

Return to Learning Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind Fall 2020

(Updated as of July 24, 2020)



The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB)—in collaboration with families, school districts and community partners—educates and inspires learners throughout the state, birth through age 21, to achieve their full human potential through comprehensive, individualized academic, transition, residential and outreach programs and resources.

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Return to Learning

Families and Staff of CSDB,

July 24, 2020

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind is committed to its students, families and staff to provide education following the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the El Paso County Public Health guidelines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal of CSDB is to return to in-person and remote learning, August 24, 2020, learning as safely as we can. We know most of our students learn best by being in school.

CSDB believes the health and safety of students and staff must be the highest priority as schools reopen, August 2020. It is essential that all staff, students, and families understand and embrace the health guidelines, including the implementation of risk mitigation practices as recommended by El Paso County Public Health and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. CSDB must follow any active health and executive orders; all constituents will need to remain flexible and willing to adjust and support practices that provide the ability for schools to remain open and educating students. This document will outline practices, procedures and protocols for staff, students, and families to understand and follow to maximize the health and safety of students.

The Governor of Colorado announced a statewide face covering order, July 2020. Coloradans older than 10 years old must wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when entering or moving within any public indoor space. Individuals performing the following activities are exempt from the requirements of the Executive Order while the activity is being performed:

- “Individuals who are hearing impaired or otherwise disabled or who are communicating with someone who is hearing impaired or otherwise disabled and where the ability to see the mouth is essential to communication.”

CSDB has been focused on supporting the mental health, social and emotional needs of students and staff for some time. Now more than ever, CSDB will continue to prioritize the social and emotional needs of students and staff by providing services and resources such as counseling and wellness activities, as well as encouraging communication that not only provides information but solicits information from staff, students and families on pertinent needs. Furthermore, high-quality instruction will integrate social and emotional learning strategies into the daily classroom experience to reinforce safety, well-being and engagement of students.

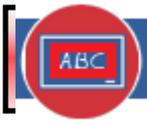
CSDB respects and understands the importance of family voice during this unprecedented health crisis. For students to be successful, families must have information that allows for thoughtful decisions to be made based on individual circumstances. CSDB recognizes that a balance between physical and emotional health, academic need, and socialization is necessary and all of these factors will be part of an individual family’s decision to participate with **in-person learning OR remote learning**. CSDB will provide as much information as possible to allow for families to feel confident in their approach to learning as school resumes, August 24, 2020.

Districts have been directed to work with their local public health department and follow the guidelines from the CDC. The CSDB plan will continue to change throughout the coming weeks as additional guidance is provided by the CDC and the El Paso County Public Health. Both agencies are supplying the regulatory framework in terms of hygiene, social distancing and other public health considerations.

Take care and stay well!



Dr. Nancy E. Benham, Superintendent



Instructional Program

Upon reopening, a unique opportunity exists to create a new and better “normal” to meet the learning needs of all students, at CSDB. It will be critical to set and maintain high grade-level expectations for academic growth and development.

CSDB plans for in-person or remote models of learning. That means a majority of the students are instructed through in-person learning, and a small group of students continue to be instructed through remote learning, if they are high-risk or from a high-risk household, or parents have chosen to continue remote learning. Principals will send out additional information to families regarding specific times for device pick-up. ***Students will remain in their chosen learning mode (in-person or remote) until January 22, 2021, unless CSDB returns to remote-learning-only mode.***

Canvas, the CSDB learning platform, will be used by all teachers, creating a blended learning environment for all students. As a result, when a shift occurs between in-person and remote learning, there will be no disruption to instruction. If CSDB returns to remote learning, families will be notified of the remote learning plan.

Mainstream and work experience options will not be offered, August—January 2021. The options will be reevaluated after January 20, 2021. Pikes Peak Community Classes will be offered on-line only, for students who meet the criteria.

Preschool begins August 24, 2020 and will be held Monday – Thursday, 8:30 a.m.– 12:30 p.m., and includes students eating lunch at school. There is no preschool on Fridays.

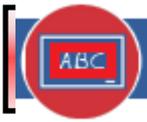
REGISTRATION

Local Students:

Early Registration scheduled for August 7th and Registration Day scheduled for August 16th, **have been cancelled**. In lieu of registration days, registration packets need to be mailed to CSDB (33. N. Institute St, 80903) or can be dropped off in front of the administration building at CSDB on August 17, 18, and 19, 2020. Please pull into the administration building parking lot on Institute St. on one of those days, and a staff member will be available to collect your paperwork. In the days prior to school starting, a CSDB nurse will contact families to discuss medical needs of students as appropriate.

Dorm Students:

Registration days **have been cancelled** so registration paperwork needs to be mailed back to CSDB. Dorm students who normally arrive at CSDB on Sunday nights will return to campus on August 23rd. Students who normally arrive on Sunday nights via charter bus will meet as usual at the Denver RTD bus station at Broadway and I-25. Please mail your registration paperwork to CSDB (33. N. Institute St. 80903) prior to August 23rd. Bring any necessary medications to the regular drop off site on Sunday, as per normal procedures. Staff will be available to collect these items. Students should limit the amount of luggage and personal items the first week back to school, due to limited space on the bus. Students may bring more items as needed, in the following weeks. Prior to arrival on campus, a CSDB nurse will contact families, to collect any necessary medical information. Further information regarding students returning to the dorm, including instructions for students who do not ride the charter bus, will be communicated to parents from our Student Life department, prior to school starting in August.



Instructional Program

SCHOOL

CSDB students, who will begin with in-person learning, will be in an environment focused on supporting the health and safety of students and staff. To do this, common areas such as the Administration Building front desk office, restrooms, libraries, cafeterias, gyms, and hallways will be clearly marked with wall and floor reminders to social distance and wear face coverings, as appropriate. Tactile and visual reminders will be provided in an age appropriate manner for students. Staff will ask students to separate if standing too close together and to put face coverings on if social distancing is not feasible. Additionally, some areas such as the media centers and cafeteria will be used on a limited basis to reduce congregating. Custodial staff will disinfect common areas throughout the day and will address high trafficked areas each night.

CSDB has invested in a variety of resources to support reopening schools, including: purchasing additional hand sanitizing and disinfecting tools, for every classroom, that can be used to clean areas quickly; purchasing face coverings for students and staff; installing plexiglass safety panels in classrooms and in common areas, installing water stations to fill personal water bottles (no water fountains in use), and adding hand sanitizing stations.

CSDB has limited outside guests, including visitors, volunteers and presenters. Families will be asked to make an appointment to meet with school staff, to reduce the number of individuals in common spaces. Teleconferencing will be encouraged as a way to stay connected as well as increased email and phone communication. Families should ensure all emergency contacts are up-to-date in case your child needs to be picked up.

The Colorado Department of Education will be providing school districts with guidance regarding tracking attendance rates for COVID-related absences. Any important information provided by CDE will be communicated to parents as necessary. CSDB will record and report attendance in accordance to CDE guidelines.

CLASSROOMS

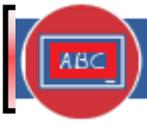
Creating positive learning environments is a high priority for CSDB. Some adjustments will be required because of the health safety practices necessary to keep staff and students in school.

Social distancing remains one of the most important aspects of decreasing the spread of COVID-19. Children's Hospital Colorado discussed the impact social distancing will have on reopening schools. Although 6 feet may not always be possible, achieving some distancing, 3-5 feet, is better than close contact. Teachers will strive to create as much space as feasible by arranging student desks and tables with as much distancing as possible, and implementing assigned seating.

To ensure social distancing and balance the number of students in a classroom space, bell schedules, class assignments, teacher availability and teacher certification will be considered.

Passing period:

- ◇ Face coverings will be required when social distancing is not possible, including transitioning between classes, safety drills and evacuation events.



Instructional Program

CLASSROOMS

Additionally, hand washing and hand sanitizing will be increased and included in scheduled activities. Students will be allowed to bring in hand sanitizer for personal use only; however, hand sanitizer will be available in classrooms as well. Students will be asked to leave all unnecessary items at home and only bring items required for learning. Teachers are expected to limit community items and ensure students do not share personal items. CSDB replaced former communal furniture with more individual options so students have their own workspaces. Teachers and students will be expected to sanitize work areas and supplies after use.

CAFETERIA

CSDB will continue to serve meals on-site when school is open. New health/safety protocols for students and food service staff will include hand washing or sanitizing before and after meals, wearing facial coverings in the cafeteria when not eating, and social distancing while walking to and from the cafeteria. In addition, CSDB will implement the following:

- Cafeteria meal schedules will be staggered to reduce the number of people in the cafeteria at any one time.
- Each table in the cafeteria will be limited to two (2) people, from the same cohort, assigned during the schedule meal time.
- Plexiglass dividers will be set up on each table in the cafeteria to allow for visibility yet providing separation while sitting and eating.
- Students will not go through the line in the cafeteria.
- Meals will be served table-side, in a disposable container with plastic ware, by staff to each student.
- Students may bring a lunch from home. *Note* No heating devices are available.
- Menus will be posted on the CSDB website and on Infinite Campus.
- Water bottles will be provided to each student for meals. The water fountain will be turned off.
- Tables, chairs and plexiglass will be cleaned by staff between each meal time.
- Microwaves will not be available for use. Kitchen areas will not be available to students or staff.
- Food service staff will clean/sanitize the tables, plexiglass and other surfaces throughout mealtimes.

Specific information regarding breakfast and lunch schedules will be provided by schools prior to school starting.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation will be provided from your home district per normal procedure. Home districts transportation offices will be developing safety protocols regarding students in district cars and busses and students will be expected to adhere to district safety guidelines. Any changes regarding transportation will be communicated to you through your district of residence or CSDB. Bus pick up and drop off schedules will also be provided by home districts.

Students will social distance during arrival and departure times: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Friday, 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Additional staff will be used for increased monitoring during arrival and departure times.



Student Life

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

Upon reopening,

- Students will be assigned a room - one person per room.
- Occupancy will be limited in common areas (e.g., living rooms, kitchens) to ensure appropriate use of face coverings and social distancing. Occupancy rates will vary based on each building and room capacity.
- Dinner will be prepared in the dorm and will be eaten as a “family unit”. This allows for less interaction among students outside of their dorm/family unit.
- Cleaning will be conducted several times a day. Overnight staff will assist in cleaning/disinfecting common areas after students have gone to sleep.
- Staff and students will engage in frequent handwashing.

ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS

CSDB believes activities and athletics play an integral role in student health and wellbeing; therefore, CSDB will support these programs to the extent the El Paso County Health Department and Colorado Department of Public Health will allow. CSDB remains in communication with the Colorado High School Athletic Association (CHSAA) to determine appropriate programming, including practices, meetings and competitions.

- Activities will occur on campus so as to reduce the opportunity to bring the virus back to campus. Evaluation of activity status will be ongoing.
- Activities will occur outside to the greatest extent possible as outdoor transmission is much lower than indoor transmission.
- Day students will not be allowed to stay after school for residential activities, at this time. Outside groups will not be permitted to provide services/activities to students. No large group activities or assemblies will be held in the dormitories.

CSDB will communicate with families and the community as more information becomes available from CHSAA regarding athletic contests. Currently, CHSAA has a Resocialization Task Force examining when, and how, to resume athletics on a broader level. Some of the topics the Task Force is examining are:

- Safety measures needed to resume specific activities.
- Adjustment of some schedules for athletics.
- Crowd guidelines.

Outreach

Outreach Programs is committed to ensuring our families and children continue to meet milestones and develop academic skills through the variety of services provided. Since March 2020, some services shifted to remote learning, and will continue as such, through Fall 2020. The option of returning to in-person services will be evaluated prior to January 2021.

EARLY INTERVENTION (EI) ACTIVITIES

EI SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

As employees of CSDB, the CO-Hears will continue to provide services to families following the guidance of CSDB. At this time, meetings with families will continue through tele-health or phone options. Meetings with the CCBs, community agencies and the CSDB team will occur remotely. Provider trainings, classes, or workshops will use videoconferencing.

The CHIP Early Intervention Providers, delivering weekly services to families are employed by or contract with the local Community Center Board. Services will follow the Early Intervention Colorado guidance, sent through the Regional CO-Hears .

EI SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE VISION LOSS

The Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) will continue to provide direct services to families, virtually. Meetings with the CCBs or community agencies and will be held using videoconferencing.

Colorado Shared Reading Project services will continue to provide sessions via tele-health, through December, 2020. Initial sessions, ongoing sessions, and assessments will be conducted remotely. Provider meetings and workshops will be held via teleconferencing. Support to families, in using technology for sessions, will be provided as needed.

Outreach Programs continue to pilot various options for family-centered events that include literacy activities, music, and parent education. Programs, regional or statewide, will be provided using videoconferencing and/or webcast means. Survey feedback will guide these programs for the winter sessions. Support to families, in using technology for events or trainings, will be provided as needed.

SCHOOL-AGED SERVICES

Contract services requested by school districts, BOCES and charter schools will be delivered virtually through the end of 2020. By providing virtual services and reducing travel to the various regions of the state, these measures may reduce the possibility of staff spreading COVID-19.

SIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

Family and Community Sign Language classes will be held virtually, through the first semester of the 2020-21 school year. The option of returning to in-person classes will be evaluated, prior to January 2021.



Sick Staff or Student

COVID-19 GUIDANCE

CSDB is prepared to support students and staff members who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19. The Center for Disease Control established, early on in the pandemic, that certain people are more at risk of severe COVID-19 infection. Some factors can make individuals more prone to the virus than others. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html> However, most importantly, students, staff, and parents must be diligent in self-screening daily. If exhibiting symptoms, stay home and consult with their health care provider to determine if they need to be tested.

If a staff member or student becomes sick while at school or begins to exhibit any symptoms:

1. Isolation will take place in a designated area.
2. Evaluation will be conducted by a Nurse.
3. In the case of a student, parents will be notified to pick-up the student immediately.
4. Identification with whom the person has been in close physical contact.
5. Only staff or students who were in close physical contact with a positive case or who exhibit symptoms will be monitored. Being in the room with someone who was ill does not constitute close physical contact.
6. Supervisors must notify Human Resources immediately if a staff member becomes ill. Staff may be eligible for leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Contact your supervisor for more information.
7. Students sent home for exhibiting symptoms or awaiting test results will be provided remote learning opportunities while out.
8. The student or staff need to remain home until cleared to return to work or school.

If a student, staff member, or family member within the household tests positive for COVID 19:

1. Seek medical care from your healthcare provider in accordance with CDC and El Paso County Health Department Guidelines.
2. Alert the school health office as quickly as possible to ensure the student can be provided with resources and to get started on remote learning.
3. Do not come to school until they have been cleared to do so by your healthcare provider. In most cases, this requires a 14-day quarantine period. Students must provide a note from a physician before returning to school.
4. If a family member is the one who is sick, the staff or student must be tested after that family member is no longer showing symptoms to ensure the student or staff is not infected prior to returning to school.
5. Staff must remain in contact with Human Resources for guidance on returning to work.
6. CSDB will coordinate with Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment regarding suspected and confirmed cases to determine course of action on a case by case basis.

Sick Staff or Student

Guidelines for Exclusion: Identifying and separating students/staff exhibiting illness as per El Paso County Public Health <https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/>. This requires clear expectations and communication with parents and staff. The appropriate exclusion timeframe will be dictated by Public Health and relayed to the appropriate staff member at school; this timeframe cannot be overridden by any other authority and remains the express authority of Public Health.

Exclusion criteria:

- Positive COVID-19 test result: Stay home at least 14 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least three days without medication AND improvement of symptoms.
 - ◊ Siblings and household members will also be excluded from school and work for 14 days after the last infectious day of the positive case.
 - ◊ A negative test will NOT affect the recommendations around exclusion; a person will need to continue to isolate or quarantine for the entire amount of time, regardless of a negative result following a positive result.
- Negative test result but symptoms with no other diagnosis: Stay home at least 14 days after onset of symptoms AND until no fever at least three days without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.
 - ◊ Siblings and household members should stay home 14 days.
- For people with a probable COVID-19 diagnosis without lab confirmation or who have COVID-19 symptoms but did not seek medical care: Stay at home at least 14 days since symptoms first appeared AND until no fever for at least three days without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.
 - ◊ Siblings and household member should stay home 14 days.
- For those with other diagnosis to explain symptoms: Stay home until symptoms have improved and follow health care provider instructions to return to school.
 - ◊ Siblings and household member DO NOT need to stay home.

Safety Guidelines (in review):

- Implement physical distancing at all times and to the greatest degree, wherever and whenever possible. Avoid immediate contact such as shaking or holding hands and hugging.
- Require educators and other school staff to wear face coverings or masks in school whenever possible. Teach and reinforce appropriate use of cloth face coverings among staff and students (when age and developmentally appropriate) when in the vicinity of others, particularly in indoor settings. A variety of face coverings available including clear masks to ease communication with Deaf/HH staff and students.
- Utilize additional barriers (e.g., plastic sneeze guards, face shields) in some common areas of campus for employees working directly with children or where spacing and masking may be more difficult.
- Clean, sanitize, and disinfect frequently touched surfaces multiple times per day, including education tools (e.g. books, whiteboards, computers). Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene.
- Shared objects should be cleaned between use.
- Students will not share materials (i.e. crayons, scissors, etc.). Keep each child's belongings separated in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or taken home each day and cleaned.
- Items not easily cleaned, or disinfected are removed (upholstered furniture or soft or plush toys).
- Teach and reinforce washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
- Take scheduled breaks for hand hygiene. Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.

Resources and Citations

American Academy of Pediatricians. <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

Center for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Center for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html>

Children's Hospital Colorado and University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus.

Colorado Department of Education. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/safeschools>

El Paso County Public Health Department. <https://www.elpasocountyhealth.org/>

Denver Partnership for Health. https://www.coloradohealthinstitute.org/sites/default/files/file_attachments/Metro_Denver_Partnership_for_Health_School_Guidance_25June2020_0.pdf

