



Decatur Heritage Christian Academy

*Roadmap to Reopening
2020-2021
July 24, 2020*



Starting School

Decatur Heritage Christian Academy is planning to open its doors to students on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. On campus students will meet for classes Monday through Friday.

We are eager and excited to begin school in August. Though the circumstances surrounding us are challenging, we anticipate that God will do good and mighty things within our school community this year as He has faithfully done over the years.

At DHCA our chief responsibility as a Christian school is to provide an exceptional, biblically-rooted education. We believe that the best version of a DHCA education is in person with their teachers when possible. And we believe it is possible. This is not the only responsibility we have, but it is our single-most important one and we must not lose focus on it.

This is not a decision made rashly. Unlike bigger schools and districts where class sizes are significantly larger and mitigation of infection is complicated by their size, our school by virtue of its size that allows us to manage risk, mitigate infection, and promote stronger instructional experiences. We have the capacity to effectively monitor and regulate the learning environment.

There are a myriad of competing priorities that make school opening decisions exceptionally challenging. There are a variety of significant health and educational concerns that can be identified whether the building is closed or open. Understanding there is no perfect school opening design, our goal is to offer clearly articulated plans by which a parent can make a reasonable and informed decision for their child. The plan establishes strong measures that account for the health crisis we are in, has built in flexibility to respond to changing data trends, and addresses educational needs based upon age and development.

We acknowledge there is no risk-free option. We acknowledge that no decision can please everyone. In the end, our goal was to develop a plan with safe and viable options to start school from which our families can choose. Our plan will be reviewed regularly. Policies and protocols can change in light of developing circumstances, governmental mandate, and/or data driven trends.

Please note that while this plan provides a great deal of information, it does not deal with every specific consideration such as detailed procedures for suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases. These are important details, but will be made available in the days to come.

A Community Goal for 2020-2021: The issues of COVID-19 and responses to it have proved to be polarizing in our society. May our differences always be expressed and managed with humility, grace, and love for one another as demonstrated and commanded by our Savior, Jesus Christ.



Facial Coverings at School

Upper School

- Students should bring a facial covering from home that covers nose and mouth.
- The school will have masks at school and are available to students while supplies last.
- Facial coverings will be worn in classes when six feet distance between students cannot be maintained.
- Facial covering should always be worn outside of the classroom, as physical distancing cannot be guaranteed while upper school students move through their hallways.

Lower School

Our Lower School and Upper School function in two separate wings of the building. This gives us an advantage to develop plans and protocols that are uniquely designed for each group.

- Lower School will keep students in the classroom together at all times. They are a cohort group that will do all of school life together avoiding contact and mingling with other grades and grade-level classrooms.
 - The exception is grades 5 and 6. Their movement and school activity will be limited and contained to experiences shared between both grade levels. They will operate on a separate daily schedule from grades 1-4.
- All special classes (art, PE, etc.) will be taught to cohort groups and not be combined with other students.
- Any movement in the hallways will be structured and timed to avoid contact with other classes as completely as possible. During any times of hallway transition, students will be expected to wear a mask.
- We do require that each student bring two masks to school to be kept at school for their use.

Further details of daily life on campus as well as virtual learning are in subsequent pages.



Educational Plans

We will begin our school year giving parents the option of participating in our Standard Plan or the Blended Learning Plan.

Traditional Plan

Decatur Heritage Christian Academy provides an exceptional educational experience for students through our incredibly gifted teachers. Desiring the very best for our students, DHCA will welcome students on campus beginning with the first day of school on Wednesday, August 12, 2020. Please know there are varying degrees of health protocols that may be implemented at DHCA to maintain effective and safe on-campus learning depending on the national, state, and local trends of COVID-19.

Blended Learning Plan

Since DHCA is committed to meeting the educational needs of each student even in the midst of COVID-19 challenges, parents may choose to have their child utilize a remote learning environment at home. While not identical to on-campus learning, students will be able to build their foundational skills and receive core instruction in each discipline. This plan allows for students to return to campus at designated re-entry times within the school year.

Remote Learning Plan

If the campus needs to be closed due to increased COVID-19 concerns, students in grades 2-12 will move to a remote learning plan. Recognizing online, remote learning is least ideal for our youngest students, we will more fully explore and give strong consideration to the option of having students in Kindergarten and First Grade continuing on campus with the use of the entire building to maximize physical distancing and increased ability to create even smaller learning groups.



Standard Daily Practices

DHCA will be actively cleaning and sanitizing the campus prior to the first day of school and ongoing to ensure a safe learning environment for your child.

- Thorough nightly cleanings of the hallways, bathrooms, classrooms, and offices
- Deep cleaning and sanitization prior to school starting and each weekend
- Cleaning staff will practice routine surface cleaning in non-classroom areas throughout the day
- Cleaning staff will be required to wear disposable gloves when cleaning
- Faculty and staff members will be given a temperature screening upon arrival to the building before 7:30am
- Faculty members will sanitize or wash their hands before going to their classroom
- Teach and reinforce good hygiene measures regularly (handwashing, covering coughs, and face coverings)
- Teachers will be provided with cleaning supplies to be used throughout the school day for routine surface cleaning
- More hand sanitizing stations will be created throughout the building
- Limit visitors on-campus
- Monitor arrival and dismissal of students; before and after school arrivals and dismissals will include staggered entry and release
- Follow protocols for students/employees who experience symptoms at the school
- Utilize large spaces (cafetorium, gymnasium, outdoors) for distancing as is feasible and reasonable
- Discourage congregating in the parking lots and common areas
- Follow ASHSAA guidelines for sporting events and practices
- Monitor health logs and records to promote open and regular communication with specific families and the full DHCA community



School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Lower School

1. Students should arrive no earlier than 7:30am. Morning Care is placed on hold, as physical distancing guidelines and avoidance of large, mingling groups need to be a priority. Students upon arrival will go directly to their classroom.
 - If this time constraint is a problem, please contact Mr. Ty Patterson (tpatterson@dhca.org) to discuss special arrangements.
2. Parents will drop off at the front covered entryway.
3. Prior to any student exiting the car all students will be have their temperature screened by a DHCA staff member.
 - A student with a temperature of 100° or above will not be allowed in the school building.
 - Parents will be allowed to park their car and wait 15 minutes to have the student's temperature re-checked.
 - If the student's temperature is above 100° on the re-check, he/she will need to stay home for the day.
 - Students may attend school when the temperature is below 100° and no other symptoms are present.
4. We ask that two masks are brought to school by each student to be kept at school for their use as need would arise.
5. Upon entrance to the school, each student will be required to sanitize their hands prior to heading to their classroom.

Upper School

1. Students should arrive on campus no earlier than 7:30am.
 - If this time constraint is a problem, please contact Mr. Ty Patterson (tpatterson@dhca.org) to discuss special arrangements.
2. All drivers (parents or student drivers) will be asked to drive toward the back of the school for a temperature check of students by a DHCA staff member prior to exiting their vehicle. Specific locations for drop-off and temperature checks will be communicated in the near future.
 - A student with a temperature of 100° or above will not be allowed in the school building.
 - Parents or student-drivers will be allowed to park their car and wait 15 minutes to have the student's temperature re-checked.
 - If the student's temperature is above 100° on the re-check, he/she will need to stay home for the day.
 - Students may attend school when the temperature is below 100° and no other symptoms are present.
3. Upon entrance to the school, students will be expected to have their mask on and to sanitize their hands prior to making their way into the hallways and to their first period classroom.
4. Locker usage will be limited. Students should plan on having their morning textbooks/materials with them until lunch. Over the course of lunchtime, students will be directed how to access their locker to get the texts/materials needed for afternoon classes.



School Arrival and Dismissal Procedures (cont'd)

Daily Dismissal Procedures

Lower School

All students will be picked up in the car line at the front of the school each day and escorted to the care by a DHCA staff member. We will use staggered pick-up times to limit student contact and promote physical distancing. Specific times will be communicated in the near future.

Upper School

Students will be dismissed at a time different from the Lower School to limit student contact and promote physical distancing. Specific times will be communicated in the near future.

After School

While there is no Morning Care to begin the school year, past year's data indicates that we can provide After School Care while promoting physical distancing. Please note this is one aspect of our program where the school cannot predict or control the number of children using this resource. After Care will be hosted in clean rooms and sanitized thoroughly afterward each night, but the attendees within After School Care cannot be regulated.

Late Arrival, Early Dismissal, Leaving Campus

Late Arrival: If a student arrives after school has already started, a call should be made to the school administrative assistant. A staff person will come outside to perform a temperature check. This applies to parents dropping of their child or a student-driver.

Early Dismissal: If a student needs to be picked up early, the parent should remain in the car and contact the school upon arrival. A staff person will escort the child out to the car. If the student intends to return to school later in the day, the Late Arrival protocols will be followed.

Leaving Campus: Student drivers seeking to leave campus during an extended break in their day will be allowed to do so. Mandatory protocols for departure and return to campus will need to be followed. These details will be shared in the days to come.



Teaching and Learning

Instructional Delivery: Standard Plan

We intend to begin school offering our students the opportunity to participate in on-campus learning at DHCA.

- Students will be welcomed on campus to attend classes in a traditional format with the understanding they will abide by the health and safety precautions and rules set out by DHCA.
- We will offer 5 days of instruction for our students.
- Our school calendar will include more days of professional support days for our teachers than in past years as they have the unique and challenging task of maintaining both classroom and remote lessons.
- Teachers will deliver face-to-face instruction while maintaining content and assignments online.
- Teachers and staff will have access to protective face shields and masks.
- The Lower School will not require facemasks in the classroom and the Upper School will require masks in the classroom when 6 feet of physical distancing is not manageable. These slight differences in face covering expectations are based upon differences related to age/development as well as the range and type of interactions that occur during the day.
- Facemask expectations (as well as other protocols) will be reviewed throughout the year with any changes being communicated well in advance of implementation.

Classroom Set Up

1. Students will sanitize their hands prior to entering and exiting the classroom.
2. Physical distancing, to the extent it is possible or reasonable, will be done.

Lower School

- Students will be kept with their classroom grouping throughout the school day. Other classrooms and students will be kept within their student groupings. Mixing of students between grade levels and classrooms will be avoided.
- We are acquiring protective face shields for our lower school faculty and staff. These face coverings are essential to ensure safety for children and adults in the building while allowing our students to see the facial expressions of their teacher.
- Students will sanitize their hands when entering and exiting a classroom.
- Masks will be worn in the hallways and within the building outside of their classroom.



- All “specials” (i.e. PE, recess, Art, Music, etc.) will be conducted with their classroom grouping of students only. When possible, teachers will come to the students rather than students traveling to another classroom. If a room other than the student’s classroom is used for instruction, a thorough cleaning will take place after its last usage and prior to the students’ arrival.
- Teachers will be provided with cleaning supplies to be used throughout the school day for routine surface cleaning.

Upper School

- We are acquiring protective face shields and masks for faculty and staff.
- Students will sanitize their hands when entering and exiting a classroom.
- Masks will be worn outside of the classrooms. They will be worn in classrooms when 6 feet of distancing is not manageable.
- Teachers will be provided with cleaning supplies to be used throughout the school day for routine surface cleaning.

Instructional Delivery: Hybrid Learning Plan

Along with on-campus learning, DHCA will support those learners who wish to maintain further separation at this time and engage in learning remotely.

- Students in grades 1-12 will have the option of taking courses remotely as a DHCA student.
- Access to reliable internet and a laptop, desktop, or tablet is necessary.
- DHCA teachers will provide meaningful learning experiences through proven interactive tools found in Google Classroom and supplemental virtual resources.
- DHCA teachers will employ a balanced and consistent approach to online learning.
- Students learning remotely will be able to transition to on-campus at gateway points throughout the year. Currently, these have been established at the beginning of each quarter (9 weeks). Additional reentry gateways are under consideration.

Canvas Learning Management System

This past spring our teachers did an amazing job of leading remote learning for the students. After a careful review of successes and growth points in June and early July, DHCA is moving forward with an initiative that will expand and enhance our classroom’s capacity for educational innovation, both on campus and remotely. We will be integrating the Canvas learning management system (LMS) into the DHCA educational experience. Canvas is a leader in the LMS industry used by schools, universities, and postgraduate programs across the nation. Canvas is an online learning tool that simplifies, streamlines, and engages students in online learning as well as in traditional classroom settings at all grade levels. This summer and fall our teachers will be actively pursuing the implementation of the educational tool confident that DHCA will experience a positive and significant impact in the learning experience through Canvas. Interested in learning more? Check out <https://www.instructure.com/canvas/k-12>



Athletics, Physical Education Class & Recess

Students need time to exercise, get fresh air, and give their minds a rest. Outdoor P.E. and recess will continue to be offered to our students. If these are ever brought indoors, space and student numbers will be carefully monitored to promote safe practices amidst COVID-19 realities. Recess and PE will be limited to one grade/classroom at a time in their play and activity spaces.

Athletics

- DHCA will follow the directives for all Athletic activities in accordance with the AHSAA (Alabama High School Athletic Association).
- DHCA will conduct a temperature check prior to all practices. If a temperature is 100* or more after 2 separate screenings 15 minutes apart, the student will not be able to practice and asked to separate from his teammates for precautionary reasons.

Fine Arts

- Concerts, programs, plays, and musicals will continue as planned. Protocols will be used for rehearsals and events to maximize physical distancing as required.

Field Trips

- There will be no field trips and overnight trips at least through the first semester.

Special Programs and Celebrations

Our community loves to come together for all kinds of events and celebrations. We hope to be able to enjoy as many of our traditions as possible, but recognize some may need to be postponed for this year. Please know all of our future decisions will be carefully made giving strong consideration to what, when, and how (or if) we can safely conduct these school programs.

DHCA does plan to have chapel programs for our lower and upper school students. For the time being, it will not be done in a large group gathering. Instead, it will be implemented within the classroom setting

Lunch/Cafeteria Plan

All students will eat lunch in their classrooms. Those ordering lunches will have them delivered to the classroom by the lunch staff. Upper School students will be relocated if their classroom is not suitable for eating lunch (as example, Chemistry classroom). Regrettably, lunch visitors will not be allowed.



Fundamental Wellness Protocols for the Home

1. Please keep your child at home if coughing/sneezing is regular, temperature is elevated, or any other “under the weather” symptoms are being displayed. Your extra vigilance and caution for the well-being and assurance of others is greatly needed and appreciated.
2. Students with a fever of 100° or greater must not come to school, and must be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications before returning to school.
3. Students who have been exposed to COVID-19 should self-isolate for 14 days from the last close contact (or as directed by a physician or ADPH). Blended learning will be utilized.
 - a. NOTE: Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 10 days OR living with someone who has tested positive within the last 10 days.
4. Students who test positive for COVID19 must self-isolate for 14 days (or as directed by a physician or ADPH). When well enough, blended learning will be utilized.
5. Be mindful of your activities outside of the school and school community. They are important and can have an impact on the DHCA community at large.

Fundamental Wellness Protocols at School

1. Students will have their temperature scanned before and during the school day.
2. School staff will be watching for symptoms in students (which may include temperature checks and/or confirmation with families that the students are COVID-19 symptom free).
3. In the event a student begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 while at school they will be brought to a quarantined room until a parent picks them up. If diagnosed with COVID-19, the student can return to school after 14 days of symptoms first appearing (or as directed by a physician).
4. Intensify regular cleaning and disinfecting procedures in all schools. Sanitize high touch surfaces throughout the day.
5. Classrooms will be equipped with basic cleaning supplies and materials. We gladly accept parent donations of Clorox wipes and hand sanitizer.
6. Appropriate and consistent use of facial coverings according to school expectations.
7. Provide hand sanitizer throughout the buildings. Encourage regular handwashing and enforce the use of hand sanitizer. Encourage students to bring personal hand sanitizer if desired.
8. Clean and disinfect schools daily. Routinely clean classrooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, and all high traffic areas.
9. Encourage all students to bring a refillable water bottle or bottles as our water fountains require touching for use.
10. Limit adult access to school facilities. Parents will not be able to enter the school buildings during drop off and pick up. Parents will not be able to eat lunch with students until further notice. Field trips are also postponed until further notice.



A Final Word on Re-opening

As we enter into this new school year with great anticipation and joy, it comes to us with challenges. Even as we face those challenges may God's Word be our comfort, strength and hope.

Deuteronomy 31:8 *"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."*