

**Mecklenburg County Public Schools**  
**Fall 2020 Reopening**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

***Why face to face for Pre-K through 5 and not secondary?***

Laying a strong educational foundation is critical to the future success of our students. Over the past six months, many parents have come to realize just how difficult it is to teach students, especially young students; this is very specialized work. Due to COVID-19, our resources, especially transportation resources, are severely limiting our ability to transport students with some degree of social distancing (21 students per bus rather than the usual 55 to 65 elementary students on each bus). Secondary students are more mature, more self-reliant, more self-directed, more able to access remote learning, and should already have a strong educational foundation. We determined to allocate our transportation resources to get those elementary students to school, safely, and to try to establish and build upon that essential educational foundation.

***What about secondary students who have special learning needs?***

Secondary students with individualized education plans, Section 504 plans, or students who are English Language Learners (ELL) will be invited to return to school for face to face instruction. School personnel will be calling these families directly to invite them to return.

***We chose remote learning. How will we receive our device and school materials?***

Secondary school students and elementary students in grades 3, 4, and 5 whose families are choosing remote learning will hear from their school directly (via call-out, web page, social media) notifying them of the date/time for them to pick up their school-issued electronic device (Chromebook) and any other required materials (workbooks, etc.). The window for device pickup will be from August 31st through September 3<sup>rd</sup> and there will be a schedule to follow.

***My student is in Pre-K, kindergarten, first, or second grade. If they don't have a Chromebook, how will they learn remotely?***

Teachers are planning lessons that will include some online components/options, but also activities that require neither device nor Internet access. Kindergarten, first, and second grade remote learners may request a device if they have no device at home.

***Can we still choose remote learning?***

We appreciate the response from parents over the summer letting us know their student(s) will attend remotely - and we have been continually updating our school records with that information. Should parents of elementary students still wish to choose the remote learning option, please call your school directly as soon as possible so we may plan appropriately.

***How will we get to meet teachers?***

This year, unfortunately, we'll not have our regular back to school events. Teachers will have virtual business cards on their landing pages for all students to access. They will also have a brief video (not to exceed three minutes) to introduce themselves. Finally, teachers will have scheduled 'live time' during the week to interact with students and even parents if that is needed.

***What will remote learning look like for elementary students?***

Students will be a part of a regular teacher's class, attendance is required, and students must demonstrate mastery of new content in order to earn their grades. The average elementary classroom teacher currently has around 12 face to face students and 6 remote students. Remote learners in grades 3, 4, and 5 will be provided a Chromebook with Wi-Fi capability to access materials and resources. All teachers will have a "landing page" for their students that will serve as a starting place for all content, communication, and resources. Assignments will be made available daily for remote learning students – this will be one means of taking attendance – and work will be reviewed and graded. Teachers will live stream some content introduction and then record that for viewing by the remote learners. Students will have access to other teacher's content introduction as well and that should be a continual source of new teaching. Links to multiple resources or tools will be available on the landing page. Teachers will have live time scheduled for at least twice each week (the start day/time of this live interaction will be shared on the teacher's landing page) for students (and even parents) to interact. Students will also receive assignments from their 'specials' teachers (art, music, health/PE, library/media) via that teacher's landing page. This means of instruction will require considerable parent/adult supervision, monitoring, guidance, encouragement. Establishing structures and routines for students learning at home will be essential for student success.

### ***What will face to face learning look like for elementary students?***

Small classes – no more than sixteen in any elementary classroom but the majority will have fourteen or fewer. Sixteen is important, though, as that is the number that can be seated in our classrooms six feet or more apart. At that spacing, we expect students should be able to remove their masks for some considerable portion of the school day. Students will be kept together as a cohort all day. Specials teachers – art, music, library/media, and health/PE – will come to them in their homeroom classroom. They will have recess – again keeping together as a cohort. There will be routines and structures in place for daily wellness checks, personal hygiene, restroom breaks, and eating both breakfast and lunch. School will dismiss at 2:30 during the time we are operating both remote and face to face learning. If a student has any signs of illness or fever, they must be kept home, please, for everyone's safety. Positive cases potentially could shut down a school.

### ***What will remote learning look like for secondary students?***

Students will be assigned to four classes for the first semester with their regular teacher. Period attendance is required, and students must demonstrate mastery of new content in order to earn their grades. Remote learners will be provided a Chromebook with Wi-Fi capability to access materials and resources. All teachers will have a "landing page" for their students that will serve as a starting place for all content, communication, and resources. Assignments will be made available daily for each class for remote learning students – this will be one means of taking attendance – and work will be reviewed and graded. Teachers will live stream thirty minutes of each course period and record and post that video. Students will have access to other teacher's content introduction as well and that should be a continual source of new teaching. Links to multiple resources or tools will be available on the landing page. Assigned tasks should be designed for students to access meaningful learning themselves while framed, guided, and monitored by the teacher. Additionally, each teacher will have live time scheduled for at least forty-five minutes daily (the start day/time of this live interaction for each course/period will be shared on the teacher's landing page) for students (and even parents) to interact. While

secondary students are generally more able to self-direct, this means of instruction will require considerable parent/adult supervision, monitoring, guidance, and encouragement. Establishing structures and routines for students learning at home will be essential for student success.

***Will our elementary students have to wear face coverings all day?***

With the numbers of parents choosing remote learning for their elementary age students, our elementary classrooms have the space for students to appropriately social distance (six feet or more between people). This means they should be able to remove face coverings while seated, ideally. Bus riders will be required to wear face coverings during the time on the bus. Anytime the students are up and moving about they will need to have face coverings.

***How will we prevent students from cheating on assignments?***

Our first check on this is that assignments from teachers should be such that students must create original approaches to demonstrating their understanding – not simply multiple choice assignments. All students will use our new Honor Code this year when submitting assignments, projects, or assessments. The statement is generally: “I affirm that I will not give or receive any unauthorized help on this exam/assignment/project, and that all work will be my own.” We want to instill integrity and a sense of pride in our students and, together, with parents, teachers, and our honor code, we can.

***Are grading practices being adjusted for this year?***

Yes. We are shifting our grading to place more emphasis on projects, coursework, homework/participation, and daily assessments rather than the traditional ‘test’ or ‘exam’. It must be stressed, however, that our instructional model is for new instruction. Students must demonstrate mastery of new content in order to pass/be promoted.

***What if we chose virtual/remote learning for our elementary age student or we have a secondary student and do not have Internet access?***

We are in the process of securing a number of devices that will allow, if within cellular service, Wi-Fi access for the student’s division-issued Chromebook. Please let your school know if you are in this category so we may track and potentially get one of these devices to you. If there is no access, it will still be necessary to get the student and their Chromebook to connect regularly. This could be accomplished by driving to any of our schools where you may access public Wi-Fi from your car. Further, the county board of supervisors is planning to add Wi-Fi access points in some of the more remote areas of the county as well. More on this to come.

***Will meals be provided for virtual/remote learning students?***

Yes, it is our hope and desire to provide meals for all of our students who are remote learners. All Mecklenburg County Public Schools are part of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program due to the high number of students in poverty. As such, all of our students will receive breakfast and lunch at no cost to families. Details are being worked out on how meal distributions will take place, so please monitor our website and social media for more information as the plans develop.