

## News Alert

Office of Communications  
and Community Engagement

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## M-DCPS Student, Parents - How to Prepare, What to Expect for the 2021-2022 School Year

On Monday, August 23rd, infinite possibilities of learning begin at Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS). As we welcome back all students and employees into our buildings, we encourage families to become familiar with the COVID-19 protocols currently in place for a safe return to school.

Click [HERE](#) to view a video regarding our Back-to-School Safety Protocols.

Click [HERE](#) to view a useful Back-to-School Checklist.

M-DCPS has spent several months sanitizing, maintaining, and upgrading school sites and buses and has updated COVID-19 safety protocols and procedures to maximize the safety of students and employees. These are provided in detail in the M-DCPS *COVID-19 Parent Handbook*, which will be available in English, Spanish, and Haitian-Creole at [backtoschool.dadeschools.net](http://backtoschool.dadeschools.net).

Students and their families also play a critically important role in ensuring safety for all. Most importantly, parents should keep their children home when they are ill, experiencing signs and symptoms of a communicable disease, and/or when they have come in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Parents should also emphasize and model healthy behavior at home and talk to their children about personal behaviors that contribute to the health and safety of their teachers and peers.

### **Expectations of All Students**

- Stay home if sick.
- Wash and/or sanitize hands frequently. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol upon entering the building. Hand sanitizing stations can be found in high-traffic areas and in classrooms.
- Avoid touching face and eyes.
- Maximize physical distancing to the extent possible.
- **Every day, wear an appropriate, well-fitted personal facial covering/mask that protects both the nose and mouth, at school and on a school bus.**
- Limit the use of shared objects, such as physical education equipment, playground equipment, art supplies, toys, and games. Shared objects will be cleaned after each use.
- **Bring personal, reusable water bottles.** Water fountains will be out of service and bottle-filling stations will be made available for refills.
- **Follow all directions provided by teachers or administrators** for the safety of the school community. Students must stay in their assigned classrooms and spaces.

## **Facial Coverings and Social Distancing**

- Families should ensure that they send their children to school with an appropriate facial covering/mask, and that students understand how and when to use it throughout the school day.
- All persons must wear a facial covering/mask when on School Board property, at a School Board activity, or while riding a school bus or other approved transportation. Students and children over the age of two are expected to come to school each day with their facial covering.
- If a student needs a facial covering/mask, parents are asked to contact their child's principal in advance.
- It is recommended that the facial covering/mask has two or more layers of breathable, washable fabric, completely covers the nose and mouth, and fits snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps.
- Students must never share a facial covering/mask.
- **Medical exemptions to the facial covering/mask requirement must be approved, in advance, directly by the school principal.**
- Facial coverings/masks must not include obscene, profane, drug-related, gang-related, or inflammatory messages or pictorial graphics.
- Eye goggles and/or face shields may also be worn, **in addition to a facial covering/mask**, so long as they are not darkened or excessively tinted.

## **Quarantine Procedures**

- A health screening area will be established in all schools.
- The quarantine process will focus on individuals directly impacted by a potential exposure through consistent maintenance and monitoring of seating charts.
- After potential exposure, the quarantine period will be 10 days, regardless of COVID-19 test results.

## **Other Important Information for Families**

### **School Arrival/Dismissal Procedures**

To the extent possible, students, parents and visitors must maintain a maximum amount of physical distancing. Specific procedures for arrival/dismissal will be provided by school sites.

### **New and Renovated Schools**

Beyond the excitement of starting a new school year, M-DCPS students, staff, parents and community members can look forward to many new and modernized school buildings and facilities. Improvements to M-DCPS facilities, including renovating, remodeling and replacing schools, expanding student capacity, enhancing safety and providing technology upgrades, were made possible with capital funds and General Obligation Bonds (GOB). Click [HERE](#) for more details.

### **New Programs and Initiatives**

Students and employees will begin the school year with a multitude of bold, cutting-edge programs that build on the District's goals of providing classroom innovation, academic rigor, innovative choice programs, mental health guidance, access and equity, as well as increased efficiencies in operations. The new programs and initiatives address the priorities of School Board members, and most are being undertaken with the use of supplemental funding, existing resources or leveraged community partnerships. M-DCPS also boasts two virtual school

options in Miami-Dade Online Academy (MDO) and Miami-Dade Virtual School (MDSV). Click [HERE](#) for more details.

### **Mental Health Resources**

To support the mental health and wellbeing of students and families, M-DCPS has provided administrators, faculty and staff with enhanced social-emotional learning and mental health awareness trainings to identify and support the needs of students and help them reacclimate to the learning environment. M-DCPS' investments of mental health services include the addition of 45 mental health coordinators, as well as Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to support the hiring of 100 part-time contracted mental health professionals, additional school counselors and a series of mental health awareness trainings for staff as well as social-emotional learning and wellness programs for students.

### **Digital Devices and Internet Connectivity**

Schools will distribute devices to students in grades 4-12 based on student need and by request. A Mobile Device Agreement must be completed. If a student does not have a device, parents should contact their child's school principal to request one. For assistance with internet service, families may apply for the [Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) through [Xfinity](#), [ATT](#) and [Verizon](#). Students on free or reduced lunch may also be eligible for free T-Mobile hotspots and/or 2 years of free Comcast Internet Essentials service. Please contact your child's school for more information.

### **Contact Information**

M-DCPS can communicate accurately and efficiently with parents through voice, text, and email messages. It is important that your child's school has the most current parent contact information. Parents can update their details by contacting their child's principal. They may also opt-in for emergency text messages by texting "Y" to 67587 on their mobile device.

### **Dadeschools Mobile App**

The Dadeschools Mobile App is a one-stop-shop for parents to access important information, including class schedules, school grades, District news and much more. Download the free app on your iPhone or Android device.

### **Immunizations and Flu Vaccine**

**All M-DCPS students are required to have the mandatory school-age vaccines for the 2021-2022 school year.** M-DCPS has partnered with the Florida Department of Health (FLDOH) in Miami-Dade County, Nicklaus Children's Hospital (NCH), and more than 20 community health centers to provide FREE back-to-school immunizations for school-aged children on Saturday, August 21st. Click [HERE](#) to view health and immunization requirements. NCH will provide immunizations at two school sites. Click [HERE](#) to view school sites and schedules. Most community clinics require appointments. Click [HERE](#) to view times and locations. Additionally, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the best way to prevent the seasonal flu is to get an annual flu vaccine. Click [HERE](#) for a list of locations where M-DCPS students can receive free immunizations and flu vaccines.

### **School Meals**

**All students will have access to free breakfast and lunch throughout the 2021-2022 school year.** Students will eat their meals in the cafeteria, classroom or another designated area, based on school-specific plans.

## Transportation

Students who are eligible for District transportation services will receive a mailed notification. Parents can also check the Dadeschools Mobile App and the Student Portal for bus route information. In accordance with COVID-19 Safety Protocols, bus capacity will be reduced, and the use of facial coverings/masks will be required. Hand sanitizing stations will be available on every school bus. School buses will also be sanitized daily after the completion of the morning and afternoon routes. Please note there may be delays in the first week of service.

## School-Site Visitors and Volunteers

Visitor access will be limited, and facial coverings/masks will be required for all volunteers and visitors at school sites and District offices.

## M-DCPS Resources

- **M-DCPS Hotline:** 305-995-3000 for general questions.
- **Back-to-School Parent Information:** [backtoschool.dadeschools.net](http://backtoschool.dadeschools.net) provides continuous updates and resources, including FAQs and helpful links.
- **The Parent Academy:** [parentacademymiami.com](http://parentacademymiami.com) supports and motivates families with access to information and vital resources in the form of a wide variety of training tools, webinars and resources. The Parent Academy is holding new, weekly webinars in three languages. Visit their Virtual Toolkit for Families for more Back-to-School information.
- **Department of Mental Health Services:** [mentalhealthservices.dadeschools.net](http://mentalhealthservices.dadeschools.net) or (305) 995-7100 for support, services and resources for students and families.
- **Project UP-START:** 305-995-7558 for students experiencing unstable housing.
- **Adult and Career/Technical Education:** 305-558-8000 for adult and/or career technical students and enrollment information.

For the most up-to-date information, please download the Dadeschools Mobile App to your iPhone or Android device. Follow us on Twitter [@mdcps](https://twitter.com/mdcps) and [@miamisup](https://twitter.com/miamisup), on Instagram [@miamischools](https://www.instagram.com/miamischools) and [@miamisup](https://www.instagram.com/miamisup), and on Facebook at [MiamiSchools](https://www.facebook.com/MiamiSchools) and [AlbertoCarvalho](https://www.facebook.com/AlbertoCarvalho).

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