



Wissahickon Middle School

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope this communication finds you doing well. I completely understand the difficult decisions parents are facing regarding their child's return to school for the upcoming school year. I am the parent of 2 elementary aged students and I am facing similar challenges as I prepare for my own children to return to school. I have been in communication with many parents and below I have compiled some additional frequently asked questions from the last several days. Hopefully, this document, along with the 2 previous documents ([FAQ: Hybrid vs. Virtual Options at WMS: 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 WMS in the second semester.

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 noon on July 31st if you are opting to participate in our virtual option.

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. 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 WMS teachers and WMS counselors are also available for support.

Q: Will students' temperatures be taken at school?

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 19?

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. 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 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. Students who are quarantined and who are in the virtual model of instruction will continue with their coursework; students who are quarantined and who are participating in our hybrid plan will work with their teachers on accessing the missed content.

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

A: The ventilation systems are designed to replace the air in the building with fresh air numerous times every hour. We have the ability to increase the outside air supply, thus increasing the exhaust air from the building. The outside air intake volume will be increased and monitored daily based on exterior building temperatures and humidity. 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 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. Similarly, in the colder months, the building may be cooler than normal because of the circulation of outside air. Nursing Areas will each receive portable air filtration devices. The units will include HEPA filtration to lessen airborne contaminants.

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

A: 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.

Q: How will the district accommodate students that have an IEP?

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

Q: Will the district restrict visitors from entering the school?

A: 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.

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

A: Classrooms will have disinfectant available for staff to use. Lysol wipes are included on our school supply lists and students are encouraged to bring them to school. Students may wipe their desks and chairs when they arrive to class.

Q: Will students wear their masks during lunches?

A: Yes, students will wear their masks when traveling through the cafeteria and when purchasing their lunch. The only time students will remove their masks is when eating. All students will be seated 6 feet apart during lunch and will be scheduled to eat in the Cafeteria/LGI and Gymnasium 2.

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

A: Those students who either walk to school or are parent pick-up will be directed to utilize the side doors of the building. Children using the bus will enter and exit through the front doors. Buses will unload one bus at a time. During dismissal, students will be dismissed using a staggered schedule. Walkers and parent-pick students will be dismissed at 2:20 PM, prior to dismissing students for the bus.

Q: Will students be able to participate in chorus?

A: No. We will not be holding chorus during the first semester. We will re-evaluate things for the second semester.

Q: Will students be able to participate in band and strings?

A: We are still confirming procedures with our Music Department, however, certain instrument groups, including wind instruments, may be utilizing a virtual form of instruction and practice. Strings should take place, as in prior years.

Q: When will 6th grade students receive their laptop computers?

A: The technology department will send out more information regarding the distribution schedule and methods for distribution, later in August.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you.

Beth Bauer, WMS Principal