

Reopening Schools: Frequently Asked Questions

These were the questions asked most often by parents, guardians, and employees.

Updated 7/16/2020

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is the Continuum of Learning (previously known as the Continuum of Options)?

A: No matter the circumstances of the pandemic, CMCSS will continue to provide a high-quality education for all students. The Continuum of Learning (previously known as the Continuum of Options) allows the district to shift from different models of instruction, traditional or remote, to provide the safest setting for students without disrupting their learning. For the 2020-2021 school year, there will be accountability, should it be necessary to move to a remote learning model, by using programs such as SchoolsPLP.

The CMCSS Communicable Disease Team in conjunction with the Montgomery County Health Department will continuously review the local spread of COVID-19 to make district-wide decisions related to the Continuum of Learning options. Although some districts are selecting one metric to determine in-person vs. remote learning, there is not a general consensus at this point on which metric is best for making school closure decisions. Therefore, CMCSS and the Montgomery County Health Department are taking a more holistic approach and are, on a daily basis, reviewing the following metrics in Montgomery County:

- Total positive cases out of total tested
- Number of new positives out of the number of new tests
- New active cases per population (per 100,000 and per 50,000)
- Percent of COVID-19 spread in the community following the Tennessee Department of Health guidance for Low Spread, Medium Spread, and High Spread and a common scale of interpretation:
 - **Normal Operations:** 0 positive COVID-19 cases in Montgomery County
 - **Low Spread:** less than 0.5% positive COVID-19 active cases in Montgomery County
 - **Medium Spread:** 0.5% to 1% positive COVID-19 active cases in Montgomery County
 - **High Spread:** Greater than 1% positive COVID-19 active cases in Montgomery County

While all metrics will be considered throughout the academic year, if Montgomery County reaches medium COVID-19 spread in the community, CMCSS and MCHD will consider additional health and safety protocols for the traditional model or consider transitioning all students to remote learning as deemed necessary. If Montgomery County reaches high COVID-19 spread, CMCSS and the Montgomery County Health Department will transition all students to remote learning.

[Click here](#) for the current COVID-19 local data that is reviewed by CMCSS and the Montgomery County Health Department on a daily basis. This data is provided by the [Tennessee Department of Health](#).

Q: How was information from stakeholders used in the decision making process?

A: Getting feedback from stakeholders was extremely important for the Communicable Disease Team to determine the level of comfortability of both parents/guardians and employees. It also allowed the school system to understand what health and safety precautions are important to families. Ultimately, the information was used to influence the decision of the district, but was not a voting process.

Q: How will the absentee/sick day policy be updated to reflect the need for children to stay home if they, or someone in their home, tests positive for COVID-19?

A. Modifications will be made to the student attendance policy for the 2020-2021 school year to the extent allowable by law. If students or employees are sick or someone in their home is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, they should not come to school. CMCSS is awaiting a COVID-19 specific code from the Tennessee Department of Education for attendance purposes. Students who need to be out for an extended period due to illness will be excused, and there will not be a gap in their education as the district will have the ability to provide remote learning for that student.

For employee-specific attendance questions, please click here for the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) policy. Employees with concerns should email michael.tharpe@cmcss.net.

SAFETY & HEALTH

Q: What will the protocols be if a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19?

The CMCSS Safety and Health Department will investigate any potential exposure cases in the school system in collaboration with the Montgomery County Health Department. Procedures and protocols are continuing to be developed as new guidance is released. [Click here](#) for the

current CMCSS Return to Work/School Flowchart developed by the CMCSS Safety and Health Department in collaboration with the Montgomery County Health Department.

Any school closures will be decided in conjunction with the CMCSS Communicable Disease Team and the Montgomery County Health Department. Transitioning from traditional to remote (rolling closures) for individual schools will be affected by the time frame required for receipt of test results and the length of time it takes to conduct contact tracing.

In collaboration with the Safety and Health Department, Communicable Disease Team and the Montgomery County Health Department, the CMCSS Communications Department will support schools in promptly communicating any school-level closures to stakeholders via phone, text, email, school and district websites, and other communications channels as needed.

CMCSS will implement the new Standard Response Protocol that includes the addition of the "HOLD" response. The new response will be used to ensure building occupants are not moving throughout the building during an investigation of a suspected COVID-19 positive case currently in the building.

Q: Will my student be expected to take a COVID-19 test if he/she comes into contact with another student or teacher who has tested positive?

A: The Clarksville-Montgomery County School System cannot conduct COVID-19 testing or require students to be tested.

Q: How will parents be notified if there is a suspected COVID-19 case, or a closure has to occur?

In collaboration with the Safety and Health Department, Communicable Disease Team and the Montgomery County Health Department, the CMCSS Communications Department will support schools in promptly communicating any school-level closures to stakeholders via phone, text, email, school and district websites, and other communications channels as needed.

CMCSS will implement the new Standard Response Protocol that includes the addition of the "HOLD" response. The new response will be used to ensure building occupants are not moving throughout the building during an investigation of a suspected COVID-19 positive case currently in the building.

Q: Will masks be required for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: CMCSS face mask requirements are based on local, state, and national guidance, including the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) and the [CDC](#), as well as feedback from families and employees.

- All students utilizing CMCSS transportation are **required** to wear masks while on the bus.

- All (general education and special populations elementary, middle, and high school) students are **required** to wear masks in all common areas in the school building (hallways, restrooms, front offices, counseling or administrative offices, etc.) and when physical distancing cannot be maintained anywhere in the building (including, if applicable, in classrooms).
 - There will be special considerations and exemptions made as needed regarding mask requirements. The district understands that some students may have health concerns or physical and emotional limitations that make masks difficult to wear. Parents/guardians will be required to provide medical documentation to the school beginning Mon., Aug. 10 as to why their child cannot wear a mask. To use form [HEA-F124](#) for documentation.
- Employees are **required** to wear masks in all common areas in the school building (hallways, restrooms, front offices, counseling or administrative offices, etc.) and when physical distancing cannot be maintained anywhere in the building (including, if applicable, in classrooms).
 - There will be special considerations and exemptions made as needed regarding mask requirements. Employees with medical concerns that they feel prevent them from wearing a mask should contact Chief Human Resources Officer Jeanine Johnson at jeanine.johnson@cmcss.net.

Students and employees are urged to bring their own masks. However, the district will have masks available for any students or employees who do not have their own. Cloth face masks should be washed after each use. Face masks must adhere to the Student Dress Code in the [Student Code of Conduct](#): obscene, profane, provocative, violent, or inflammatory words or pictures on body/skin, clothing or jewelry, or clothing advertising alcoholic beverages, drugs, drug paraphernalia or tobacco products are prohibited and students are prohibited from wearing, while on school property or at any school-sponsored activity, any type of clothing, apparel, or accessory, which denotes such students' membership in or affiliation with any gang (T.C.A. § 49-6-4215). For more information from the CDC on the use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19, [click here](#).

CMCSS hopes families will partner with the district to promote an overall goal of increased personal hygiene. Parents can help by reinforcing new temporary social limitations while children are in school, such as not giving hugs or high-fives, as well as encouraging increased handwashing.

Q: Are face shields an acceptable substitute for masks?

A: According to the CDC, it is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. The CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Some people may choose to use a face shield when sustained close contact with other people is expected. If face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face

and extend to below the chin. Disposable face shields should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

If employees have specific questions about PPE, please contact the Safety and Health Department.

Q: How will CMCSS focus on mental health?

- Social and emotional resources will be provided on the CMCSS website for parent(s)/guardian(s) to access to support the mental health needs of their students in the home environment.
- Students will have a website with social & emotional resources available to them within Classlink.
- When school begins, the school counselor referral system will be available for students to request access to their school counselor during school hours, whether in the traditional setting or remote.
- CMCSS employees will have access to a social and emotional resources hub to aid in students transitioning back to school and/or remote learning.
- School social workers, school psychologists and behavior consultants will continue to provide services to students.
- Students who are eligible will continue to have access to Centerstone and MFLC school-based services. If you have questions about eligibility for those services, please contact your student's school for more information.
- CMCSS/Montgomery County employees will also have access to a mental health counselor through the Onsite Clinic beginning in July.

CMCSS understands that 2020 has caused unprecedented stress and anxiety on families. If you or a family member are in crisis, there are resources available to assist you. Contact 1-800-273-8255 or text TN to 74141 to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Social and emotional health has been and will continue to be an important focus as CMCSS and the community at large navigate these unprecedented times.

ENROLLMENT

Q: How can I complete the enrollment process for my student(s)

Parents/guardians still will need to turn in all [necessary registration documents](#) to the **CMCSS Enrollment Center or their child's enrolled school before or soon after the first day of school on Aug. 31**. The Enrollment Center at Greenwood will be open to the public by appointment only Tuesday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. To schedule an appointment,

please call 931-542-5078 or email carol.davis@cmcss.net. The front offices at schools will begin accepting these documents on July 23 and will be open M-F from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visitors are required to wear masks.

Click [here](#) for a list of elementary schools and contact information.

Click [here](#) for a list of middle schools and contact information.

Click [here](#) for a list of high schools and contact information.

INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

Q: If my child is eligible for Voluntary Pre-K or Developmental Pre-K, what options are available to offer that service?

A: Because Pre-K is a voluntary service in Tennessee and is not mandatory, it will only be offered as a traditional classroom option. There will not be a virtual option for Pre-K.

Q: How are the needs of students receiving specialized instruction (including but not limited to IEP and 504) taken into consideration under the options available in the reopening plan?

Regardless of the mode of instruction in use under the Continuum of Learning, students who have an IEP will have the same opportunities as students without IEPs. The district will work to provide whatever is necessary to meet a student's least restrictive environment (LRE) for a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

If a student with an IEP or 504 plan is enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, it is the responsibility of CMCSS to ensure the school system meets all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IEP) Act and Section 504. CMCSS K-12 Virtual will follow all modifications and accommodations documented on the IEP or 504 plan as appropriate. There are some instances in which accommodations listed in the IEP or 504 plan are not conducive to the virtual environment and may not be provided. In this case, the originally zoned school will be responsible for providing such accommodations in order to help the student to be successful in the virtual setting.

Q: How does CMCSS K-12 Virtual compare to other online learning or homeschool virtual opportunities?

A: CMCSS K-12 Virtual is a free virtual learning opportunity available to all families of K-12 students living in the Clarksville-Montgomery County School System. The virtual classrooms are run by certified and licensed CMCSS teachers. Unlike other virtual or homeschool options, the parent is not responsible for curriculum or teaching the students. However, as with any educational instruction, parents should share some responsibility as far as monitoring students' time engaged in learning.

Q: Will schools still offer extracurricular activities (band, JROTC, clubs, and organizations)?

A: In a traditional setting, most extracurricular opportunities will still be offered. However, individual schools will determine these offerings. CMCSS will adhere to national, state, and local health department guidance to determine the safety of specific activities during the pandemic and provide timely and appropriate guidelines and recommendations. As the conditions of the pandemic are ever-changing, the school district will remain flexible knowing that the health and safety of students and employees is the first priority.

TECHNOLOGY

Q: If my family chooses CMCSS K-12 Virtual, are students provided with a laptop and access to the internet (if necessary) via a hotspot?

Laptops will be provided for students in the CMCSS K-12 option. Internet service (hotspots) will be offered to families enrolled in the school of choice who are in need.

Q: If the school system moves to remote learning under the Continuum of Learning are students provided with a laptop and access to the internet (if necessary) via a hotspot?

A: For the 2020-2021 school year, the district is extending the 1:1 program, previously available to all grade 4-12 students, to include 2nd and 3rd grade students. In the event that the district uses a remote learning model, laptops will be issued for home use for all students grades 2-12. Students in grades K-1 will be provided printed materials to supplement their learning. In collaboration with community partners, the district will make every effort to provide internet connectivity to every student in need.

OPERATIONS (TRANSPORTATION, CAFETERIA, ETC)

Q: What are the safety measures in place for school buses and transportation?

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, parents are encouraged to consider alternative methods of transportation to and from school because passengers on school buses will not always be afforded a minimum six-foot distance from other students.

All bus drivers, bus aides, and bus monitors will be screened and have their temperatures checked before each shift. Bus aides, bus monitors, and students will be required to wear a mask the entire time they are on the school bus. For safety reasons, the bus driver will not wear a mask while the vehicle is in motion. Each CMCSS school bus will have a hand sanitizing station at the passenger door.

In addition, all buses will be disinfected by the Vehicle Maintenance Department after the morning runs and again after the afternoon runs. CMCSS mechanics will use the disinfectant "HDQ" and follow a pressurized spray, wait, and wipe method. The driver will lower windows (weather permitting) and open both roof hatches to increase the fresh airflow throughout the ride. Finally, the district will work to reduce the time students sit on the bus waiting for the school to open in the morning and while loading in the afternoon.

Q: Will the location of the current bus stops change, or will additional stops be added to promote social distancing?

A: Additional bus stops will be added in subdivisions. Bus stops will not be supervised by CMCSS staff. Families are strongly encouraged to reinforce proper social interactions with their children.

Q: Will transportation change for 504 and special population students if the radius for bus transportation changes?

A: CMCSS will provide special education transportation services according to the requirements of the student's IEP.

Q: If I choose the traditional option, what will lunch look like when students are in school in person?

Students will eat in the school cafeteria unless otherwise configured by the school. By law, teachers receive a duty-free lunch period, and in the majority of instances there is not enough school-based staff to monitor meals in the classroom. The district will space students as best it can, but parents should not expect that students would be provided with six feet of separation from other students while eating breakfast and/or lunch in the school cafeteria. The following are additional protocols that the Child Nutrition Department will follow:

- All Operations/Child Nutrition employees will self-screen and have temperatures taken before each shift.

- Staff are required to wear masks in addition to all standard safety protocols.
- Additional training for all Child Nutrition employees (focus on cleaning, disinfecting, specific protocols, and social actions.)
- Students sharing meal items or placing extra items they do not consume, on what are commonly referred to as “share tables”, will be prohibited.
- Choices will be further limited and served by staff only.
- Meals and utensils will be handed to students to reduce contact.
- Child Nutrition staff will key in the student IDs to reduce contact with the keypad.

CMCSS K-12 Virtual

Q: When is the open enrollment period?

A: For students currently enrolled in a CMCSS school, the open enrollment window is July 15-19, 2020. Students who are new to the district will receive a form to select the traditional or virtual option as soon as the registration paperwork is complete. Please allow 24-48 hours to receive the link once registration is complete.

Q: If I select either the traditional or virtual option, but then want my student(s) to enroll in the opposite option later, would I be able to switch during the school year?

A: We want all students to be able to work in the environment that best suits their needs and needs of the family, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. If a student wishes to move from a traditional to virtual or from a virtual to traditional setting during the school year, we will allow the change given the following:

- there is capacity to enroll the student in the desired courses, and
- it is the end of the nine-weeks or semester

Q: If I want to purchase my own technology for my student(s), what would I need to have?

A: There is no need for parents/guardians to have to purchase technology. CMCSS will provide all the necessary devices students will need.

Q: How can my student(s) participate in CMCSS K-12 Virtual if my internet is unreliable?

A: Students who do not have reliable internet service will be provided with Hotspots upon request.

Q: What kind of technology do I need for my student to participate in CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: CMCSS will provide all K-12 Virtual students with the technology needed for success.

Q: What will the typical day look like for a student in CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: Depending on the courses or grade level of your student, this could look very different. However, your student should be prepared to spend about the same amount of time each day engaged with the classroom teacher and/or peers, working independently, or meeting with the teacher in a small group setting as their traditional school counterparts do.

Q: When will CMCSS K-12 Virtual teachers be available to work with students in real-time should students have questions or need help with an assignment?

A: Each CMCSS K-12 Virtual teacher will have designated times available each day to answer questions and/or conference with students and/or Learning Mentors.

Q: How will parents and guardians be kept informed of their child's progress in his or her CMCSS K-12 Virtual coursework?

A: As in the traditional setting, student grades will be entered into PowerSchool. Parents and students will have the ability to access student progress at any time through this platform. District policy is for teachers to enter grades for the previous week each Monday by midnight.

Q: Which traditional course offerings will be offered through CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: Although we will do our best to offer a wide variety of options for students wishing to enroll in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, there may be some classes that are not possible to replicate in the virtual setting. School counselors will work with each student to maintain a schedule that will:

- ensure that each student remains on-track to graduate, and
- allows the greatest variety of course options as is possible.

*If a student enrolls in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, and it is determined that a course he or she wishes to take cannot be offered, he or she will have an opportunity to enroll in traditional school at that time.

Q: How will CMCSS K-12 Virtual provide accommodations for students who have an IEP, 504 Plan, or receive another similar kind of service?

A: If a student with an IEP or 504 plan is enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, it is the responsibility of CMCSS to ensure the school system meets all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IEP) Act and Section 504. CMCSS K-12 Virtual will follow all modifications and accommodations documented on the IEP or 504 plan as appropriate. There

are some instances in which accommodations listed in the IEP or 504 plan are not conducive to the virtual environment and may not be provided. In this case, the school of zone will be responsible for providing such accommodations in order to help the student to be successful in the virtual setting.

For more specific information about this topic, please view our newly released [Parent FAQ](#) from our Special Populations Department.

Q: What learning platform will be used for CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: The learning platform utilized may vary depending on the course being offered. The majority of courses will be accessed through SchoolsPLP, an online learning management system that is available for teachers and students in CMCSS. CMCSS teachers have vetted and designed the content to align TN State Standards to rigorous and interactive student experiences that mirror the content taught to their peers in a traditional school setting. Many English Language Arts (ELA) courses will be using platforms created by and directly aligned to the newly adopted textbooks. In addition, some high school courses may use Google Classroom or an alternate platform depending on the demands of the course.

Q: Will students have an opportunity to take other types of Career and Technical Education classes in CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: There will be very few CTE course offerings through CMCSS K-12 Virtual due to the TN Department of Education's three-course focused elective group graduation requirement and the hands-on nature of the majority of CTE courses. Those interested in the CMCSS K-12 Virtual option will need to work with a counselor to determine the most appropriate focus elective group option.

Q: If a course is offered at the traditional school that is not offered through CMCSS K-12 Virtual, can a student be enrolled in both?

A: At this time students will need to choose either the virtual setting or the traditional setting. During the final scheduling process, individual students can request a case review to determine if their situation warrants enrollment in both.

Q: Will my student still be able to complete Honors, Advanced Placement (AP), and/or Dual Enrollment courses if enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: To the greatest extent possible, Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment courses will be offered to students wishing to enroll in CMCSS K-12 Virtual. Just like in a traditional high school, specific Honors, AP, and Dual Enrollment course offerings will be based on student demand and qualified instructor availability for each course.

Q: My child was accepted into one of the Academies for the 2020-2021 school year before the COVID-19 closures began. Will he/she still be able to participate in the Academy if we opt for CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: If you feel that virtual is the best option for your child and family, please register for that option. We will do everything we can to accommodate the course load for which they had originally registered to include CTE courses that are part of the Academy pathway. Once all families across the district have made a choice of virtual or traditional, counselors will reach out to individual families regarding specific course requests and nontraditional options for ways we may be able to enroll students in those courses virtually.

Q: If my student is a senior, what school will be listed on his or her diploma if he or she enrolls in CMCSS K-12 Virtual?

A: CMCSS K-12 Virtual is an extension program of the CMCSS school system. The diploma will list the student's enrolled school.

Q: If my student is a senior and enrolls in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, will he or she participate in a traditional graduation ceremony?

A: Yes, graduating seniors will be able to participate in the enrolled school's graduation ceremony.

Q: If my child enrolls in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, would he or she still be eligible to play collegiate sports and receive scholarships from NCAA schools?

A: Yes. The virtual platform (SchoolsPLP) used at CMCSS K-12 Virtual is approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), by meeting the following criteria:

- The courses must meet NCAA core-course requirements.
- The courses must have ongoing and regular teacher-initiated interaction for the purposes of teaching, evaluating, and providing assistance throughout the duration of the course. This may include
 - synchronous or asynchronous instructive interaction, including emails, video conferencing, online chats, phone calls, and feedback on assessments.
- The courses must have a defined time period for completion. This means the nontraditional program must identify the fastest and slowest paths to successfully complete a course (i.e., maximum and minimum time frame for completion).

Q: If my child is enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, can my child participate in on-campus clubs outside of the school day?

A: Yes, students may participate in on-campus clubs when they occur outside the regular school day. Information about clubs can be obtained from the student's enrolled school.

Q: If my child is enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, can he or she participate in school dances such as Homecoming or Prom?

A: Yes, students may participate in school events like Homecoming or Prom. Information about these events will be communicated by the student's enrolled school.

Q: If my child is enrolled in CMCSS K-12 Virtual, can he or she try out for a sports team?

A: Students may participate in athletic programs at their CMCSS school in which they are enrolled. Students must declare their intention to participate/try out to the school's athletic director before the beginning of the season.