



## Delaware Township School Frequently Asked Questions

### Update: 08/14/2020

Below are some Frequently Asked Question answers as of August 1, 2020. Please be aware that some responses may need to be adjusted to fit the ever changing environment due to the pandemic. Changes will be communicated as quickly as possible to our families as decisions are made.

#### Health and Safety

1. Are we going to prescreen our students and staff before they arrive at school?

Each parent will be required to complete a daily health screening of their child before they leave for school. Students should stay home if they exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19 and parents should contact the school nurse. Each staff member will be required to complete the same daily screening as students before they leave to come to work.

2. What happens if a student or staff member shows symptoms upon their arrival to school?

They will be quarantined in a separate area from nurse's office space. We will contact the students' parents so they can come and pick them up. Staff will be required to go home. Please note: Parents/Guardians/Emergency Contacts are required to pick up students in a timely manner.

3. How many students will be on the bus?

DTS bus students will be following guidelines from HCRHS. Parents will be given the opportunity to waive district transportation and to transport their child to and from school by car or by other means. Buses will be cleaned in between runs. **If your child typically takes a bus and you are willing to waive your right to be provided school transportation and are willing to drive your child to and from school for the year, please contact the main office as soon as possible.**

4. Will students and staff be required to wear a mask?

All students and staff will be required to wear a mask on the school bus and while in school according to the mandated instruction recently received from Governor Murphy. We will have additional masks at school for students who forget their masks. Staff and students can wear their own personal masks; however, it must be two-ply. Face scarves and bandanas should not be worn in place of a mask. Please understand that we realize it will be challenging for students to wear a mask all day long while they are in school. We will do our best to social distance in the classroom and get students outside as much as we possibly can, which will allow them to take off their mask to get a break as long as they are practicing social distancing of 6 feet.

5. How will classrooms be set up?

We have removed much of the furniture from our classrooms and only put back student desks and the teacher desk. All classrooms meet the guidelines set forth by the state including extra space between desks, all desks facing in the same direction, with Plexiglass shields where applicable.

6. How will our buildings be cleaned?

Our facilities will be cleaned using protocols that exceed CDC recommendations. Our custodial staff will use the most advanced electrostatic sprayers to clean our buildings. Hand sanitizer and cleaning products will be available in all classrooms and in the halls. Handwashing time will be built into our daily schedule.

7. Will the bathroom be available for use and how will sanitary conditions be maintained?

Our custodial teams will have an increased rotation to enable higher frequency cleaning of bathroom routines.

8. How will students eat lunch?

When we return to full school days, students may be allowed to eat in the cafeteria on certain rotating schedules, while other students will eat lunch in their classrooms spaced six feet apart. Parents will still be able to pre-purchase lunch from our food service company, Maschio's, as before. Hands free ticket scanners are being reviewed. We will also take students outside to eat lunch weather permitting.

9. How will students be taught about the social distancing protocols before school starts?

We will be sharing tutorial videos with students and parents before the start of the school as to the protocols that they will need to follow to adhere to social distancing as well as what a typical school day will look like during this time of COVID-19.

10. Are parents able to come into the building?

Individuals will need to have a specific appointment to come into the building. They will also be required to wear a mask when inside of the building. Virtual meetings, phone calls and emails with staff members are the first choice.

11. Who will be supporting the school district with COVID questions, confirmed cases, etc.?

We understand that the County Health Department is working on dedicating staff to a School Task Force to support school districts for the 2020- 2021 school year. They are expected to continually provide guidance and protocols that the district will be following based on New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations.

12. What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 in the school?

If we are notified that there is a positive case with either a student or staff member, we will be following a protocol based on the New Jersey Department of Health and the CDC guidance. This will be done with the assistance of the Hunterdon County Health Department. Parents and staff will be notified that there has been a positive case and close contacts will be identified and advised to self-quarantine. Keep in mind that the standard for contamination is being closer than 6 feet for 10 minutes or more, to someone who has COVID and both not having a mask on during the exposure.

13. How will the district handle a student or staff member exhibiting a fever during the school day?

As per the guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health and the CDC, the student or staff member would be isolated and then sent home. Based on symptoms and/or testing, they may be excluded from school for 10-14 day. If they are well enough to join, the child will switch immediately to virtual instruction. We will consult with the Hunterdon County Health Department, as necessary.

14. How will the district handle a student or staff member that has been exposed to someone with COVID however they are not exhibiting any symptoms?

As per the guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health and the CDC, the student or staff member would be quarantined from school for 14 days. If well enough to join, students and staff will participate in virtual instruction immediately. We will consult with the Hunterdon County Health Department as necessary.

15. What happens if a student in the class or teacher who has been in contact with our child tests positive? Does the school close, are we instructed to quarantine?

Contact tracing and safety protocols will determine the extent of closure and notification. However, due to the close proximity of students and staff and the reality that siblings and families could be impacted, the chance of a quick closure of facilities to ensure safety is highly probable. We will be in consultation with the Hunterdon County Health Department and follow their guidance based on NJDOH and CDC recommendations.

16. If situations were to arise where we, as parents, were no longer comfortable with our child coming to school due to increased COVID-19 risks, what is our recourse for withdrawing our students from the Hybrid/In-Person option?

If statewide cases trend up and the need to pivot the community to full virtual instruction (Virtual Instruction Academy-VIA) becomes apparent, the school district will be prepared to make a systemic determination to protect our students, families, and staff. We will need to take direction from the Governor and the NJ Department of Education, but we believe that our Governor and Commissioner of Education will continue to support the school district with moving quickly to secure our students safety. If the concern is locally based, the school district will work with the county health department to determine if a closure due to potential exposure and contact tracing may be necessary. If a parent becomes uncomfortable sending their child to school, they can opt for VIA (Virtual Instruction Academy) learning.

17. What schedule will my PreK-5 child be following?

Due to our small class sizes, we are able to bring back all PreK-5 students to start the school year while creating a safe environment utilizing measures outlined in the Restart and Recovery Plan and guidelines from the state. We plan to begin the school year using a modified half day schedule. **Due to contract tracing guidelines, students will remain in their classrooms for most of the day and special area teachers will be working on a new single grade level schedule (Only two special classes a trimester will be assigned to elementary students).** This will ensure the same cohort of students use the same classroom all day long which will help with our cleaning protocols and limit possible contamination for students.

18. What schedule will my 6-8th grade child be following?

The traditional nature of the middle school is to have mixed classes that are specialized and having students changing classrooms for each subject in a normal setting. We have arranged for students to remain in one classroom as much as possible, only moving for specialized instruction such as Science and Specials.

19. Is a full virtual learning (VIA) an option for my child?

Yes, we will provide VIA, a full virtual learning experience (VIA- Virtual Instruction Academy) for those students who are unable to return or parents who are not comfortable sending their child back to school. During half day instruction occurring in the classroom, students working virtually may have the opportunity to follow morning instruction via live streaming or be assigned work to complete at home prior to afternoon instruction. Afternoons will be dedicated to virtual instruction and check ins with teachers for at-home students. In the event of the return to school a full day, teacher availability will need to be re-arranged to accommodate DTS's at-home learners for instruction and check ins.

20. Will virtual teaching follow the same instructional format as it did during the spring? How will the instructional approach of the in-person format differ?

No, the instructional approaches will be different and improved than in the spring. With some additional thought, experiences, and planning, the virtual learning environment we intend to provide in the fall will incorporate more user friendly virtual/hybrid instruction, and will support a more coherent model for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Please keep in mind, when children are present in school, teachers will not be available to the at home learners, unless the teaching is live-streamed. In-class and virtual instruction is anticipated to concentrate on gap learning, accelerated curriculum/standards coverage, wellness and safety.

21. Will the option of changing the choice of model be offered?

Yes, if a parent opted for virtual learning (VIA) and wants their child to return to back to the school building for instruction, they will be allowed to do so, with a one week notice so we can be sure we are following guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the Department of Education. A child can convert to Virtual Instruction at any time but will require a two week notice to return to the classroom again, to avoid students being pulled in and out, thus disrupting learning continuity.

22. How will specials take place in K-5?

Since students will be staying in the same classroom all day, and we have special area teachers provide students instruction on a trimester schedule, to limit teacher exposure to the whole school population. For physical education we will be having classes outside weather permitting, and socially distanced indoor when necessary.

Please note: For all students (K-8), locker rooms will be closed, so students will be required to come to school dressed appropriately for PE class on their assigned days.

23. What happens if we are mandated to go full VIA (Virtual Instruction Academy) and shut down schools?

If at any time we are forced to go to full virtual learning (VIA), virtual instruction will take place in every class, following a predetermined schedule. There is a full expectation for a much more robust synchronous (teacher led instruction) and asynchronous (working on their own at home) learning experience. Middle school students will have a set schedule to follow that is different than what occurred in the spring. Elementary students will follow a schedule designed for their class by their teachers. Participation in all class sessions will be required for students; attendance will be taken.

#### Other Important Information

1. Will there be Back to School Nights?

In order to keep everyone safe and to maintain social distancing, we will be having virtual Back to School Nights. Teachers will pre-record a presentation for parents to access.

2. Will there be Parent Teacher Conferences?

In order to keep everyone safe and to maintain social distancing, we will be doing virtual parent conferences. We will be communicating more details as we get closer to November.

3. How will students be graded at the start of the school year?

We will be using the same grading system that we would if there was no COVID-19. Teachers will review their grading practices in their Back-to-School Night video. Any changes will be communicated to students and parents as quickly as possible.

4. What about Kindergarten and preschool orientation?

We will be holding "in person" kindergarten and preschool orientation before school opens on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Teachers will contact you with your assigned hour on those days. Kindergarten testing will not occur this year; teachers will assess students when the year begins.

5. The two models are not friendly to working parents, especially those who must work on-site full time. What should we do if both parents must work full time on-site?

The district is keenly aware that the half day schedule as presented may pose conflicts for working parents or parents without extended family support structures. The YMCA will be providing childcare for students, starting at 12:50 pm until 6:00 pm for any parents who may need it. For more information on each program including the costs and how to register visit their website: HCYMCA.

6. If a student must be absent because they are in quarantine, symptomatic, sick, etc. can they jump into the virtual classes?

Yes, they can join by following the directions of their teachers which will be communicated to the families.

7. What if my child doesn't have internet access?

We will be providing mobile hotspots to any student who may have a financial hardship which prevents them from having internet access. If your child needs to use a district hotspot, please email Mr. John Perone at [jperone@dtsk8nj.org](mailto:jperone@dtsk8nj.org) or call the main office.

8. What is the best way for my child to receive technology support while home if they are having issues with their Chromebook?

They should contact Mr. Perone or call the main office.

Please continue to contact your student's teachers, and additional school personnel with your specific questions concerning your child.