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# KSSSB 2020-2021



## Reopening Guide

1100 State Avenue; Kansas City, KS 66102  
913.305.3015

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**Website:** [www.kssb.net](http://www.kssb.net)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/KSBlind/>

**Twitter:** @KansasBlind



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## Welcome Back

This year “back-to-school” takes on a whole new meaning. Safety has always been our first priority, and we are challenged by a new threat that could not have been anticipated only a few months ago. This guide will explain the changes we will make to keep students and staff as safe as possible, given the reality of opening school in the midst of a pandemic.



The COVID-19 virus will continue to infect individuals until there is a safe vaccine in place, which means outbreaks in our community are possible, perhaps even likely, throughout the school year. This means that we have to plan for numerous learning scenarios, communicate changes quickly, and be prepared to accommodate individual students, or groups of students, learning from home for extended periods of time.

In the interest of safety, and following the best medical advice available, we will ask our staff to adhere to our rules for masks, social distancing, cleaning their spaces, washing their hands, etc. For students, we are required to follow Wyandotte County mandates regarding the wearing of masks, knowing that we will need to make some exceptions. Teaching students how to wear a mask correctly and consistently will be a process, and it will require patience, grace, and encouragement from all staff.

KSSB has received and considered guidance from KSDE (ie: Navigating Change 2020), the ReStart WYCO Education Committee, Wyandotte County Public Health Department, and CDC Guidelines in creating our Reopening Guide, but we know that no amount of planning can completely prepare us for what lies ahead. We ask that you help us by staying in touch with your child’s home district and transportation service, following our website and social media pages closely, and providing us with your latest contact information (including emergency contacts).

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In the midst of some monumental challenges, our school has continued to grow and improve. Our Field Services continue to expand and provide services to more students across our state than ever before. We have a new Preschool Enrichment Program, an accessible playground, a redesigned “Makerspace”, a renovated pool, renovated kitchens in Edlund Dormitory, and a Mobile Technology/STEM Unit.

This is a time for us to unify as a community in the face of adversity and to teach our students valuable lessons about personal responsibility and concern for each other. KSSB has been serving the state of Kansas for 153 years and has overcome great adversity before. This is a challenge that we’ll face head-on, together.

Sincerely,

Jon Harding, Superintendent

Dr. Debora Howser, Director of Special Education

Aundrayah Shermer, Director of Field Services

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# Health and Safety

KSSB has worked with the Wyandotte County/Unified Government as we put our plan in place for this coming year. County Health Departments have the authority to set regulations for schools that reside within county boundaries. KSSB is fortunate to have a strong working relationship with our local health department and local government. KSSB is also following guidance from the KS State Department of Education, and we are following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Links to each agency's guidance can be found here.

- Centers for Disease Control: <https://bit.ly/2WQmQhU>
- ReStart WYCO: <https://bit.ly/30EAcyN>
- ReStart WYCO Education Guidance: <https://bit.ly/2AQay17>
- KS State Department of Education: <https://bit.ly/2CzE10m> (Navigating Change)

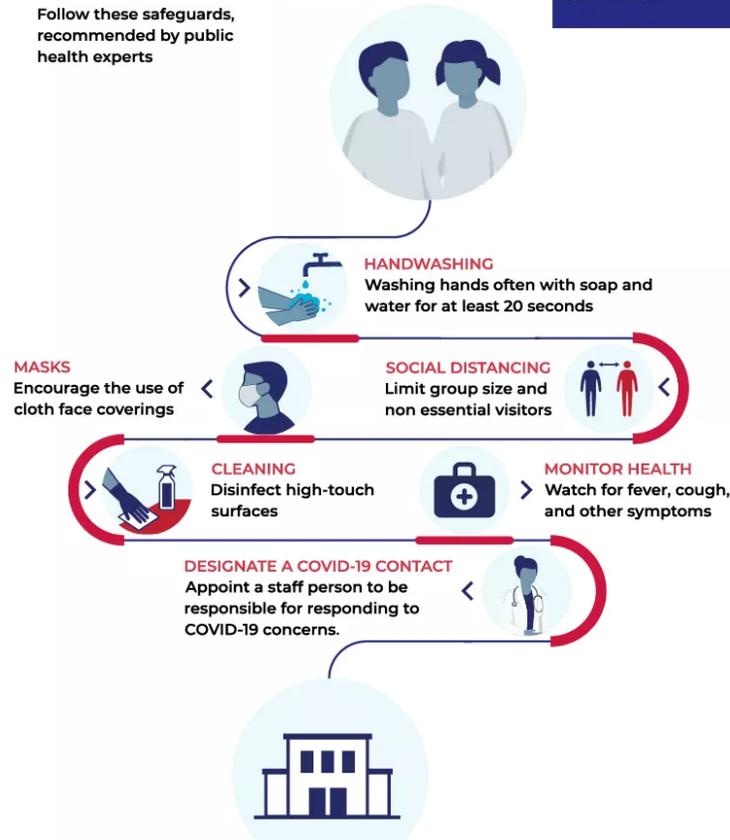
We intend to have the following practices implemented on opening day:

- **Temperature screenings and masks for all staff and visitors** upon arrival
- **Temperature screenings for students**
- **Masks for students over age 5 (medical exclusions apply)**
- A **quarantine room** in our dorm for any student who is ill but is awaiting transportation home
- **Increased spacing** in classrooms, including individual student desks 6' apart when at all possible
- **Block scheduling**, to minimize movement in hallways
- **Ensuring constant air flow and ventilation** (outside air is used), using our HVAC fans and/or windows
- **UV lighting** in our Johnson HVAC system.
- **Rotating lunch schedules** and/or food delivery to classrooms
- **Daily use of foggers** for disinfectant and anti-microbial applications: *PermaSafe* (non-corrosive, non-hazardous, odor free, environmentally neutral).
- **Enhanced cleaning:** disinfecting surfaces twice a day
- **Scheduled hand-washing** and use of hand sanitizer
- **Reviewing** facility-use agreements to limit use by outside groups
- **Reporting** of any suspected COVID-related illness to county health departments, parents, and staff

## How to Protect Students and Staff

Follow these safeguards, recommended by public health experts

**CDC**  
RECOMMENDED  
STRATEGY



## Masks

All adults will be required to wear masks while on campus. Masks may be removed for short periods: when outside (and more than 6' apart), when eating, etc. Students age 5 and older will be required to wear masks, per county regulations. With students, our intent is to educate and encourage rather than 'enforce' the use of masks. Any student with a documented medical condition that would cause the use of masks to be unsafe will not be required to use a mask. Students with significant disabilities would not be expected to wear masks, either.

We encourage staff and students to bring their own masks. Masks should be washed daily. KSSB will provide single-use KN-95 masks (or similar) for students and staff who do not bring their own or need another one (as long as supplies available).

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## **N**ursing

KSSB employs 3 full-time nurses who work in three shifts: 7:00a to 3:00p; 3:00p to 11:00p; and 11:00p to 7:00a. This service is provided to ensure the care and safety of students, some who are with us 24 hours a day, 5 days a week. In order to allow our full-time nurses to complete their routines and duties, we will **have a Certified Nursing Assistant on duty to** assist with screenings of all staff and visitors who enter campus from the hours of 6:00a to 6:00p.

Nurses will assist KSSB administrators in determining when students need to be sent home, when they can return to school, when to keep students in isolation, communicating with Wyandotte County Health Department officials, communicating with parents, and conducting contact tracing on our campus.

## **S**creening on Arrival

KSSB will utilize the rear gate (11th St. and Washington St.) as the single entry point for all vehicles coming on to campus. A check point will be created at the small shed near the northwest corner of the track, where a screener will greet all vehicles. Masks will be offered, temperatures taken, a screening questionnaire completed, and hand sanitizer provided.

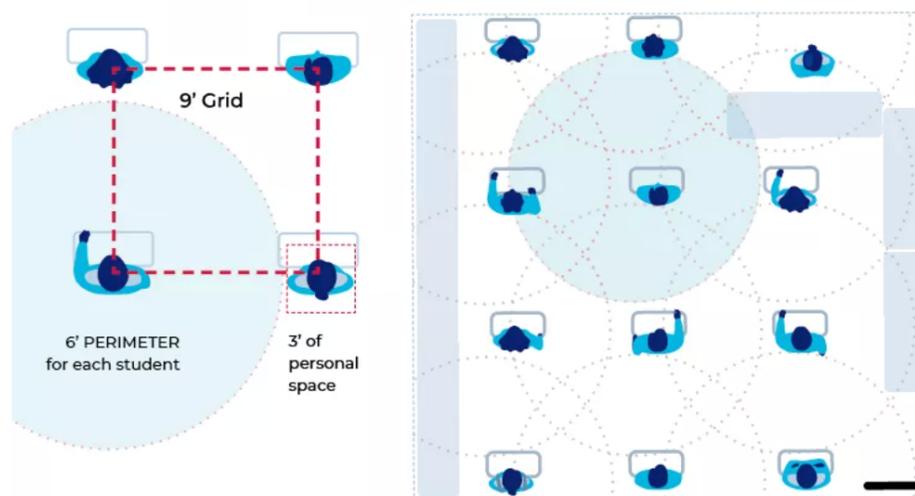
Only buses and Open Minds staff will be allowed to pass through without stopping. Open Minds is our preschool provider and they will conduct their own screenings. Open Minds staff and children will not be in contact with KSSB students. KSSB students will exit buses behind the Edlund Dormitory and will be screened inside the lower level of Edlund at a screening station.

Screening will be done by either a nurse and/or teaching staff and will include a temperature check using a digital heat thermometer, some basic questions about how students feel, and non-toxic, disinfectant spray or wipes (as available) for backpacks and coats. Students will wash their hands before breakfast, which will be served in the basement of Edlund for “day students”. Students will then move to their assigned classroom at 7:55 to start school at 8:00 a.m.

## Seating

We will provide individual desks and chairs, spaced 6' apart in our classrooms, except those where students are unable to sit for extended periods of time (Deaf-Blind and Life Skills Classrooms). We do not expect more than 10 students in any classroom at one time, so keeping students distanced from each other is more manageable than in typical schools where student class sizes are larger.

### Arranging Instructional Spaces



Normal capacity	Socially distanced capacity
31	12

Example: 960 square feet (30' x 32' room, with furniture)

## Enrollment Day

In order to limit the risks of a large group congregating in a closed space, we'll institute a number of changes, including:

- Encouraging parents to **complete enrollment forms ahead of time** and returning via mail or dropping them off at Enrollment Day.
- **Enrollment forms can be accessed here:** <https://bit.ly/32SeSbG>
- Weather permitting, **enrollment will be held outside** in our sensory garden. Awnings around the perimeter of our dorm (Edlund Building) and cafeteria

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will be used to set up stations. As an alternative, **we may use the gym** for enrollment.

- Parents will be asked to **enroll at specific times**, based on the first letter of their last name: **Please note the time that you would be expected to enroll:**
  - 10:00a - 11:30a    A-D
  - 11:30a - 1:00p    E-K
  - 1:00p - 2:30p    M-S
  - 2:30p - 4:00p    T-Y

## **U** pdated Contact Lists

It is critical that parents provide us with their most current contact information in order that we can disseminate information quickly and accurately. This means personal cell phones, home phones, email addresses, work phone numbers, mailing address, as well as emergency contacts should be kept up to date. KSSB uses a system that can disseminate messages to both cell phones and emails in one message, but this only works if the information in the system is current. We ask that you assist us in ensuring your information is kept current by contacting **Renee Wilson** at **[renee.wilson@kssdb.org](mailto:renee.wilson@kssdb.org)** or calling **913.305.3015**.

## **S** ick Policy

We ask that parents continue to **contact the office directly** (not your child's primary teacher) at **913-305-3015** if a child is not feeling well and is kept home from school. **It is critical that parents keep students home who exhibit two (2) or more symptoms (see below), especially if they are "new" symptoms.**

KSSB's main office will notify all instructional and/or dorm staff of the child's absence. Children arriving at school with COVID-19 symptoms will be sent home and should be tested for COVID-19 testing at the Public Health Department in their county or where their primary care physician directs them.

COVID-19 symptoms include:

- **Fever**
- **Dry Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**
- Congestion
- Sore throat
- Diarrhea

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- Nausea
  - Chills
  - Headache
  - Muscle aches
  - Fatigue

Children who start to exhibit the above symptoms, including a fever of 100 degrees or above, and symptoms of other infectious illnesses while at school will be sent home immediately and are advised to get a COVID-19 test. While waiting to be picked up, the student will be isolated from other children in our isolation room in Edlund Dorm.

**Positive result:** Symptomatic cases may return if the following conditions are met: Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine and other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved).

Asymptomatic cases may return if the following conditions are met: Ten (10) calendar days have passed since the date sample was collected AND symptoms have not developed. If symptoms develop during the 10-day isolation period, then follow the above criteria for symptomatic cases with a new isolation period starting from the day symptoms started.

**Negative result:** Known exposure to a COVID-19 case or travel from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List. People who are identified as close contacts of a COVID-19 case or have travelled from a location on the KDHE Travel-related Quarantine List must be quarantined for 14 days. A negative test result within the 14-day quarantine period does not affect the quarantine period and the person must finish their 14-day quarantine.

**Untested:** Persons who have not received a test proving or disproving the presence of SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, but experience symptoms may return if the following conditions are met: Ten (10) calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared AND fever free for 72 hours without the use of fever reducing medicine and other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath have improved).

### **Other Students and Employees in the Household**

If a student or employee is excluded from school because of a positive COVID-19 test, other students and employees living in the same household are considered close contacts and will be excluded from school for a mandatory 14-day quarantine period, which begins after their last exposure to the case. If the household contacts continue to live in the same household as the case while the case is in isolation, the 14-day quarantine period for household contacts begins once the case is released from isolation by Public Health.

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If a student is excluded from school on a 14-day mandatory quarantine period because they have been identified as a close contact of a case, then other students and employees living in the same household are considered contacts of a contact and do not need to be excluded from school unless they were also identified as a close contact of a case.

### **Defining a Close Contact**

A person is considered a close contact of a case if they were **within 6 feet of the case for 10 minutes or more or if they had exposure to secretions (for example, being coughed or sneezed on)**. Close contacts must remain in quarantine until they have met the criteria for release from quarantine set by KDHE or the local health department.

### **Travel-Related Quarantine**

If a student has recently traveled from a location on the KDHE Travel-related quarantine List, the student is subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine starting from the day after they return to Kansas.

### **School Response to Student or Employee in Isolation or Quarantine**

As soon as the school becomes aware of a student that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 disease, the custodial staff will be informed so that all desks, lockers and workspaces of the person are thoroughly disinfected. If the school is not open when notification occurs, the custodial staff will wait 24 hours or as long as possible prior to disinfecting and instead will block off the area so that others do not have contact. However, if that is not possible or school is in session, the cleaning will occur immediately.

School staff will immediately begin compiling a list of close contacts, including names, email addresses and phone numbers. Consider the two days prior to when the case started having symptoms or if the case was asymptomatic the two days prior to the date the sample was collected. Identify anyone who would have been within 6 feet for 10 minutes or more or would have had direct contact with secretions. Guardians of students who have been identified as close contacts and any staff identified as close contacts will be informed immediately.

Close contacts must start a 14-day mandatory quarantine period starting from the day after the last contact with the case. The list of close contacts will be shared with the local health department for follow-up during the quarantine period.

### **Separation While in School**

KSSB has a room or space separate from the nurse's office where students who may have COVID-19 or another communicable disease will wait to be evaluated or for pick-up.

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Students will be given a mask to wear. Only essential staff and students assigned to the room may enter, all will sign in so that there is a record of the persons who entered the room, and the room will be disinfected several times throughout the day. Strict social distancing is required, and staff must wear appropriate PPE. Students who are ill will be walked out of the building to their parents.

### **Confirmed Case of COVID-19 In the School Building**

When there is confirmation that a person infected with COVID-19 was in a school building, KSSB will contact the local health department immediately. As one option, the school will close the school building for a minimum of two to five days and work with the local health department to assess factors, such as the likelihood of exposure to employees and students in the building, the number of cases in the community, and other factors that will determine when the building should reopen. While the school building is closed, all school activities will be cancelled or rescheduled, regardless of whether the activity was to take place in the building or another location, including extracurricular activities, before and after-school programs and field trips. Parents/students and employees will be encouraged to stay at home until more information is provided by the school or the health department.

As another option, KSSB may remain open but block off areas where the person infected with COVID-19 was in the school building until the area has been cleaned thoroughly. The school will work with the local health department to assess for close contacts within students and staff and inform those who are exposed that they must start a mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

### **O**nsite Learning

KSSB believes onsite learning represents the best way for our students to learn, but we can only provide this when Wyandotte County Health Authorities allow us to do so. We are offering more classes than ever before, with a renewed emphasis on assessments and curricula in math, reading, and social emotional learning. Our new schedule provides students with new options like personal finance, career exploration, computer applications, braille (including Nemeth) proficiency, and podcasting. We've expanded our online options in braille, assistive technology, music braille, and computer science. KSSB has laid the groundwork for students to take greater control of their learning this year by offering expanded learning options, especially on Fridays.

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## Hybrid Learning Requests

**H**KSSB will work with parents and Local Education Agencies when “hybrid” learning options are desired/requested, with the understanding that ‘remote’ learning is not the optimal environment for students who are blind or have a visual impairment.

A parent request for remote learning (whether part-time or full-time) for students who attend KSSB would require a decision by the students’ IEP (Individual Education Program) team, as it would be considered a “change of placement”. Other factors would require consideration such as the availability of transportation, the impact of remote learning on the student’s progress, etc. Students receiving instruction from home (remotely) would be required to present a daily “remote learning log” to KSSB indicating the child is engaged in daily learning. **A copy of KSSB’s “Remote Learning Handbook” is here: <https://bit.ly/2Eil2I7>**

## Remote Learning

**R**KSSB students **may be sent home intermittently, for extended periods of time, in the 2020-2021 school year.** The county or state, for instance, may close schools due to an outbreak and/or reemergence of COVID-19. Absences from school will be longer if children are sick and/or are isolating, but learning can continue from home if students are otherwise able.

Most students would receive instruction using a “Learning Management System” (LMS) like Blackboard Course Sites or SeeSaw. The ability to navigate a LMS is essential for success in public schools and higher education. Technical colleges, community colleges, and four-year universities all require students to access content on LMS software.

Should KSSB be required to close school for a period of time due to COVID infections (or other reasons), we are prepared to move quickly to a ‘remote’ learning instructional approach. We have already prepared a schedule for each student should this become necessary. Given the persistent and growing infection rates across the state, we expect that disruption to on-campus learning will occur. **Again, KSSB’s “Remote Learning Handbook” is here: <https://bit.ly/2Eil2I7>**

KSSB will make every effort to make sure that **students have the equipment they need** to access these sites from home, including hardware, software, and accessories. **For students who are unable to access learning remotely** using a computer, we will provide instruction that parents can implement from home through existing “wiki” sites, phone calls, and/or Zoom meetings, as the parents desire.

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## **I**nstruction

KSSB will work with local schools to **reconvene IEP teams in the fall** to review progress toward IEP goals, and to determine any adjustments that need to be made as a result of the disruption of “in-person” learning in the spring of 2020.

In some ways, KSSB is at a distinct advantage, compared to most schools, when it comes to managing COVID-19 risks. Our campus is comprised of 10 acres, and we have numerous learning spaces (Irwin, Johnson, Vogel, Brighton, Edlund buildings, a large gym, a pool, etc). We also have a small student population and a very low pupil-to-staff ratio, which allows strict supervision. While we cannot eliminate all health risks, we can teach students how to manage these risks, protect themselves, and protect each other.

While there is much that scientists do not know about COVID-19 transmission, there is growing evidence that it is spread primarily through aerosolization of droplets and smaller particles emitted by breathing, talking, coughing, etc. The frequency of exposure and the ‘dose’ of the exposure appear to be factors in transmission. It is believed that masking, good ventilation, physical distancing, and hand washing can mitigate the risks of infection.

KSSB’s primary learning spaces are Johnson and Vogel buildings. **All classrooms in Johnson and Vogel buildings have windows** which can be opened to allow air flow year-round. At least one window in each room will be left open slightly to allow outside air to enter, improving air quality. However, this means children must be prepared to dress warmly. Fans will be disseminated to classrooms as another way to improve air circulation. Our HVAC system brings in outside air rather than recirculating inside air.

**Individual desks will be placed in elementary and secondary classrooms**, allowing students to have their own defined space a safe distance from other students. Our Life Skills and Transition classrooms have flexible seating and large rooms to permit distancing. When weather allows, students can use other spaces, even outdoors, such as our sensory garden for instruction. Our gym is very large and students can be spaced at a safe distance. Our pool and changing rooms are also quite large and students can be taught appropriate spacing in the shallow end of the pool.

While our cafeteria is large, it can become a bit crowded when everyone eats at the same time. Therefore, **we will have a ‘staggered’ lunch schedule** which will allow for greater spacing at tables and fewer students in the hallways at the same time. Lunches will also be delivered to specific classrooms, limiting the number of individuals in the cafeteria at any one time.

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Each classroom will have adequate supplies of Kleenex and hand sanitizer, and students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles instead of using communal water fountains. We anticipate our track and goal ball sports seasons will continue, with proper precautions, but decisions on goal ball will be made closer to the beginning of the season. We do not expect to offer wrestling as a sport. KSSB competes in the North Central Association of Schools for the Blind and typically travels to other states for goal ball, track, wrestling/cheerleading, and forensics competitions. On-site competitions have been canceled by NCASB. KSSB may elect to provide an end-of-season event on our campus.

## **B**lock Schedule

KSSB will **move to a block schedule for the 2020-2021 school year**. This will allow for more in-depth learning for students and minimize the time spent in hallways between classes. KSSB will dismiss Mondays -Thursdays at 3:30 p.m. and Fridays at 12:30 p.m. this year. The Friday earlier dismissal allows students who live far away to arrive home earlier for the weekend. Blocks will be arranged in the following time frames:

	MON-THUR	FRI	
Block 1:	8:00a - 9:30a	Period 1	8:00a - 8:45a
Block 2:	9:35a - 11:05a	Period 2	8:50a - 9:35a
Lunch:	11:10a - 11:40a	Period 3	9:40a - 10:25a
Block 3:	11:45a - 1:15p	Period 4	10:30a - 11:15a
Block 4:	1:20p - 2:50p	Lunch	11:20a - 11:50a
Eagle Time:	2:55p - 3:30p	Eagle Time	11:55a - 12:30

On Fridays, students will have the opportunity to participate in elective classes and they will have a “homeroom” (Eagle Time) that allows students to complete daily work or extend their learning through individual projects.

## **D**orm

Students staying in the dorm in the 2020-2021 school year **will not have roommates**, whether in the dormitory, apartment, or cottage. While learning to share space, getting along with others, and identifying shared living rules has always been an important part of the dormitory program, we believe keeping students distanced from one another will be the best way to ensure safety. KSSB’s dormitory has bathrooms that connect dormitory “suites” upstairs and “communal” bathrooms downstairs. Bathrooms will be disinfected regularly and students will be taught how to keep themselves safe while taking turns using a common bathroom.

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For **Sunday afternoon/evening drop-offs**, we ask that parents/family avoid entering the dormitory. Dorm staff can greet parents/family outside and receive medications, forms, or special instructions. Parents can call our dorm staff prior to arrival at **913.305.3050** to make arrangements for an exchange. If parents must enter the dorm, we will require a temperature check and ask that masks be worn at all times. For those needing to use the restroom, there is a bathroom available in Irwin building, next to the security office. We will work with transportation providers and request they follow the same protocols.

Afternoon and evening dorm activities will be conducted in smaller groups and staff will utilize multiple spaces and buildings on campus to conduct small group sessions (gym, library, track, sensory garden, Makerspace, etc.). Transition students will be separate from middle and high school students, when at all possible. Dinner in the cafeteria will be staggered and/or delivered to students. In milder weather, students can eat outside in the sensory garden. Students will be asked to wear masks when social distancing is not pragmatic. Masks will not be required when students are in their own dormitory room.

## **C**ompetency-Based Learning

Schools in Kansas are being encouraged by the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) to adapt a “competency-based” model of education in the 2020-2021 school year. On July 16th, KSDE released a comprehensive guide for schools called *Navigating Change* that prioritizes state standards, per grade bands (Pre-K-2; 3-5; 6-8; 9-12) and aligns these standards with competencies that students can demonstrate to show proficiency. In competency-based education, it’s about **what students know, and are able to do**, not how long it takes them to master the course materials.

KSSB will begin incorporating grade-band competencies into IEP goals and instruction, when possible. In many ways, KSSB has been using competencies as a metric to measure student progress on IEPs goals, especially for students with more significant support needs. For KSSB students, competencies are not just demonstrated in academics, but also in the Expanded Core Curriculum (Compensatory Skills, Orientation and Mobility, Social Interaction, Independent Living, Recreation and Leisure, Sensory Efficiency, Assistive Technology, Career Education, and Self-Determination). Therefore, we will continue to include ECC competencies in instruction, assessment, and IEP goals.

## **C**ommunicating with Parents

Our goal is to increase parent engagement and advocacy, using a variety of tools.

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During our Continuous Learning Plan (CLP) in the spring of 2020, we were able to increase our communication with parents. Many teachers indicated that more interaction with parents was one of the most positive things to emerge out of our CLP period. While using Zoom cannot replicate face-to-face interactions, many teachers found it to be a “bridge” between home and school. Zoom will continue to be a part of our strategy, as we provide updates, host IEP meetings, and share successes from your child’s time here at KSSB. We are seeking parents’ feedback on information they find helpful and providing webinars that address issues in blindness and low vision, such as: technology, transition, IEP rights, career and vocational education, Orientation and Mobility, Independent Living Skills, etc.

## **S**ocial/Emotional Support

We expect that students may return to KSSB in the fall with heightened anxieties. KSSB prides itself on providing a nurturing environment combined with high expectations. We are committed to providing students a safe place to return in August, and our contracted social worker will provide expanded individual and group counseling. Some students may need more support than what we are able to provide, and in those cases we will work with parents and /or the local district to locate community resources that can help. KSSB’s contract Social Worker, Ronald Wilson, will be reaching out to families regularly to see what supports might be needed.

## **F**inally

KSSB is here to provide students with a sense of stability and consistency in at time of upheaval. We need your help, more than ever, to ensure that students receive every opportunity to succeed. We intend to provide new and exciting programs and spaces for learning this year, including:

- New, accessible playground
- Preschool Enrichment program (Irwin Building)
- Renovated MakerSpace (Brighton Recreation Building)
- Mobile STEM Unit
- Updated kitchens in Edlund Dormitory
- Improvements to our pool
- Virtual 5K Run and Walk sponsored by the KC Blind All-Stars <https://runsignup.com/Race/KS/KansasCity/TheKCBlindAllStarsFoundationrace>
- Family Forum, a workshop for parents
- Space Camp (for 2021-2022)
- Braille Celebrations
- Boys and Girls Weekends

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- Tech Clubs
  - Podcasting
  - Online Computer Science, Braille, and Tech classes  
...and more

We will adjust these offerings based on health risks associated with COVID-19, and the community's control of this virus. As always, please follow our **website** at [www.kssb.net](http://www.kssb.net) and our social media pages: **Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/KSBlind/> and **Twitter** @KansasBlind. Our parent/student handbook is here: <https://bit.ly/3jNcAAR>  
Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,



Jon Harding  
Superintendent  
Kansas State School for the Blind  
913.645.5456  
jharding@kssdb.org