

# SARALAND CITY SCHOOLS

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19 PANDEMIC



**OVERVIEW:** Saraland City Schools will offer two learning environments for the 2020-2021 school year: traditional "on-campus" classrooms and online "learn-at-home" classrooms. Returning students were mailed a Snapcode and should visit [www.saralandboe.org/registration](http://www.saralandboe.org/registration) to begin the registration process. During online registration, parents/guardians will select their preference of an instructional setting for their child(ren). Students new to Saraland City Schools will contact the enrolling school registrar to begin the registration process and will also select one of the two learning environments. The remaining sections of this document provide information related to each option and the importance of parent/guardian support regardless of the instructional setting. Prior to selecting the classroom environment, parents/guardians are asked to thoroughly review document contents.



**PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITY:** Parents/guardians are asked to monitor their child(ren) for symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, fatigue, difficulty breathing, headache, sore throat, congestion, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea). Students with a fever of 100 degrees or higher should not report to school. Parents/guardians of sick children who have concerns should immediately contact their respective school nurse to discuss symptoms, obtain physician clearance, and discuss an appropriate return to school date. Parents/guardians are encouraged to be transparent with the school nurse or administrator should a child or a family member be diagnosed with COVID-19.



**MASKS/FACIAL COVERINGS:** Students will have the option of wearing masks/facial coverings. However, students will not be required to wear a mask during the school day. Parents/guardians are encouraged to educate students on the importance of maintaining physical distance, when possible, as well as the option of wearing a mask/face covering when physical distance is not feasible. If worn, cloth masks (those other than disposable medical masks) and neck gaiters must be solid gray, black, white, or red. Masks/facial coverings may display the Saraland Spartan logo. No other insignia is permitted on masks/face coverings. Neck gaiters may be worn around the neck when not being utilized as a face cover. Typical disposable surgical masks are also permitted. See the Student Handbook for additional guidance.



**TRANSPORTATION:** Saraland City Schools will offer transportation to students for the 2020-2021 school year. However, to reduce the number of students riding school buses, all who can transport their child(ren) to and from school are encouraged to do so for the upcoming school year. Although attempts will be made to separate students, physical distancing cannot be guaranteed on buses while transporting students. Buses will be disinfected by school personnel at the conclusion of each route.



**CHILD NUTRITION:** Saraland City Schools purchased a contactless system for students to use with breakfast and lunch purchases. Students will be issued a barcode which will be scanned at each point of sale. Additionally, plans have been developed by each school administration to allow for students to eat lunch in areas throughout the campus in order to ensure smaller groups than the number typically served in the cafeteria. Lunch will be served at times similar to previous school years. Cafeteria staff will maintain compliance with ALSDE and MCHD when preparing and serving food. Cleaning and disinfecting measures by cafeteria staff will uphold high standards in preventative measures against the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses. Visitors will not be permitted to eat lunch with students during the 2020-2021 school year.



**CLASSROOM SETTING:** A typical number of students, as enrolled in previous years, will be educated within each on-campus classroom. Teachers will monitor students to ensure appropriate practices that assist in limiting transmission are in place. While all square footage of each classroom will be utilized, it is unlikely that students will be able to maintain six (6) feet physical distance throughout the school day – class, period, or block. Parents/guardians are encouraged to educate students on the importance of maintaining physical distance, when possible, as well as the option of wearing a mask/face covering when physical distance is not feasible.



**SCHOOL VISITORS:** All school visitors are required to report to the main office upon arrival at a school campus. All visitors will be required to present a photo ID, sign in, and secure a visitor's pass. To support physical distancing, campus access to visitors will be restricted and will require administrator approval. Visitors will not be permitted to eat lunch with students during the 2020-2021 school year.

**DISCLAIMER:** ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IS BASED ON THE INFECTION RATE OF THE CITY OF SARALAND AT THE TIME OF DOCUMENT PUBLICATION. AN INCREASE IN THE COVID-19 RATE OF INFECTION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY MAY NECESSITATE MODIFICATION OF RESPONSE PRACTICES. SARALAND CITY SCHOOLS IS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH POLICIES MANDATED BY THE ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (ALSDE), ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (AHSAA), ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH (ADPH), MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (MCHD), AS WELL AS LOCAL AND STATE ORDERS/ORDINANCES CREATED IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS FROM SARALAND CITY SCHOOLS' COVID-19 OPERATIONAL PLANS ARE OUTLINED IN THE 2020-2021 STUDENT HANDBOOK.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** COVID-19 guidelines in conjunction with heightened health and wellness protocols have been implemented for the 2020-2021 school year. School nurses will work closely with the ALSDE, ADPH, and MCHD regarding protocols, quarantine measures, and regulations for COVID-19. School nurses will aid parents, guardians, staff, and students with medical referrals and testing sites for COVID-19 as deemed necessary.

First aid areas in each school will be maintained and function in compliance with ALSDE, ADPH, and MCHD. Sick and well child first aid areas are established at each school. School nurses will maintain each area to support the needs of students. School nurses will teach preventative measures to students and staff, including proper handwashing techniques, cough/sneeze etiquette, and the importance of keeping hands away from the face, as well as how to properly wear a face covering and other important preventative measures such as physical distancing.

Thermal scanning thermometers were purchased and distributed throughout each school. Temperature checks will be conducted periodically and in instances when a student demonstrates potential signs of fever/illness.

All teachers will be provided ample cleaning supplies to utilize during the school day and throughout the 2020-2021 school year. Cleaning and disinfecting of common areas and classrooms will take place daily at all schools. Cleaning and disinfecting practices will uphold high standards in preventative measures against the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses.

Students will be provided opportunities to wash their hands throughout the school day. Additionally, hand sanitizer will be available. Parents/guardians are encouraged to reinforce the importance of personal hygiene to include proper washing of hands.

The administrative team of each school has devised plans for the safest and most efficient transfer of students in hallways, before school, between classes, and after school. Parents/guardians are encouraged to educate students on the importance of maintaining physical distance, when possible, as well as the option of wearing a mask/face covering when physical distance is not feasible.

All faculty and staff will be provided appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to wear when the individual faculty or staff member deems such items necessary.

Should a student or faculty member be diagnosed with COVID-19, contact tracing will be conducted by the MCHD. Determination of steps to be taken after reviewing the identified case will be coordinated between Saraland City Schools and MCHD officials.

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**ONLINE LEARNING:** During the 2019-2020 school closure, it was repeatedly stated by parents, guardians, and students that no substitute existed for instruction provided by a teacher in a face-to-face environment. At the conclusion of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not anticipated that a "stay at home" option for learning will be offered in subsequent school years by Saraland City Schools. However, for the 2020-2021 school year, parents/guardians who are concerned about student exposure to COVID-19 in a traditional classroom setting may opt for their child(ren) to be educated in an online "learn-at-home" setting.

The ALSDE recently awarded a contract to SchoolsPLP for digital content to be delivered through Schoology, a learning management system (LMS). Schoology will be utilized by Saraland teachers to deliver instruction to students engaged in full-time online learning and as an instructional supplement for students opting to be educated on campus.

For the 2020-2021 school year, the online "learn-at-home" option is solely for parents/guardians who have concern about students being educated in a traditional environment due to COVID-19. Saraland City Schools is not offering a virtual school. SchoolsPLP is not a virtual classroom in which students solely rely on the online content provider to deliver effective instruction. Rather, it is a resource utilized by a Saraland teacher who will design both synchronous (students online at same time learning together) and asynchronous (students online at different times learning independently) instruction scheduled during a traditional school day or as communicated by the teacher.

Parents/guardians who elect for their child(ren) to participate in the online "learn-at-home" environment have expressed concern over the potential for COVID-19 exposure in a traditional classroom setting. With respect for these concerns, the online option does not include provisions for student participation in "face-to-face" on-campus extracurricular sports and activities affiliated with Saraland City Schools. In athletics, this policy is necessary to maintain compliance with current Alabama High School Athletic Association eligibility requirements.

Students in grades K-8 who are enrolled in the online "learn-at-home" option on August 6, 2020 will not be permitted to enter an "on-campus" classroom setting until the 2nd quarter of the 2020-2021 school year. A change in placement for K-8 students is permitted with principal approval on a quarterly basis.

Saraland High School students whose parents select the online "learn-at-home" option will be enrolled in ACCESS distance learning or similar online courses for the first semester. In December, students may return to on-campus instruction, if desired, or opt to continue receiving online instruction throughout the 2nd semester. A change in placement for high school students is permitted with principal approval on a semester basis.

For parents/guardians who opt for the online "learn-at-home" environment, students will not work at their own pace. Students will be assigned to an online classroom facilitated by a Saraland teacher. It will be the responsibility of parents, guardians, and students to meet appropriate deadlines and to participate in online meetings as scheduled by the teacher. Lessons will be completed and assignments submitted based on established due dates. In addition to activities assigned to individuals, coursework may be assigned to online groups as determined by the teacher. A child's age and developmental level should be considered when making the decision to commit to online learning. Digital citizenship and academic integrity are essential to student success and a requirement for continued enrollment in the online setting. During the 2020-2021 school year, the principal may withdraw the student from the online setting for lack of performance, issues with academic integrity/digital citizenship, or other just cause. In a typical online learning environment, organizational skills on the part of the student as well as parent/guardian involvement are necessary for student success. Parents/guardians should understand the responsibility of which they are committing when selecting the online "learn-at-home" option provided by Saraland City Schools. Parents/guardians who opt for their child(ren) to be educated in an online environment will sign a document stating they are aware of their responsibility and the challenges affiliated with this instructional format.