

# **Mountain Brook Schools 2020-2021 Reopening Frequently Asked Questions**

*All information subject to change as new guidance emerges.*

## **GENERAL**

### **When will school start?**

The first day for students is August 11, 2020. School calendars can be found on our [website](#).

### **What is the difference between virtual school and traditional school?**

Students who opt for virtual school will be using a virtual curriculum to guide their learning as they work from home. For Pre-K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students, virtual school will be facilitated by a Mountain Brook teacher. For 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, virtual school will be facilitated by a state certified teacher. Students who opt for traditional school will attend classes 5 days per week at their designated school during regular school hours. The option to register for virtual learning can be accessed [at this link](#). The deadline to register is Friday, July 24, 2020. Students will have the option to change between the two school options at the semester break but not before.

### **Will masks be required for students and employees?**

Masks are required for all employees and all students when social distancing cannot be achieved. We anticipate that students and faculty will utilize masking for a significant period of time throughout the day. However, our schools are intentionally planning for specific times when students can extend their distancing and have "mask breaks". When riding a bus, masks are required for everyone.

### **What types of masks may be worn?**

Individuals can determine what type of facial covering is most comfortable for them. Facial coverings need to cover the nose and mouth. A facial covering that can be worn around the neck would be most beneficial for younger children. Any graphics or wording should comply with the Mountain Brook Schools Code of Conduct.

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**Will temperature checks be taken as people enter school facilities each day?**

The Alabama [Roadmap to Reopening Schools](#) encourages parents to take temperature checks at home prior to coming to school. Temperature checks will be conducted by the school nurse if a student or employee begins to feel unwell or exhibits possible symptoms.

**What will social distancing look like in the classroom and hallways?**

Schools are making preparations to assist with traffic flow in the hallways during class changes. When possible, schools will consider staggering classes moving in the hallways. Since distancing will be a challenge during these times, it is important for everyone to wear a facial covering as they transition.

**How will student absences be handled this school year?**

The Mountain Brook Schools Attendance Policy has not been changed. However, all COVID-19 related absences will be excused. Students will be able to continue their academic work while away from the building or make up their work after a reported illness.

**HEALTH**

**What is the plan when a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19?**

**Student:** If you or a family member test positive, please inform your school nurse so that we can assist you with developing a plan. The individual should remain home until they meet all "return to school" criteria. Family members should also quarantine at home for 14 days to monitor for symptoms. Mountain Brook Schools will communicate with the Jefferson County Department of Health and follow all guidance provided for the individual situation. The school and family should make every attempt to work together to assist with identifying any possible exposures.

**Employee:** If you or a family member test positive, please inform your school nurse and administration so that we can assist you in developing a plan. Dr. Susan Cole, Director of Personnel, is prepared to talk you through the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(FFCRA\)](#) which allows you some paid leave entitlements assuming you meet one of the six qualifying reasons for leave related to COVID-19. For your protection and that of others, if you or a family member test positive for COVID-19, please follow appropriate quarantine requirements and provide a

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physician release upon returning to work. FFCRA also covers questions related to those with underlying health conditions.

**What if a student or teacher tests positive? Does that entire classroom/school need to quarantine? How will this classroom/area be cleaned if a positive case is determined?**

If a student or teacher tests positive, Mountain Brook Schools will work with the Jefferson County Department of Health on contact tracing and exposure levels. If distancing and masking have been continuously occurring, it may be possible for the class to continue at school. However, if the exposure risk is higher based on similar situations, it may be possible that the class would need to quarantine for 14 days. Each situation is different, and decisions will be made on an individual basis.

**What if someone in your family tests positive? Do you have to quarantine?**

Based on guidance from the Jefferson County Department of Health, if you live with an individual who has tested positive, this would be considered a high exposure situation. You and other family members would be asked to quarantine for 14 days to monitor for symptoms. Employees in this situation would need to contact Dr. Susan Cole, Director of Personnel, for more information.

**If I am notified that I need to quarantine, do I have to pay for a test?**

If you receive notification that you may have been in direct contact with a positive COVID-19 case, you will be asked to quarantine for 14 days. There is no mandate from the school system to seek out and pay for a COVID-19 test.

**What services are available to help the social-emotional well-being of students and teachers dealing with the stress of the pandemic?**

Employees have access to the Employee Assistance Program for counseling if needed. Our school counseling team will be assessing the needs of students and faculty members as school begins. Counselors will use small group guidance and individual support to assist with mental health and social-emotional needs. All parents and students are welcome to meet with our school counselors should they have concerns. Mountain Brook Schools students and parents also have access to the Mountain Brook Schools Reporting Line through ClassLink should they need assistance.

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**What measures are in place to assist employees who have underlying health conditions?**

We ask those employees to contact their school administrator and Dr. Susan Cole, Director of Personnel, should they have any concerns.

**Do students and employees have to notify the school if they test positive?**

All families and employees are highly encouraged to let the school nurse know of a positive test result.

**How will we differentiate between those with other symptoms (ex., cough, sneezing, allergy/sinus) and COVID-19 symptoms?**

We will follow the guidelines provided by the Alabama Department of Health. Should an individual present with symptoms, they should see the school nurse to be evaluated.

**Will maintaining 6 feet of social distancing be enforced in the cafeteria, hallways, and other places outside of the classroom?**

We will try to maintain 6 feet of social distancing in all areas when possible.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

**Are virtual students also starting August 11, and will virtual students attend graduations?**

Yes, all students will start on August 11, and graduation dates will be the same for all students. Virtual students will follow the Mountain Brook Schools board approved calendar. Virtual students who are enrolled in Mountain Brook Schools are allowed to participate in graduation.

**I registered my child for virtual by mistake or changed my mind. What do I do?**

Email Dr. Missy Brooks, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, at [brooksm@mtnbrook.k12.al.us](mailto:brooksm@mtnbrook.k12.al.us).

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**What will PE and recess look like for students?**

We encourage students to be outside during PE and recess as much as possible. PE teachers are working on safety protocols that will include distancing. Students are not required to wear masks when participating in physical activity.

**What is the deadline to make a decision about attending virtual school?**

We ask that families register for virtual school by Friday, July 24.

**Will my child have the same teacher regardless of whether they attend traditional or virtual school?**

Virtual instruction for grades K-8 will have content from Schools PLP provided to them by a Mountain Brook virtual teacher. For virtual instruction in grades 9-12, a teacher certified in the state of Alabama will serve as the facilitator. That teacher would not be from Mountain Brook.

**I would like to explore Schools PLP in more detail before making a decision. How can I do that?**

We have just received access to the Schools PLP curriculum. If you would like further information, please email [covid19questions@mtnbrook.k12.al.us](mailto:covid19questions@mtnbrook.k12.al.us) and we will contact you to accommodate your request. We are working on a presentation that will answer specific questions about this option soon.

**Will students in grades 9-12 enrolled in virtual school have to come to campus to take tests?**

No, ACCESS has changed that policy. Students may test from home.

**How will special services look during this time?**

Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and 504 plans should have a team meeting with the appropriate members of that team to make a decision about the best placement and strategies to meet the needs of the student.

**OPERATIONS/MAINTENANCE**

**How will schools be cleaned?**

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Mountain Brook Schools custodial teams are performing all cleaning and sanitization in accordance with the CDC Guidelines. All custodians have received professional training prior to the 2020-2021 school year. All high touch surfaces and bathrooms will be cleaned on a rotating basis throughout the school day. All buildings will be cleaned and sanitized before the next school day.

**What plans exist for classroom ventilation and HVAC filter changing?**

The Mountain Brook Schools maintenance team is following the CDC recommendations for the maintenance of all HVAC systems to ensure our air quality in the buildings.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Updated July 17, 2020)**

**Are Pre-K and Kindergarten students expected to wear masks?**

All Mountain Brook students are expected to wear masks when distancing cannot be achieved. However, we understand this will be especially difficult for very young students. Our goal is to do the best we can to help young children with this process. We do realize, however, that there will be more instances when masks come off for these younger ages.

**What will PE look like for K-6?**

Our PE teachers have received guidance from state professional organizations regarding recommendations for PE classes. Lesson design will minimize the use of equipment, reduce group sizes, utilize outside activities as much as possible, and adhere to cleaning protocols. Masks are not required during physical activity, but PE teachers will be developing plans for distancing to the greatest extent possible.

**What if my child forgets to bring their mask to school?**

Each school will have a supply of extra masks should someone forget their mask or their mask breaks during the day.

**What happens if a child refuses to wear a mask?**

Wearing a mask is not optional when distancing cannot be achieved. Should a student refuse to wear a mask, we will address the behavior through positive reinforcement strategies just as we would with any other behavior. Our

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administrators are prepared to work with families should this become an issue for their child.

**Will specials be offered at the elementary schools?**

Yes. Specials classes will be offered at all four elementary schools.

**Are our classrooms large enough for student seats to be spread 6 feet apart so that students do not have to wear a mask?**

The size of our classrooms may limit our ability to distance students 6 feet apart. Due to this limitation, students will be asked to wear masks in classrooms should they not be able to distance. Our school teams are building in specific times for extensive distancing to enable students to take "mask breaks".

**How will lunch be served?**

Students will go to the lunchroom to pick up their lunch and return to their classrooms to eat. Our lunchrooms have transitioned to a "touchless" system to reduce the spread of any virus.

**How will the Extended Day Program meet the criteria for distancing?**

Each of our elementary Extended Day Programs are developing procedures and activities that will support social distancing. Students will be placed into cohorts (small groups of approximately 15 students) and they will remain with that group throughout the semester. Registering for full time (5 days per week) or part-time (designated days) will be very important so that EDP directors can appropriately staff for after-school activities. We will not be able to accommodate last-minute decisions to attend EDP.

**Does the ACCESS virtual program for grades 9-12 offer honors/advanced courses?**

The virtual program for grades 9-12 does offer an array of Advanced Placement courses. However, it does not offer the honors/advanced levels.

**What types of face coverings will teachers be wearing?**

All faculty and staff will be provided traditional face masks, as well a clear facial shield. When delivering instruction, it is very important for a student to be able to

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see a teacher's face for a variety of reasons, including pronunciations, lip reading, and facial expressions.

**Do I need to notify anyone if we want to opt in for traditional school?**

No. By default, any student enrolled in Mountain Brook Schools is a traditional student. You will only need to register for virtual school if you should choose that option.

**If I have already purchased school supplies from my child's school, will I receive those supplies?**

If you opt in to virtual school, any school supplies that you have already purchased through your child's school will be available for pick up.

**If a student or teacher tests positive, will I be notified?**

Currently, the guidance we have received directs us to notify the groups of people who may have had certain levels of interaction and possible exposure with the positive individual. If there is a high risk of exposure, the Jefferson County Department of Health or Mountain Brook Schools will speak with your family directly. The Jefferson County Department of Health will lead the contact tracing process when warranted.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Updated July 21, 2020)**

**How will students who attend virtual school for the first semester transition back into traditional classrooms if they choose to return for the second semester?**

Mountain Brook Schools will assess the academic progress of each student upon their return to a traditional classroom. If there are gaps, schools will create a plan to address them.

**What will be the role of the virtual teacher in Schools PLP?**

The Mountain Brook Schools virtual teacher will select activities based on grade-level content, monitor and assess progress, and meet weekly with students and parents if needed.

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**Why can't students who want to attend school virtually just watch traditional Mountain Brook classes online for the first semester?**

This is not a viable option because students would be in front of a screen for more than 7 hours per day. Virtual learning is designed differently than in-person learning.

**Will parents with students enrolled in virtual school receive progress reports and have nine-week conferences with the virtual teacher to ensure they are doing well?**

Yes.

**Will students still be able to participate in enrichment if they choose a virtual option?**

Students in the virtual program may attend enrichment in person or will have access to a virtual option designed by our enrichment specialists.

**Will there be training on the virtual school platforms?**

When we finalize our enrollment, virtual teachers will be able to train parents and students on how to use the virtual learning platforms. For students in ACCESS courses, there is a student orientation that must be completed before starting.

**How will Schools PLP curriculum mirror what is being taught in Mountain Brook elementary schools?**

The Mountain Brook Schools virtual teacher will be selecting content that should mirror what we do in our elementary schools.

**Does Schools PLP offer live lectures?**

There are recorded videos, games, and a variety of activities. The lectures are not live.

**What can we expect from specials in Schools PLP?**

Schools PLP offers music and art.

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**If we choose to homeschool our children using a homeschooling curriculum (not the virtual one provided by the state), are we able to enroll in MBS at any time?**

Enrolling in a homeschool curriculum would require a student to withdraw from MBS and then choose a curriculum accredited by an accreditation group, such as AdvancED or Cognia. Those courses could be accepted by MBS at any time and allow you to re-enroll your student.

**If my child will attend virtual school, should they be following the MBS summer reading curriculum?**

Yes.

**Will students have the option to choose between a face mask and face shield?**

No. We require that all students come to school wearing a face mask.

**Will outdoor spaces be used throughout the school day?**

Each school is developing its own school-based plan regarding how to use outdoor spaces for various activities throughout the day.

**At what point would traditional school convert to remote learning for everyone?**

If a complete transition to e-learning were ever considered due to COVID-19, that decision would be made in conjunction with the Jefferson County Department of Health, Alabama Department of Public Health, and Alabama State Department of Education. Our hope is for students to return to school as much as possible pending the continued availability of a safe and healthy environment.

**If it becomes necessary for a classroom to be closed for 24 hours for cleaning, what will that class do?**

If it becomes necessary for a classroom to be closed for cleaning, that class would be relocated to another classroom in the building.

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**If a student misses school for a couple of weeks due to COVID-19, how will they make up missed work?**

If a student is out for a short-term absence of approximately 14 days, we will utilize our learning platforms and technology tools to be able to connect that student with their class and/or teacher during that time.

**What safety precautions will be in place for lunches regarding food preparation and service?**

All meals will be prepackaged by our child nutrition team and will be picked up by individual students in the cafeteria. Elementary students will eat lunch in their individual classrooms. Secondary students will eat lunch at designated locations where distancing can be achieved.

**Have a question that isn't answered above? Email [covid19questions@mtnbrook.k12.al.us](mailto:covid19questions@mtnbrook.k12.al.us) with your inquiry.**