



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
 Department for Community Based Services
 Division of Protection and Permanency**

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The intent of this correspondence is to provide information on the opening of school during COVID-19 and the 2020-2021 school year. This correspondence will also offer guidance on acceptable school attendance for foster children. The Kentucky Department of Education, Department of Public Health, Governor’s Office and school districts have been in collaboration to ensure a safe return of students for the 2020-2021 school year. While general guidance has been issued by the Governor’s office to the districts, each district is responsible for implementing how students will safely return to school. As students return, guidance will be updated as necessary.

Enrollment of Foster Children

All children committed to CHFS are required to be enrolled in school. Foster children shall not be home-schooled. During COVID-19, NTI (non-traditional instruction) has been utilized by districts throughout the state. NTI is not the same as home-school. NTI is offered to provide consistency in instruction during times when school would otherwise have to be cancelled. In homes where the foster parent chooses to homeschool their biological children, CHFS committed children must still be enrolled in school.

Types of Instruction

As districts plan for re-opening, several options are being considered. Some districts will offer a form of in-person instruction while others may offer in-person and NTI. The decision between in-person and virtual instruction or NTI for children in care should be made following communication among foster parents, the child’s DCBS worker, PCC/PCP case manager, and school to determine the most appropriate setting for the child. In situations where termination of parental rights has not occurred, the birth parent should also be included in the discussion and



decision-making. Documentation of such consultation should be maintained in the child's case file. In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, further consultation with DCBS regional management may be necessary.

Special Considerations

For children with special healthcare needs, consideration should be given to their medical and behavioral health needs. Consultation with the medically complex team may be needed. For children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, consultation with the school should occur to ensure that the child receives the appropriate services in accordance with his/her IEP or 504 plan.

Safety and Well-Being

Foster parents and staff will need to follow all safety guidelines that are set forth by the district (i.e., face mask, good hand hygiene, etc.). Children who are not well should not be sent to school. Previously issued protocol shall be followed for any child who is symptomatic and/or has had exposure to COVID19.

If you have questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Holly Davis at hollyc.davis@ky.gov or Sherry Postlewaite at Sherry.Postlewaite@ky.gov.