and Static Grouping

- Adults should maintain six feet of physical distance from other adults and students.
- Students should maintain a physical distance of at least three feet from other students and six feet from adults in a classroom or indoor setting to the greatest extent possible.
- Students who are unable to maintain a physical distance of at least three feet from other students or six feet from adults should remain in static groups. The static group composition should be maintained for as long as possible.
- The composition of a group may change if students are able to maintain a physical distance of at least three feet from other students and six feet from adults in a classroom or indoor setting to the greatest extent possible.
- Students with disabilities should continue to receive special education and related services in the least restrictive environment.
- Schools should factor in any additional service providers who may need to enter the classroom, students who receive services outside the classroom (e.g. resource, APE), and/or students who receive services through alternate instructional methods.

Personal Hygiene

- Students and staff should wash or sanitize hands upon arrival at school, before and after eating, before and after using outdoor play equipment, and before exiting the school facility.
- Students should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer after changing any classroom. Teachers in the classroom should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer every time a new group of students enters.
- Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol may be used in place of handwashing in some instances.

Daily Cleaning Efforts

- High-touch surfaces should be cleaned with a commercially available cleaning solution, including EPA-approved disinfectants at least twice per day. This includes:
 - Light switches, doors, benches, bannisters, and bathroom fixtures
 - Surfaces and objects in libraries, labs, and other settings where "hands-on" materials and equipment are used
 - Student desks, which should be cleaned before and after each student's use
- Sharing of materials between students should be minimized.
- Playground equipment and athletic equipment should be cleaned as necessary, depending on frequency of use.
- School employees will be provided an adequate amount of hygienic supplies according to the role and the number and age of students or adults served by that employee.

Group Sizes

- The maximum group size that may convene indoors in a single room should be determined by physical distancing requirements.
- A physical barrier is not required if groups convene outdoors, but each group should remain separated.
- Schools should limit crowding at entry and exit points and maintain maximum group sizes and physical distance recommendations to the greatest extent possible.

COVID-19 Symptom Monitoring

- Students and employees who are sick should stay home (regardless of the illness).
- Staff and families should notify school officials (e.g., the designated COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.
- Each school should establish an area used to isolate staff and students with COVID-19 symptoms (such as fever, persistent cough, or shortness of breath).
- Students in the isolation area must be monitored at all times.
- The isolation area should be cleaned after it is occupied by a sick student or adult.
- Parents will be responsible for picking up their child from school if it is determined that the student has any signs of illness.

Visitors

- Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Nonessential visitors or non-district employees:
 - must wear face masks and maintain a physical distance of six feet from others.
 - are subject to a temperature screening and must sanitize their hands upon arrival.
- Essential visitors are individuals who must enter schools in order to conduct visits in accordance with Louisiana law or policy. Essential visitors include, but are not limited to, individuals, who:
 - conduct CLASS observations.
 - observe teacher candidates as part of the teacher preparation quality rating system.
 - provide essential supports and services including, but not limited to, early intervention services, special education services, and mental health consultation.

Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

- Schools should plan for and expect that some students/staff will contract COVID-19 during the school year given the levels of COVID-19 in our communities.
- Students and staff who have COVID-19 should stay home and remain isolated until they have recovered and have been determined to no longer be infectious according to CDC's end of isolation criteria.
- Students, families, and employees should notify the school or their immediate supervisor if they test positive for COVID-19.
- Schools will communicate with employees and parents of students who were in close contact with the affected COVID-19 individual.
- All COVID-19 cases will be reported to LDH in accordance with the School Reporting and Data Sharing Order.
- Closures of individual classes and/or schools may be necessary. Factors considered will be the level of community transmission, number of students/faculty affected, and risk of spread at the school.

Contact Tracing

- Individuals who were in close contact with a Covid-19 positive case may be identified and contacted as part of the LDH contact tracing process.
- Close contact is defined as
 - being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period OR
 - having direct contact with an infected person, including touching, hugging, kissing, or sharing eating or drinking utensils; or if an infected person sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on another person.
 - Indoor Classroom Exception: If BOTH the case and the contact were engaged in consistent and correct use of a well-fitting face mask AND were within 3 to 6 feet of each other, then those close contacts do not need to quarantine.
 - This exception only applies to students and should not be used for teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.
- Close contacts should be encouraged to seek testing immediately, regardless of vaccination status. If negative, they should be tested again between 5-7 days post exposure.
- Close contacts of a COVID-19 positive individual must stay home for 10-14 days following exposure.
 - If no symptoms develop during quarantine and no testing is done, the individual may quarantine for 10-14 days from last contact with a COVID-19 case.
 - If quarantine is shortened, daily symptom monitoring and strict adherence to prevention measures including physical distancing, hand washing, and wearing face masks should continue until 14 days from last contact with a COVID-19 case.
- Close contacts who were previously diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 90 days and remain asymptomatic do not need to quarantine.
- Close contacts who are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose in a single-dose vaccine) at the time of exposure and remain asymptomatic do not need to be quarantined.

Other Safety Measures

- Limit use of indoor shared spaces, such as cafeterias and gymnasiums, to maximum group sizes. Ensure physical distancing and face mask use. Clean between each group's use.
- Close shared water fountains. Encourage students and staff to bring bottled water from home.
- Display COVID-19 informational signs in highly visible locations (e.g., school entrances, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs (such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a face mask).
- Require all employees to participate in health and safety training throughout the school year.

COVID-19 Immunizations

- Eligible students and staff may have opportunities, throughout the school year, to receive the COVID-19 vaccination at a JPS School Based Health Center (SBHC) or school site.
- Vaccinations will be administered to consented individuals and provided by local health care partners.
- Prevention strategies to protect people who are not fully vaccinated in schools with young children who are not eligible for vaccination should be layered.

Mental Health Supports

- Jefferson Parish Schools will continue to provide families and employees access to the Emotional Support Line, staffed by experienced mental health professionals.
- Schools will screen all students to determine if there are any social and/or emotional supports needed.

TEACHING & LEARNING:

HOW ARE STUDENTS GOING BACK TO SCHOOL?

Student learning is our top priority. Virtual learning served a necessary and important role last school year, and we learned a lot through the experience. Our intention for the 2021-22 school year is that students in grades PK-12 will attend school in-person. As numerous studies have shown, there are great benefits to in-person learning. We know from our experience over the last year that the majority of our students perform best academically, socially and emotionally when they are learning in-person with their peers. At the same time, we know a small segment of our high school students may benefit from a virtual school program that offers flexibility and increased responsibility for their coursework. The decision to create [Jefferson Virtual High School](#) for the 2021-22 school year delivered on our priority to provide access, equity, and opportunity to all students.

Based on the public health situation, schools may shift to a 100% virtual school instructional model, either on a school-by-school basis or district-wide.

Quarantined Students

- Should students need to be quarantined, they will bring devices home, access assignments in Google Classroom and conduct asynchronous learning for days out of school.
- Teachers will check assignments, provide feedback for assignments through Google Classroom and monitor student work.

Technology

- The district has 1:1 device capacity for K-12 graders and will provide students with district computers in order to support instructional technology for teaching and learning.
- We continue to partner with Cox Communications so qualified families can easily access discounted, low-cost home internet. More information is available at jpschools.org/internetoffer.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES:

WHAT OTHER PROCEDURES WILL ENSURE A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL TEACHING & LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

| | |
|---|---|
| Arrival and Dismissal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to enter and exit in single-file lines to enable physical distancing.• Establish one or two entry and exit points that enable the flow of students to move in a single direction.• Set up hand hygiene stations at the entrance to the facility so students can clean their hands before they enter. If a sink with soap and water is not available, provide hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and supervise its use. |
| Facility Organization | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remove unused desks and furniture in classrooms to maximize physical distance and minimize objects that must be cleaned.• Establish distance between the teacher's desk/board and students' desks.• Identify and utilize large spaces (e.g., gymnasiums, auditoriums, outside spaces) to enable physical distancing.• Teach from one location in the classroom if possible and follow physical distance guidelines.• Provide additional time for transitions.• Designate areas of the hallway (i.e., lanes) as flow paths to keep students separated and to minimize congregation of students.• Plan staggered class changes (e.g., by hall, odd/even room numbers, grade/discipline) to decrease the number of students in hallways at one time. |
| Before & After-Care Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees and students must wear face masks and adhere to physical distancing protocols.• Younger students who are unable to maintain physical distance should maintain static groups. |

TRANSPORTATION:

HOW WILL WE SAFELY TRANSPORT OUR STUDENTS?

Transportation

- According to the Presidential Executive Order No. 13998 on Promoting COVID-19 Safety in Domestic and International Travel, all drivers and passengers on the school bus must wear a face mask at all times.
- Families are encouraged to drive their children to school if possible. This will reduce the number of students on buses.
- Parents and students are encouraged to maintain physical distance at bus stops and to avoid congregating in groups while waiting for the bus.
- All passengers should engage in hand hygiene upon entering the bus. Hand sanitizer should not exceed 80% alcohol concentration and containers should be securely closed, secured against shifting and protected from damage.
- Operational Standards
 - Seating charts should be created and consistently enforced.
 - Open windows at all times to facilitate air flow as weather conditions permit.
 - Stagger unloading of buses at school to minimize student group size as they enter school and to allow six feet of distance while entering.
 - Clean high-touch surfaces, including seats and handrails, as per normal. The bus should be cleaned and disinfected daily.

EXTRA-CURRICULARS:

WHAT ACTIVITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM?

Assemblies and Field Trips

- Assemblies are limited to maximum group sizes and with appropriate physical distancing in place. For younger students unable to maintain physical distance, maintain static groups.
- Attendees must wear a face mask regardless of vaccination status.
- Students and staff should wash hands before and after events.
- Field trips can occur if strictly following masking, cohorting, and transportation requirements.
- Outdoor field trip opportunities should be prioritized, if possible.

Athletics and Physical Education

- Athletic activities are allowed to resume with the recommendations put forth in the Louisiana High School Athletic Association's Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities.
- Outdoor and indoor spectator capacity for LHSAA-sanctioned athletics shall be set in accordance with the Louisiana State Fire Marshal's guidelines developed in conjunction with the Office of the Governor and LDH at opensafely.la.gov.

Band and Music

- Band and vocal music activities are allowed to resume with the guidance put forth in the *JPS Band and Music Guidelines*.
- Due to the Governor's indoor mask mandate (Proclamation 137), band, vocal and singing classes should not occur indoors at this time, as participants in these classes must adhere to the indoor mask mandate. Band, vocal and music classes may occur outdoors until further notice.

MEALS:

HOW WILL WE PROVIDE NUTRITIOUS MEALS FOR OUR STUDENTS?

We will continue to provide nutritious meals for our students. Food will be served with additional safety and sanitation procedures in place.

Food Preparation and Meal Service

- Wash hands before and after every meal.
- Ensure six feet of distance between students while eating to the maximum extent possible.
- Utilize classrooms for eating in place if possible.
- Allow students to bring food from home.
- Stagger meal times for each group and adhere to maximum group size based on physical distancing requirements in the cafeteria.
- Use disposable utensils.
- Mark spaced lines to enter the cafeteria and serving lines; designate entrances and exit flow paths; ensure single-file lines for food lines and disposal.
- Utilize outdoor seating as practical and appropriate.
- Food and nutrition staff should:
 - Clean frequently touched surfaces such as kitchen countertops, cafeteria and service tables, door handles, carts and trays at least twice a day. Follow the directions on the cleaning product's label and clean hands afterwards.
 - Practice proper hand hygiene. This is an important infection control measure. Gloves must be worn throughout the preparation and service of food.
 - Wash hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol can be used, but not as a substitute for cleaning hands with soap and water.



Dr. James Gray
Superintendent

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Please note this plan is subject to change.
Learn more at jpschools.org/startstrong.