Covid-19 Information 2020-2021 School Year

The City of Columbia has issued a mandatory mask ordinance for 90 days, which extends into October at this time. Columbia Public Schools will follow this ordinance as we begin our school year. Please encourage your student to begin wearing a mask before school begins so that they can become comfortable with this. A mask should cover the nose and mouth and your hands should be clean when putting the mask on or taking it off. A washable cloth mask is a good choice to reduce waste. Mark your mask with your name! A mask is worn to protect others; it reduces sharing our germs with other people by reducing the spray of saliva when we cough, sneeze, or talk. The mask should be worn unless eating or drinking. If PE class involves exercise the coaches will direct the student regarding wearing a mask. While in group music classes, the director will guide students regarding mask use. Best practice is to wash your mask every day.

Our staff will encourage social distancing, leaving 6 feet between people when at all possible. Our staff will be working very hard to keep everyone safe. We will discourage group gatherings in halls and have developed a lunch plan that will reduce the numbers in the cafeteria. Each grade level will have two lunch shifts. Staff will encourage frequent hand washing and hand sanitizer will be present in every classroom. Remind your student to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

Most important, if your child appears ill with fever, cough, or shortness of breath, do not send them to school to “try it out” for a few hours. A helpful habit is checking your student’s temperature every morning before school. They should stay home if the temperature is over 100*. Call the attendance secretary if your student is ill. Teachers will make every accommodation for your student to succeed and would much rather help them catch up when they are feeling well. It is so important that your student has current contact information on file at all times. If you change your phone number, let the attendance secretary know right away. The nurse will be the person to contact families if there is a confirmed case of Covid-19 in our building. This is called contact tracing and current phone numbers will be so important.

In the event of a positive Covid-19 person at our school the current plan is to close the school for 24 hours to all people. A member of administration will alert families and give instructions to you. During the second 24 hours our custodial staff will be allowed in the building to deep clean. When custodians have completed this deep cleaning, you will be notified that we can return to school the next school day. The most current information is always available on the CPS website. Please visit the www.cdc.gov website for greater detail.

If your student takes daily medication or has asthma, please contact the health room to arrange bringing items to school. We are limiting visitors and will make special arrangements for you to meet the health room staff. Students are not allowed to bring prescription medication to the nurse, a parent must do this and complete paperwork. Please do not hesitate to email or call the health room with any questions. I thank you in advance for your patience as we navigate this unusual back to school time.

If your 8th grade student has not provided written proof of Tdap and Meningitis vaccines, their schedule will be blocked until this proof is on file. You have been contacted by the nurse if this applies to your student.

Thank you for sharing in student and staff health this 2020-2021 school year.

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