

August 3, 2020

Dear Highland Families,

The Highland staff is looking forward to welcoming students back to in-person learning on **Monday, August 24, 2020**. The first day of school will be a **half day** for elementary students. We will dismiss at 11:50 a.m. Students will have lunch at school on August 24th. You may send a sack lunch with your child or your student can purchase a sack lunch from the cafeteria.

If you have a kindergartner, we will still be doing our **Kindergarten Assessments on August 13 and 14** during your previously scheduled time. If you don't have an assessment time because you recently registered your child for kindergarten, please call 303-347-4525.

We know this year will be different as we continue to deal with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. What will be the same is our commitment to a welcoming and supportive school community and our partnership with parents to meet the needs of every student. As we prepare for a return to in-person learning, I want to share information on a variety of key topics to support a successful start to the school year.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Colorado Department of Education, and Governor's Office released the draft health guidance for keeping our kids safe as schools reopen this fall. The guidance is organized by COVID-19 incidence levels and provides specific recommendations on the levels; Stay at Home, Safer at Home, and Protect our Neighbors. This guidance is designed to help local public health agencies and school districts ensure the safest learning environment possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Read the guidance on the [Reopening Schools: Health Guidance by COVID-19 Phase](#). The guidance document is available here: [Reopening Schools](#). You may also find the [Reopening Schools Questions and Answers](#) information helpful.

Health and Safety

We will have a variety of requirements and protocols to support student and staff health. While these may take some time and require some adjustments on the part of families, students and staff, strictly following them will help us maintain in-person learning.

- School staff will complete an in person health screening and temperature check for each student each day.
- Students who begin the day in childcare, SACC, will also have a daily health screening and temperature check. SACC will open on the first day of school, August 24th.
- Do not send your child to school if they are not feeling well, have a fever, or have been around someone who has symptoms of or tested positive for COVID-19. As always, please adhere to the *How Sick is Too Sick* guidance when determining if your child should come to school.
- All staff and students in K-12 will be required to wear masks with breaks throughout the day. Health officials say that mask-wearing protects teachers and other adults in the

building as much as it protects the students. Students will not be required to wear masks when eating or when at recess.

- Preschool students will not be required to wear masks at this time, but they will be learning how to wear them at school in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Parents are asked to ensure their student has a mask every day. If a mask is left at home, we will have one to give your child. It is a good idea to pack an **extra mask** in your child's backpack for the just in case situations. Here are two district resources that you may find helpful: [Face coverings - Do's and Don'ts](#) and [How to Help your Child Adapt to Wearing a Mask](#),
- If you think your child may need an exemption to mask wearing due to a diagnosed health concern or disability, please submit the [Request for Exemption for Wearing a Mask](#).
- All students and parents who are on school grounds (this includes the parking lot if you are outside of your vehicle) must be wearing masks.
- Students will practice hand hygiene throughout the day. This includes before lunch and after all recesses. Building these hand hygiene routines will support our health and build good habits.
- The district is providing sanitizing stations to each building at entrances and cafeterias.
- Specific guidance about positive COVID cases, contact tracing, and quarantining will be in place. The district is working with Tri-County to finalize this.

Teaching and Learning

Instruction is designed to meet the academic, social-emotional and safety of our students.

- Students will remain with their classroom cohort or homeroom for most instruction.
- Student support services including Literacy Support, GT Services, English Language Development and Special Education Services and Mental Health Services and Support will be in place to meet student needs.
- Students will participate in Specials: Art, Music and PE.
- Due to the number of students enrolling in TOPS, we may have to make changes to class placements to support balanced classrooms, instruction and cohorting.
- In an effort to support cohorting and limit student contacts, there are no field trips, assemblies, or large gatherings at this time.
- Students will be utilizing Google Classroom as a support for learning during the instructional day. Our teachers will be using *Google Classroom* to support learning whether we are in face-to-face sessions or if we move to a distance learning platform at any time during the school year.
- We want to support families in using *Google Classroom* at home, so please be looking for our upcoming **Family Academies** for using this great tool to support your children.
- We will continue to use 1:1 technology (one Chromebook per child) for grades 2-5. The district will provide an assigned Chromebook for the student's exclusive use in these grades. More to come, but this practice will help us with social distancing and hygiene practices. Additionally, should we need to return to remote learning strategies, we'll be that much more ready. There will also be a technology plan for K-2 students should we

need to move to distance learning.

- Parents, please check the revised school supply list. This will be updated by the end of the day on Friday, August 7th. You may notice some changes or additions. We have added supplies at some grade level so that students have their own materials.
- Please send a water bottle labeled with your student's first and last name. If the water bottle has a straw please be sure that the straw can be completely covered when not in use. (Click [here](#) for an example) Drinking fountains will not be used, but we do have *bottle fill stations* in each building.

School Environment and Building Access

- **A necessary change to our school is that only students and staff will be able to enter the building.** We know this is hard as we love having parents and volunteers in our school. We just can't have parents or visitors in the building as we need to make every effort to keep our students and staff healthy. There will be more detailed information about access to the grounds in future communications. Thanks for your understanding and flexibility.
- Classrooms, instructional areas, and the cafeteria are being set up to maximize space and provide social distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- Meetings involving parents will be held virtually.
- School Accountability Committee and PTO meetings will be held virtually.
- We will not have any before or after school activities or enrichment classes. SACC will be open for registered students.
- We want to thank our custodial crew for all their work to get school ready to open. They have done thorough cleaning of every area. As students and staff return to school, all areas inside schools, as well as playgrounds, will be cleaned and sanitized (following the protocols of local health officials) as frequently as possible.
- We also want to thank the district Operations and Maintenance department for increasing the ventilation in our building. The ventilation system has been serviced and will be frequently checked to make sure indoor spaces are properly ventilated.

Structure of our Day

The structure of our day is designed to support current health and safety precautions for students and staff.

- All elementary schools will have a soft start. Students may enter the building 15 minutes prior to the start of school. There will be no morning playground supervision. Students are **not allowed** to play on the playground in the morning. A soft start allows students to social distance as they enter the building. Students will have their temperature checked before entering the building, answer the health screening questions and wash/sanitize hands upon entry to the classroom.
- Students will eat lunch by grade level and classes will be assigned specific areas to support cohorting and limit exposure. Hand hygiene will be required prior to students eating lunch.
- LPS Nutrition Services will be utilizing a new system where families can make online

payments for students' meals. We are no longer using MySchoolBucks so families are not able to make payments with their old accounts. Please use this link, <https://family.titank12.com>, to begin the process of making a new account. Simply click on "Sign Up Today!" to begin the process. Families will be able to check what their student has purchased for the day, put limits to their account and much more.

Additionally, families will be able to fill out their **Free and Reduced meal application** at this link. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the Nutrition Services department at 303-347-3355.

- Some parents have asked if we will continue to have recess. The answer is YES! Recess is important for physical activity and supports all kinds of learning. Recess will be by grade level and support student cohorts.
- Students will be dismissed in an organized manner that supports social distancing. Students attending School Age Child Care (Hotshots) will be released first, followed by bus riders, then carpool students and walkers. This process may add a few minutes, but it will help us in the long run so please be patient.
- If your student is a bus rider, please review the information from Transportation and talk to your student about what is expected on the bus: [Bus Transportation Expectations](#).

School to Home Communication

- Our school website is adding a Restart tile to provide current information on the start of the school year.
- Our school newsletter is the Highland Highlights and comes out on the first of every month.
- You can also find helpful information regarding the return to school on the district website [Restart LPS 20-21](#).
- Prior to the start of school, there will be a communication that includes more first day of school information as well as information about our virtual Back to School Night.

Thank you for your partnership, flexibility and understanding as we all navigate the changes and circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. I will be sending more detailed information in the near future.

On behalf of the Highland staff, we can't wait to welcome our students back to school!

Sincerely,

Keri McCabe
Highland Principal
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