



WALTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Re-opening Plan: Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Superintendent A. Russell Hughes has developed a Re-opening Plan for the Walton County School District (WCSD). The plan, which was created through a Re-opening Task Force which began meeting in May, has been vetted by local experts, including the Florida Department of Health and Walton County Emergency Management. The plan is a lengthy, internal document written as directions for employees, but this FAQ sheet has been written specifically with parents and students in mind. As you read over this handout, please remember the COVID-19 situation is a fluid one. Because the re-opening of schools is a local decision, we will continue to watch and learn from several data points, including COVID-19 numbers and locations, CDC and state guidelines, and Florida's Re-open Plan, so there may be revisions to the plan as the summer progresses. If you have any questions or concerns, please send a text to 850.204.9667 or call 850.892.1100.

When do students return to school?

- Students return to school on August 10, 2020.
- The WCSD will have three educational options for students for the fall semester (August-December). Students can choose one of the following:
 - Traditional school (in brick and mortar classrooms, five days a week)
 - Walton Virtual School (virtually at home with enrollment in WVS)
 - Innovative Learning (virtually at home with enrollment in your current school; verbal and visual interaction with an instructor and peers five days a week)
- All three options will be explained on our website in full next week. Innovative Learning is a new option that was released Monday, July 6th through Emergency Order No. 2020-EO-06 by the Florida Commissioner of Education. As the district fully explores this new option, more information will be provided to parents next week to choose the setting that best fits their families' needs.

- Along with the detailed explanation of the three options, which parents will receive next week, a link to an electronic survey will be provided. Surveys, which are called “Student Intent Form for the 2020-2021 School Year”, will be due by Monday, July 20. The information gleaned will allow WCSD to better prepare and make crucial decisions regarding re-opening to include hiring personnel, ordering supplies, creating bus routes, and planning for safety.

What will brick and mortar schools look like in August?

- The WCSD will follow any mandated guidelines by the CDC and state, and all recommended guidelines will be reviewed and considered for the safety of students. Specific items in the Re-opening Plan may be lifted and/or strengthened to best fit our community and/or schools and current conditions through this fluid situation.
- The WCSD will utilize Florida class size standards, which means an average of 18 students or less in pre-kindergarten through 3rd grade classrooms; 22 students or less in 4th through 8th grade classrooms; and 25 students or less in 9th through 12th grade classrooms. Desks in classrooms will be spaced accordingly and with social distancing in mind.
- Student schedules may be different than in years past, including staggered start and end times, as well as staggered bells so that traffic in halls and common areas can be decreased throughout campus.
- Student travel throughout campus will be limited. For example, primary art and music teachers may conduct lessons in homeroom classroom. Schools may also provide breakfast and lunch in classrooms and/or other innovative ideas, such as outdoor cafeteria seating, to cut down on traffic and large gatherings. Schools will limit student numbers in large areas, such as recess, lunch, busses, etc. Assigned seats or groups may be utilized to keep similar groups of students together.
- If a student or employee falls ill at a school, the individual school in question may be deep cleaned, which could impact scheduling. Teachers will be required to have emergency plans in place throughout the year in case they are absent or in case instruction moves temporarily to a virtual setting.
- If the state or Walton County regresses on Florida’s Phase System, the WCSD is prepared to move to a virtual setting and has an Instructional Continuity Plan ready.
- The WCSD has a Pandemic Plan in place and a Crisis Response Team to address specific issues as they arise in regard to health and safety due to COVID-19.

What are the health and safety precautions that will be put into place in brick and mortar schools?

- All students and staff will be required to thoroughly wash and/or sanitize their hands upon arrival at school and will be encouraged to do so throughout the day during transitions such as lunch, recess, etc. Soap and/or hand sanitizer will be available throughout the day as well, and hand sanitization stations will be added throughout heavy traffics areas.
- Social distancing will be followed when feasible.
- Employees will be required to wear a mask when social distancing is not feasible.
- Students are strongly urged to wear a mask when social distancing is not feasible.
- Masks will be provided at the beginning of the school year to all employees and staff who need one. Individual consideration will be given regarding the wearing of masks, including situations where individuals are asthmatic or suffer from respiratory illness. Students and employees may bring their own masks from home, but masks from home should follow the intent of the dress code and be appropriate for school (for example, inappropriate symbols or phrases and/or bandana patterns would be not be acceptable).

Will schools screen individuals for COVID-19?

- Upon entering WCSD facilities, all employees will be screened daily for COVID-19. The check list is guided by CDC recommendations, which includes symptom and exposure questions. Temperature checks are to ensure all adults are below the 100.1 threshold.
- Student screening will take place at home by parents. Parents will be provided the screening questions in advance to August 10th and will be asked to take their child's temperature daily before sending their child to school. If children do not pass the screening questions and/or have a temperature above 100.1, students should stay home. At school, students may be screened randomly. If students fail the screener, they will be sent home. It will be important for all parents to have updated contact information at their child's school this school year.
- All employees conducting screenings will be trained by a Florida Department of Health doctor.

What will happen if a child or employee contracts COVID-19?

- If a child or employee is sick with symptoms of COVID-19, they will be encouraged to stay home and consult a doctor. To return to school, a doctor's clearance and/or a negative COVID-19 test will be required. Students who provide this documentation will

have their absences excused and will not be reported for truancy. Students who are excused will also be provided with make-up and/or virtual work.

- WCSD is continuing to increase technology resources for those students who may need to quarantine and complete work from home.
- If a child or employee gets sick during the school day with symptoms of COVID-19, each facility has a designated isolation room that is not connected to the schools' larger HVAC system. Isolation will occur until a student can safely be released to a parent.
- If the WCSD believes COVID-19 exposure has taken place with either employees or students, with guidance from the Florida Department of Health, parents will be notified as appropriate and confidentiality will be followed.
- A nurse is on every WCSD school campus. Nurses can provide screening, care, and guidance for students and employees regarding COVID-19 and staying healthy.

How will school buses adjust?

- When parents complete their "Student Intent Form for the 2020-2021 School Year", if parents choose traditional school, they will also be asked if their child will utilize WCSD bus transportation.
- Once the number of students who need transportation can be gleaned, the Transportation Department will release bus routes and school start times for the 2020-2021 school year. Please know that school start times may need to be staggered in greater length than in previous years.
- Students will sit no more than two per seat, and seats will be assigned. Siblings and families will be placed together if possible. Students will be required to wear a mask while on the bus.
- Buses will have masks and hand sanitizer in touchless dispensers.
- Buses will be sanitized between routes, and bus drivers will be trained on proper sanitization procedures.
- We also appreciate and support parents who can drive their children to school to help with our school bus driver shortage and our efforts to social distance.

How will school facilities adjust?

- The Facilities Department has been proactive in ordering an abundance of supplies including cleaning solution, hand sanitizer dispenser stations, and more.
- All custodians and plant managers will be required to attend a training on the proper use of COVID-19 related cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitation products, and these individuals will train teachers and other school employees on proper disinfecting procedures in classrooms and common areas.

- Facilities, including playground equipment, furniture, door handles, computers, and common areas, will be cleaned often and thoroughly throughout the day. Deep cleaning will also take place regularly once students and employees are off campus, such as Friday afternoons, on days off, and/or on weekends.
- Teachers and schools will be urged to put away non-essential items in classrooms in order to provide more room for social distancing.
- Schools will use signage and other items, such as staggering class changes, to direct the flow of traffic throughout schools, especially hallways, as well as cues to social distance.

What other changes can we expect?

- Water fountains may be turned off throughout schools to decrease exposure. Instead, students will be able to bring a water bottle from home.
- Schools may choose not to use lockers and other storage areas, as students will not be able to congregate in large groups.
- Field trips and most travel will be canceled and/or postponed as a precautionary measure until further notice. Large gatherings, such as school assemblies and pep rallies, may be minimized or held outside to keep students safe. When appropriate, field trips and/or other activities may be held virtually.
- Schools will continue to monitor information from the Florida High School Athletics Association (FHSAA) and other state and local groups to ensure the safety of our schools' extracurricular activities and organizations.
- School visitors will be minimized and encouraged not to enter beyond the safe and secure lobby. If a visitor must enter, the individual will be screened and expected to wear a mask.

What impact (if any) will these changes have on academics?

- Students in all three of Walton's educational options will take diagnostic assessments to determine current mastery of content. The information from these assessments will assist teachers in preparing to differentiate instruction as needed.
- Teachers have been trained on how to address gaps or deficiencies in learning throughout the school year along with current grade level standards so that students will not fall behind, even if virtual instruction occurs again in the future.
- Face shields will be provided and utilized by all designated speech and language teachers, which can include phonics instructors, speech pathologists, foreign language teachers, and more.
- An Instructional Continuity Plan has been developed and will be implemented as necessary throughout the school year. If students must work from home and/or

virtually for periods of time due to school campus closures or the cleaning of a particular school, the WCSD has an Instructional Continuity Plan in place and will help support parents and students with virtual resources as needed.

In addition to academics, how will we continue to support students in brick and mortar schools?

- Students will be taught best practices for personal hygiene. Specific skills such as correct hand washing, how to cover a cough/sneeze, and social distancing will be part of classroom procedures, especially at the elementary level.
- Students will be advised to not share personal items such as food, water bottles, supplies, etc.
- Students will be taught character education attributed to new social adjustments, such as patience, personal space, and personal responsibility.
- WCSD will provide mental health resources and counselors to students who may need additional support.
- Additional efforts will be taken to provide school supplies and possibly thermometers to students as needed. Please talk with your child's school if you need assistance.

We hope this document provides answers and clarity regarding schools opening on August 10. As a reminder, additional information will be provided next week regarding the three educational options for students. Please continue to check back for more information. If you have additional concerns or questions, please let us know. Thank you for your support.