



Wissahickon High School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this communication finds you doing well! I know that you are faced with a challenging decision about the best “fit” for your student and your family regarding our hybrid or virtual models; there is no perfect option in this imperfect world. Since the last FAQ was sent out last week, I have been in communication with many parents and I thought it might be helpful to share some additional frequently asked questions.

Hopefully, this document, along with the 2 previous documents ([FAQ: Hybrid vs. Virtual Options at WHS: July 23, 2020](#) and [Reopening Details from the Principals: Secondary Schools: July 16, 2020](#)) will support you and your family with your decision. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have additional questions.

Q: If I choose the virtual option for my student, when can he/she return to in-person schooling?

A: If you select the virtual option, you are making that decision for the entire first semester, which ends on January 22, 2021. You will have the option to return to WHS in the second semester.

Q: Will students' temperatures be taken at school?

A: No, we will not be taking temperatures at school or as students load the bus. We are asking families (and staff) to pre-screen for symptoms every morning to ensure no one is coming to school with any COVID symptoms. Guidance from our nurses will be provided to assist in this area.

Q: Will students have access to water fountains?

A: All water fountains will be closed, but students will have access to water bottle filling stations. Students are encouraged to bring water bottles to school.

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

A: Classmates and others with direct contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) will be notified and increased health checks will be followed for those individuals at the direction of the school nurse and County Health Department. All families will be notified that we had a positive case and informed that they were not in direct contact. For those in direct contact, the Montgomery County Department of Health will 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. Students who are quarantined and who are in our WVA will continue with their coursework; students who are quarantined and who are participating in our hybrid plan will work with their teacher on accessing the missed content.

Q: How can better air circulation be achieved in classrooms without operable windows?

A: The ventilation systems in our school 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 to provide the most efficient circulation of outside air. (Similarly, in the colder months, the building may be cooler than normal because of the circulation of outside air.) The key will be to dress in layers!

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

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

Q: Will students be able to sanitize desks and chairs?

A: Classrooms will have disinfectant for staff to use. We also encourage families to send students to school with their own personal wipes and sanitizer to use throughout the day.

Q: Will students wear their masks during lunch?

A: Students will wear their mask when walking through the cafeteria and when purchasing their lunch. The only time students will remove their mask is when eating. All students will be seated 6 feet apart during lunch and will be scheduled to eat in the Upper Café, Lower Café, Auditorium, or Audion.

Q: Will student arrival and dismissal be the same as in past years?

A: When students arrive to school, they will report directly to homeroom, rather than congregating in our lobby areas. (Homeroom assignments will be changed to fit our alphabetical hybrid model so we have less students in each classroom.) In the afternoon, we will stagger dismissal as buses arrive.

Q: How will student parking work this year?

A: Mr. Yost sent out information to all juniors and seniors about purchasing a parking pass for the first semester only. We will have a second semester opportunity as well. Please review the information that was sent out and please email Mr. Yost at wyst@wsdweb.org if you have additional questions.

Q: Do I need to complete the survey if I want my student to attend school following the hybrid schedule?

A: No. You only need to submit a response by 12:00 on July 31st if you are opting to participate in our virtual option through the WVA.

Q: What days will my student attend school following the hybrid schedule?

A: We will be sending out a calendar with the hybrid rotation days soon. We will also have opportunities for blended families (with different last names in the same household) to opt to send their students on the same day.

Q: Who teaches the classes in the WVA?

A: All of the teachers are certified and employed by MVP. They teach asynchronous lessons and students are expected to complete the work independently on their own time. WVA teachers are also available for support and our WHS teachers and WHS counselors are also available for support.

Q: What is the grading scale at the WVA?

A: The WVA and WHS follow the same grading scale and GPA calculations.

Q: Is athletic participation a risk for my child?

A: This is a big concern of mine as well – the entire idea of a Fall sports season is troublesome to all of us. We are currently following all of the safety procedures and directions set by the PIAA and the Suburban One League. All schools in our league are following the same protocol (and I think all Principals, Athletic Directors, student athletes and parents are sharing in the same concerns). Mr. Cairnes wrote the Athletics Plan and can provide you with more specifics about his direct trainings with our coaching staff for all teams and his work with all of our student athletes. We are screening our athletes for symptoms and other schools are following that same process but none of us are able to offer the assurance that our students, or students from other teams, are not asymptomatic and able to spread the virus. My personal opinion is that athletic involvement, at this point, comes with absolute risks. Unless the Governor orders that PIAA cancel the season, students and families have the difficult decision of weighing the risks versus the rewards. We will continue to do everything we can, within our control, to prevent the spread of the virus but I can't confidently tell you that the risk is not there. If you have specific questions, please contact Mr. Cairnes at jcairnes@wsdweb.org.

Thank you! Please let me know if you have additional questions!

Lynne Blair, WHS Principal