

KCS CONNECT

2021-22

2021-22 Learning Options / Frequently Asked Questions

Knox County Schools will continue to offer two learning options in the 2021-22 academic year for students in Grades 1-12. These students can utilize in-person, on-campus instruction, or they can apply for a transfer to a KCS virtual school (elementary, middle, and high). The virtual learning program will not be available for kindergarten students.

The transfer window for these virtual schools will be open from **May 3 through May 14**. It is important to note that the process will follow the standard transfer procedure, and students who meet the prerequisites and are approved for a transfer will be notified in June.

Students who are accepted into a virtual school will unenroll from their base school and enroll in the virtual school; therefore, they will not be able to participate in extra-curricular activities at their former base school.

It is very important to remember that this virtual option is dependent on getting approval from the Tennessee Department of Education, and these plans could change in the future. We will make sure to keep you updated.

Virtual Learning

Who is eligible for virtual learning?

All students in Grades 1-12 are eligible to apply for a transfer to a KCS virtual school; however, KCS has established prerequisites for selection (see below).

Virtual learning will not be offered in kindergarten, due to the significant challenges of online learning for our youngest students.

State policy does limit the initial number of available spaces to 1,500 at each of the district's three virtual schools (elementary, middle and high), if approved.

What is the deadline to submit a transfer to a KCS virtual school?

The deadline to submit a transfer to a KCS virtual school is 4 p.m. on Friday, May 14, 2021. The online application may be found [here](#). In addition, each school will have paper forms that parents can submit for the transfer application.

What are the prerequisites for KCS virtual school?

Students who want to transfer to a KCS virtual school for the 2021-22 school year must meet certain prerequisites. These include:

- Home internet meets KCS requirements (internet assistance is available by calling the IT customer service line at 594-4484);
- Student tests in-person (This applies to state assessments and could also include diagnostic testing for special education, RTI screening, etc.);
- Parent / guardian completes an orientation on virtual instruction and signs an agreement;
- Parent / guardian attends school-specific / program-specific orientation;
- Elementary students must have an identified “Learning Coach” who provides supervision for virtual students throughout the day; and
- Parent / guardian will be expected to pick up additional materials.

A student’s prior academic performance will be considered. These factors include teacher recommendations, academics, work habits, attendance and credits earned (for high school students). Students must not have received an F as a final grade in a core academic class during the Fall 2020 semester. If a student does not meet the prerequisites, a family can appeal to their principal.

Will I be able to change my student’s learning model during the 2021-22 school year?

Students will not be able to apply for a transfer to a KCS virtual school after May 14.

Students who are granted a transfer to a KCS virtual school will be able to return to in-person instruction at their base school if they desire. However, if they leave a KCS virtual school, they will not be able to return during the 2021-22 school year.

When will I know if my transfer is approved?

Approval notifications will be made in June. The district will work to provide those notifications as promptly as possible.

Will there be a waiting list for KCS virtual schools?

Yes, the Transfer Office does maintain a waiting list for transfer requests until the start of the school year.

Who will get the first priority for spaces at a KCS virtual school?

Transfer requests will be electronically assigned a number using a lottery-style process. Those requests will be made in order of the assigned number, within the ordered priorities listed below, per standard transfer procedures:

1. Teachers transferring their child to the school in which they teach;
2. Contract employees for their children;

3. For students who have a sibling presently enrolled at the requested school who will continue to be enrolled in the year the requested transfer is effective. For purposes of transfers, a sibling is defined as a brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother, stepsister, or foster child living in the same household;
4. Students with a medical condition that requires virtual learning;
5. Students not meeting any of the above criteria;
6. Out-of-district students.

Is there an appeals process for students whose transfer request for virtual learning is not approved?

Yes, appeals will be heard by the district's transfer appeals committee.

Will any students be required to attend in-person learning?

In certain cases, the district may direct students to in-person learning in order to support the best educational outcomes.

Will students in a KCS virtual school have access to AP and Honors courses?

Yes, there will be a variety of AP and Honors courses offered based on the number of requests received.

Will students in a KCS virtual school be able to participate in extracurricular activities at their base school?

No, students attending a KCS virtual school will not be able to participate in extracurricular activities at their base school. There will be clubs and activities available at the virtual school depending on student and staff interest. There is no plan for athletics at this time.

Have principals been hired for the three virtual schools?

Yes. For elementary, Jennifer Garrett will serve as principal and Zack Brewer will serve as assistant principal. For secondary, Leanne Hawn will serve as principal and Chris Layton will serve as assistant principal.

In-Person Learning

Will in-person students be required to wear masks during the 2021-22 school year?

Board of Education [Policy C-240](#), regarding the use of face coverings in our schools, remains in effect at this time. The policy will sunset on Aug. 1. After that, the district will follow the guidelines of the Tennessee Department of Health which state that masks are recommended.

Will physical distancing be required for in-person students during the 2021-22 school year?

Appropriate physical distancing will be followed in classrooms, to the extent possible. In elementary schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart. In middle and high schools, students should be at least 3 feet apart in areas of low, moderate, or substantial community transmission. In areas of high community transmission, middle and high school students should be 6 feet apart if cohorting is not possible.

Classrooms should be structured in such a way as to facilitate this distancing, to the extent possible. Please note that for contact tracing and quarantine purposes, the current definition of a "close contact" is 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes.

Will daily temperature checks be required for in-person students during the 2021-22 school year?

Temperature checks are no longer recommended for students. Families should continue to screen children at home. Knox County Schools will continue to screen staff and other adults in the school building. Students and staff who have a fever or other symptoms of illness should not attend school or ride the bus.

What cleaning procedures will be in place for school buildings during the 2021-22 school year?

Buildings will undergo daily sanitizing for high-touch areas such as doorknobs, handrails, and countertops, using a COVID-certified disinfectant. Common areas such as administrative areas, libraries, cafeterias, auditoriums, gymnasiums, and hallways will be misted with a COVID-certified disinfectant daily.

Classrooms will be cleaned per the district's standing protocols and as needed; they will be misted at least every other day. Restrooms will be monitored and disinfected multiple times each day. Additionally, each classroom will be provided with hand sanitizer and disinfectant.

Buildings will also be disinfected either in part or in their entirety as may be necessary following a positive COVID diagnosis of a student or staff member. Buses will be disinfected following morning and evening runs with a COVID-effective agent provided to contractors by KCS.

How will contact tracing work for in-person students during the 2021-22 school year?

In response to a reported positive COVID-19 case:

- If the district is made aware that a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, district officials will immediately notify local health officials.
- The KCS Health Services Department will work with the Knox County Health Department to initiate contact tracing protocols to determine how widespread the potential exposure is and notify families and staff members impacted.
- If the student or staff member is on a school campus, he or she will be isolated until they can be transported off campus.
- Contacts are to self-quarantine at home for at least 10 days from their last contact with the infected individual. Contacts may end their quarantine after 7 days with a negative test conducted on days 6 or 7 of quarantine. The current definition of a "close contact" is 6 feet for a cumulative 15 minutes.
- Quarantine is not required for fully vaccinated individuals or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days. If they develop symptoms, they should self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider.
- If there is an incident on campus that might pose a threat of exposure to COVID-19, families and staff will be notified while maintaining confidentiality.

Will in-person schools have the option of moving to temporary online learning because of COVID metrics?

The State Board of Education voted on April 12 to retire the emergency rule for school districts operating during COVID-19. As a result, Knox County Schools will not have the ability to move individual schools to online learning, unless the Governor declares a state of emergency.

Will teachers be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Knox County Schools is encouraging all employees to receive the COVID-19 vaccine as a way to mitigate the spread of the virus and to protect our school communities. However, employees are not required to be vaccinated.

Will in-person students be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

Students will not be required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Will inclement weather days be included in the 2021-22 school year?

The 2021-22 calendar is expected to include 10 inclement weather days.