

Good afternoon.

Many parents have reached out to me recently wanting more details from our school concerning procedures and practices that we plan to do routinely to make our campus clean and safe. Mr. Tyler's message has been clear regarding Baldwin County's efforts to open school. There is no full proof plan that can guarantee someone won't be exposed to the COVID 19 virus on our campuses. However, there are many things we are doing to help reduce that risk. My hope is that this information will not only help you make some tough decisions regarding your child's education but also put to rest some anxiety. At the very least, please know we are going to do all that we can to ensure the return to school at SFMS is as safe and as positive as possible. Middle school is tough enough, right?

What are we doing to make SFMS safe for students?

- Students will not be brought into the gym in mass numbers in the mornings. Instead, they will be allowed to enter the building at 7:10, so they can go to homeroom, which will prevent large crowds on our campus.
- Staff members will be on campus to monitor students at 7:10, which will promote safety and social distancing.
- Classrooms will be arranged with traditional desks when possible with no extra furniture in order to make space for social distancing. Desks will be arranged so as to have students facing in one direction and/or 6 feet apart.
- Classrooms with tables will have dividers and we will be mindful of spacing when feasible.
- Teaching in groups will be kept to a minimum and done in a safe manner.
- Students will be given hand sanitizer provided by Baldwin County as they enter the classroom and when they leave the classroom.
- All students and staff members will be required to wear a mask while on campus.
- In P.E., students will not dress out in the gym. Students will wear masks in P.E. except when exercising or while participating in an activity. All PE equipment will be sanitized as often as possible and at the end of each day.
- Breaks and lunches will be amended to promote safety and social distancing. We will also work to promote pricing for canteen items that will eliminate the need for change, which will eliminate large-scale contact between canteen workers and students who are buying goods.
 - Students will be allowed to go to our snack bar in small groups and return to class during their break times. This is similar to our rainy day procedures in the past.

- Half of our students will take their lunches to our pavilion area and eat. The other half of the students will be in the cafeteria, seated in every other seat and spaced in a way that staggers students to prevent them from being directly across from each other. There will be additional space between our tables in the cafeteria.
 - These groups will rotate so as not to always be outside or in the cafeteria.
 - Rainy day procedures will require students who brought their lunches to eat in the classroom and the other students to eat in the cafeteria. We will monitor this to ensure it provides safe numbers in both venues.
 - All areas will be disinfected between use throughout the day
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- Bathrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected multiple times throughout each day.
 - Every classroom will be disinfected at the end of each day by using a hospital-grade misting machine in addition to the scheduled cleaning throughout the school day and week.
 - Clubs, assemblies, pep rallies, field trips, and large gatherings will be cancelled until further notice, and any meetings related to such things will probably be done virtually and/or in a safe manner.
 - No Open House this year. We are currently looking at a virtual option for our Open House.
 - Visitors will not be allowed in our school building without an appointment, and early dismissals will be handled so as to promote limited contact and entry for parents and the general school population.
 - Parents will not be able to drop items off at the school this year. This means that the drop-off table in our lobby will not be allowed this year. Medication drop off by parents will be streamlined by our nurses, which will prevent the need for parents to enter our facilities on a large-scale basis.
 - Water fountains will not be available. Students will be allowed to bring water bottles to school and keep with them throughout the day.
 - School buses will be sanitized daily to promote cleanliness and control the spread of germs; students will also be spaced out on the bus to follow CDC and state guidelines on social distancing. Students will be wearing masks on the buses.
 - Baldwin County has provided thermal cameras to check temperatures of students, employees, and other visitors on campus and there is an established procedure for anyone who registers a temperature on these cameras, including protocol for how anyone who is symptomatic can return to school/work.

Please remember, this process is evolving and may change to better suit the needs of our students. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it should provide enough information regarding things we are doing to help make our campus clean and safe for parents to know that we are taking precautions and it is not business as usual.

Finally, this is not our new normal. These changes are temporary and I think we can all agree that we all look forward to the days when we come together in person as a community . If nothing else, we will appreciate those moments much more and hopefully never take them for granted. For now, you still have two options. However, the process has changed and should you decide to enroll at the Baldwin County Virtual School, you will need to withdraw your child from SFMS and then enroll him/her in the BCVS.

Again, thank you for your patience and I look forward to seeing our students on August 12. Go Toros!

Sincerely,

Oliver Sinclair

Principal

SFMS