



WSD Elementary Schools

Blue Bell - Lower Gwynedd - Shady Grove - Stony Creek

Dear Wissahickon Elementary Parents and Guardians:

We know that you have been inundated with a significant amount of information during the last several weeks, whether that be from weekly updates from the District, email communications, phone calls or School Board Meetings. The upcoming days present a difficult decision for your family to make regarding what is the best option for your child, to start the 2020-2021 school year. It is our hope that sending you this FAQ document may help provide you with some additional guidance. In the recent weeks, we have been sent many emails and received numerous phone calls and we are making every attempt to include the questions that are most often asked. The deadline of July 31 is required for all families to choose between 100% Virtual or 100% In School. Your patience, grace, and understanding in these unprecedented times is greatly appreciated. Please continue to be well, healthy, and enjoy your summer vacation with your children and families.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bialka, Dr. Lupo, Ms. Sasin, Dr. Walsh

How will class lists be determined for the virtual and in-person classes?

Teachers have already created classes that are balanced and parent input forms that were submitted in the spring will be taken into consideration.

What kind of professional development will teachers receive prior to the start of the year?

The curriculum department is working on a robust cadre of workshops tailored toward the teachers' needs and evolving technology platforms.

When will the children in the virtual classes receive the needed technology device?

The technology department will send out more information about the distribution method later in August.

What will morning and end of day procedures look like?

We will be adding more staff to help with car line and when buses arrive in the morning they will be unloaded one bus at a time, and dismissal at the end of the day will have buses loaded one at a time. The students in carline will be practicing social distance while they wait for their parents.



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What about lunch?

Students will be reminded to wash/sanitize their hands before and after eating. Multiple hand sanitizer stations will be placed near all cafeterias. Students will be seated with 6 feet between students and all facing the same direction. Masks may be removed while children are eating and drinking. We will utilize cafeterias and nearby spaces, as needed, to provide as much social distance as possible. Lunch schedules will be adjusted to provide additional time and lessen the number of students in line.

What other safety protocols are in place?

Daily prescreening will be expected from all families and staff to ensure no one is coming to school with any COVID symptoms. Guidance from our nurses will be provided to assist in this area. Our HVAC and ventilation systems will be adjusted to provide increased movement of outside air. Water fountains will be not available. Water bottle filling stations will be placed by all cafeterias to allow students to refill water bottles from home. There will be increased availability of technology at the elementary level to eliminate the need for shared devices. In fact, each child will receive their own device to use in school. There will be minimal shared equipment in all areas. Any shared equipment will be sanitized frequently and between use.

What about recess and encores?

We will continue to offer both. Recess numbers will be decreased by elongating the lunch periods (likely one to two classes at a time). Homeroom classes will be kept together during recess to prevent cohorts of students from clustering together. Students will not be required to wear masks when active, and more than 6 feet apart, and will be taught appropriate activities to promote social distancing. Hand washing and/or sanitizing will be utilized after recess. Encores will continue to be offered at all levels. In some instances, encore classes may be held in the homerooms to minimize student movement, with a possible exception of PE.

What is the communication plan if someone in a school tests positive for COVID 19?

Classmates and others with direct contact (within 6 feet for at least 10 minutes) will be notified and increased health checks will be followed for those individuals at the direction of the school nurse. Others in the school will be notified of the positive case, told that they were not in direct contact, and asked to continue to self-monitor their symptoms. The Montgomery



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County Department of Health will continue to communicate with families through contact tracing procedures and will also determine when a student or staff member is able to return to school. This is customary with any contagion in the school. Decisions to quarantine will be made in conjunction with the Montgomery County Department of Health.

What if my child has allergies or another chronic medical condition that often cause some of these same symptoms?

Parents should communicate ahead of time (if possible) with the school nurse and alert them to these conditions, so that a plan is in place in the event symptoms develop during school. For example, in order to differentiate between asthma and COVID-19 related shortness of breath, when a student uses his/her inhaler, the symptoms should improve as expected. Or a student with chronic allergies having a mild cough and runny nose whose symptoms may be explained through clear improvement with an anti-histamine. Consultation with the nurse is recommended for further clarification.

If we elect virtual, is our "Spot" at the school guaranteed in January when semester is up if we want to return to in-person then?

Yes, your child will have a place at the home school.

Can we access the library / librarian to take out books during the school year?

Yes, you can use Destiny and arrangements to be made with the librarian on when to pick them up in the lobby of the school.

Can the children access library books if we are on the virtual plan?

See above.

Will virtual students be able to receive a device from school as well as the books and consumable workbooks?

Yes, communication regarding the distribution of these materials will be shared later in August.

If we choose the in school option, and schools are closed by the governor during the semester, what will happen? Will instruction be different from the students who chose the virtual option? Will they just join the "virtual" crew or do something different?



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If school is closed then each child will receive a device to use and the homeroom teacher will become the instructor for the program, just online. The structure of the program will mimic the typical school day.

If we choose the in-school option and cases spike in our area, we are uncomfortable with it but schools remain open, are we allowed to keep our child home, even though we chose the in school option?

The school district is asking for a semester (end of January) commitment for planning purposes. It would create an imbalance in class instruction if students join the group later, so we are asking for a commitment by July 31st and an information form will be sent out in the coming days.

Program Aspect	Elementary Option A In-Person Return to School		Elementary Option B Fully Virtual
School Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular School-day Hours 	OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular School-day Hours
Days Attending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every Day of the Week (M-F) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every Day of the Week (M-F)
Class Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with District Guidelines 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with District Guidelines
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wissahickon Teacher 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wissahickon Teacher
Instructional Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Instructs in the Classroom 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher Instructs Synchronously from Home
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, PIE Time, Encore Classes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English-Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, PIE Time, Encore Classes
Encore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art, Guidance, Library, and Music Taught in Homeroom – Health/PE Outdoors/Gym 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Art, Guidance, Library, Health/PE, and Music Taught Synchronously or Asynchronously
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-Minute Lunch w/Social Distancing Guidelines 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-Minute Lunch
Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Morning or Mid-Afternoon / Periodic Brain Breaks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Morning or Mid-Afternoon / Periodic Brain Breaks
Computer Access & Tech Platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using District Computer Devices & Tech Platforms in the Classroom – District-Issued Computers Provided for Student Use at Home During School Closures 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using District Computer Devices & Tech Platforms - District-Issued Computers Provided for Student Use at Home During School Closures
Reading / ESL Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading and ELD Intervention Services Provided During the School Day 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading and ELD Intervention Services Provided Remotely During the School Day
Special Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP / GIEP Support & Services and Related Services During the School Day 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IEP / GIEP Support & Services and Related Services Provided Asynchronously and/or Synchronously During the School Day
Large Group Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Large Group Gatherings – Concerts / Assemblies 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Large Group Gatherings – Concerts / Assemblies



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If my child's evaluation report stated that further testing was needed once school reopened, when and how will the testing be conducted?

Testing will resume once we are back in school. The psychologist will contact you with a dates and times for you to bring your child in for testing. Please know Student services are following CDC guidelines during testing. Your student will need to wear a mask, and parents will not be allowed in the building to wait for your child in the building. The testing room will be disinfected, there are table shields between the evaluator and the student, and the evaluator will wear a face shield during testing.

How will students in the virtual program have their needs met per their IEP?

A special education teacher will be assigned to all students with IEPs who choose virtual instruction and all support and services will be implemented according to the IEP.

How will the district accommodate students that have an IEP?

Wissahickon will ensure that students are provided FAPE and continue to receive access to related services while in the school.

If there are enough virtual only GIEP kids in a specific grade, would there be an actual class just for them (meaning they would be taught together virtually all day/5 days a week) or are you making a "pull out" virtual class just for them?

If we have a caseload of virtual students for a teacher we will have one teacher provide the gifted support; not the general education content. The gifted support will not be five (5) days per week. The gifted support will be the push-in and pull-out model that occurs in the brick and mortar school.

What would that magic number (round about) be to be able to make a gifted pull-out virtual class vs. one that is somehow combined with the in-person gifted kids?

That would depend on the overall caseload of gifted students across the elementary schools. Currently, the gifted teacher's caseload is about 25-28. The caseloads will be equitable. Student services will have a better understanding the beginning weeks of August.



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Will virtual gifted classes be mixed with GIEP kids from all 4 elementary schools if there isn't enough from one specific elementary school?

This will all depend on how many virtual gifted students we will have. It is a possibility. Student services will have a better understanding the beginning weeks of August.

What is the plan if there is not enough GIEP students in a given grade that choose virtual only to form a virtual class? Has the school thought about both scenarios yet?

We are not just looking at a specific grade level. We are looking at the gifted program as a whole. No matter how many students chose virtual, the gifted support program will remain the same instructional method as a brick and mortar school. As in a brick and mortar school, we may combine grade levels, provide virtual instruction with brick and mortar class, provide smaller virtual class, etc.

Will a gifted teacher from a particular school be the virtual gifted teacher?

Not necessarily. It will be a WSD teacher. However specifics to the programming and whom will be teaching the courses will not be determined until early August.

Can my child come to the brick and mortar building just to receive gifted support services if we chose virtual learning?

No, if you chose virtual learning the gifted support program will be virtual.

How can better air circulation be achieved in a building without operable windows?

The ventilation systems are designed to replace the air in the building with fresh air numerous times every hour. This occurs without opening the windows. The District plans to open this system to 100%. This will give the building the maximum amount of air changes allowable by the system. The result may be that the air conditioning does not cool as well as it could because the system will be bringing more warm air into the building than it is designed for to provide the most efficient circulation of outside air. Opening the windows could bring in more fresh air, but as long as the ventilation system is working, it will be circulating fresh outside air.



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What does social distancing look like for elementary students?

During the first days of school teachers always review classroom routines. Expectations will be reviewed with all students about the importance of maintaining social distance. We envision teachers using a meter/yard stick or other visuals to physically show students what social distance might look like. Procedures will establish the rules for using the bathroom, getting out of their seats, and other routines but through the lens of the pandemic we are facing.

Will every child receive a device this school year?

All students K-5 will receive either a Chromebook (Gr. K-2) or a Dell laptop (Gr. 3-5) for virtual learning and in the event of a school closure they will be sent home with the students.

How will the district enforce social distancing for students and staff?

All desks will be spaced apart to the maximum extent possible, likely four to six feet depending on the room and the enrollment. When feasible, students will be assigned seating in the classrooms, cafeteria, and on buses. All desks will face the instructor. All other furniture will be removed from the classroom except for the teacher desk.

How will the district limit student movement in the building?

At the elementary level, strict traffic patterns will be enforced within the hallways and/or stairwells to limit contact among individuals. Signage promoting social distancing will be provided in the classrooms, restrooms, hallways, sanitizing stations, cafeteria, and communal spaces for both staff and students to remind individuals to limit clustering. The use of cubbies will be utilized only if they are individualized and separated. In cases where that is not possible, student materials will be kept in and around the student's desk area. The master schedule at the elementary level will also reflect an increase in lunch periods and breaks for grade levels to reduce the clustering of students and staff, to promote social distancing, and to allow for movement breaks.

How will school breakfast, lunches, and snacks be handled?

The school lunch program will continue to be available. A grab and go breakfast will be offered before school to be eaten in the classroom. Safe snacks will be expected and communicated by the homeroom teachers.



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Social distancing will be practiced to the greatest extent possible during snack time, which may lead to staggered snack times.

How will students be able to use the bathrooms safely?

Some classrooms have individual bathrooms. Some buildings have public bathrooms. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently and will use the hallway bathrooms one at a time from each classroom.

Where will students store their materials throughout the day?

The district will reduce the amount of student tools and resources needed to lessen materials transitioning between home and school. If a backpack is necessary, it will be hung on the back of the student's chair to avoid congregating at shared spaces. Additionally, the district will minimize the sharing of materials in the classroom and on the playground. Student materials will be stored at their desk or individual cubbies if available.

Will students be wearing masks?

Yes. We will be following the Governor's order. If there is a medical issue that will prohibit the wearing of a mask, the family should reach out to the counselor, nurse, or case manager so it may be documented in the appropriate 504 or IEP.

Will the district restrict visitors from entering the school?

Only essential visitors will be allowed to enter the school building. All essential visitors will be required to follow the same safety guidelines as all other school personnel. The district will offer virtual meetings whenever possible.

How will the district ensure students and staff are washing/sanitizing their hands regularly?

Staff and students will wash or sanitize hands before/after lunch, after recess, and before/after other transitional times. Signage promoting proper hygiene will be visible in locations such as classrooms, restrooms, hallways, sanitizing stations, communal spaces for both staff and students, etc. Teachers will be spending time at the beginning of the year reviewing healthy hygiene and hand washing practices; we are hopeful that parents will practice this at home as well.



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What is the cleaning protocol going to be for classrooms?

General disinfecting will begin after morning arrival and continue throughout the day. Custodial staff will disinfect high-contact building areas, such as doors, handles, railings and tables. Hallway restrooms will be cleaned and sanitized mid-day. Teaching staff will be provided with disinfectant materials for their classroom. In the evening, the custodial team will disinfect buildings by spraying and wiping surfaces with an EPA/CDC approved hospital-grade disinfectant on surfaces such as walls, floors, doors, knobs and furniture, with concentration on high-contact areas. In the event that urgent deep-cleaning is necessary, the Building Supervisor will close the area and begin heavy disinfecting procedures; as per CDC guidelines, the area should be closed for 24 hours, or as long as practical before re-entering.

What will PE classes look like?

We will have PE classes, as it is a state requirement for PE instruction. The HPE Department is also consulting the guidance from their National Associations, however students will always be six feet apart and no contact games will be included in the curriculum. The activities will keep students active but will be very different than prior years. We will utilize outdoor spaces for PE instruction, as much as possible.