



2020-2021 School Reopening FAQ

Can I change my child's Educational Delivery Model?

- At this time, enrollment in the District's Educational Delivery Model options are closed. Student schedules and the staffing model for in-person, K-8 SOLA, 9-12 Hybrid and K-12 WAVA have been completed based on July 31st deadline to choose an option. We asked parents to select their child/ren's educational delivery model for the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year (first and second nine weeks, which ends on January 15). Prior to the second semester, we will assess if parents enrolled in an online option (SOLA, WAVA or Hybrid) would like to change their model for the third and fourth nine weeks.
- Consideration was given to allowing students to change their educational delivery model after the first quarter versus first semester; however, due to the staffing required to support the four options available, we asked for a commitment for the first semester. If the context in Allegheny County or PA warrants significant changes, we will work with our families on a case-by-case basis.
- A change to your child/ren's choice will only be considered if extenuating and exceptional circumstances are present. Students enrolling new to the District will be enrolled as in-person students.

What are West Allegheny's Face Covering/Mask Guidelines?

- Our reopening plan requires staff and students to wear their masks while they are moving (to and from school on buses, walking in, out and around the school) and when actively engaged in learning and conversing with their peers and teachers. Students will be provided face covering/mask breaks when working independently at their desks as a result of the District's ability to provide six feet of social distance in ALL classrooms.
- As per the new guidelines provided by the PA Department of Health, face covering/mask breaks cannot exceed ten minutes. West Allegheny administrators and teachers have been proactively planning at **least two mask breaks** with varying lengths throughout a 40-minute class period based on active instruction and independent learning time. The new guidelines simply dictate how long one mask break can be at a time.
- We are asking parents to provide masks/face coverings. In the event students lose, damage or forget their mask, one will be provided to them. Please begin to practice at home and consider letting your child pick a fun mask/face covering that they will be more likely to wear. Mask stamina should be up to thirty-minutes at a time.
- The PA Mask Order requires individuals to wear a "face covering." "Face covering" means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A "face covering" can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen, and, for the purposes of the order, can include a plastic face shield that covers the nose and mouth. <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Universal-Masking-FAQ.aspx>
- West Allegheny approves ear-loop masks and gaiters. Bandanas are not appropriate in school. Face shields are an acceptable alternative to masks/gaiters. If you prefer your child to have a face shield, we can provide one for you. Please contact Mrs. Tammy Adams, Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services at tadams@westasd.org.



- If your child has a documented medical, mental health and/or disability prohibiting the wearing of any face covering, please contact Mrs. Tammy Adams, Assistant to the Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services, at tadams@westasd.org to discuss.

When would the District shift from 5-days in-person to a blended model of alternating days?

- The criteria used to shift the in-person model from 5 days a week to a blended model of alternating days will be made if occupancy limitations are necessary, due to high incidence and positivity rates, as well as if Allegheny County is placed in yellow again. In the event, we are required to reduce capacity within our schools, which is a restriction in the yellow phase, the District is prepared to implement a blended learning model for students attending in-person with split schedules, students alternating on ABAB days. We will divide students into two groups (Group A) and (Group B) with alternating days A/B/A/B. Students in WAVA and the K-8 Synchronous Online Learning Academy (SOLA) will not be impacted by restrictions in capacity and would remain uninterrupted in their model.
- For in-person students, if schools are closed for short (a few days) and or longer school closures (a few weeks or months), we would switch to a fully remote model as we did in the Spring. The remote learning plan 2.0 is available on our reopening webpage and is enhanced from last Spring. There is daily required synchronous instruction where all students will have access to their in-person teachers for daily instruction.

If my child is quarantined, how will his/her education be continued and supported?

- Teachers will provide access to direct classroom instruction either through zoom and/or prerecorded sessions to support COVID quarantined students for reasons related to travel, exposure and/or illness. Students will receive their schoolwork through the Canvas Learning Management system and have the support from in-person teachers to complete assignments. Please contact your child's principal/nurse to establish connection to the in-person classroom.

When should I quarantine my child?

- You should quarantine your child for 14-days if s/he was exposed to someone presumed or confirmed COVID positive
- You should quarantine your child for 14-days if s/he traveled to a known [hot spot states](#), in the US or internationally, and travel was classified as high risk.
- You should quarantine/isolate your child at least 10 days if s/he is presumed or confirmed COVID positive and, if they continue to have symptoms, for additional time until there is at least one symptom-free day. **You must contact your school nurse prior to returning your child to school.**
- If an individual residing with you is confirmed/presumed positive for COVID, you should quarantine your child during the person's symptomatic days PLUS an additional 14-days.
- If any of the above apply to your child, or to discuss any quarantine related questions, please contact your child/ren's school nurse. Teachers will provide access to direct classroom instruction either through zoom and/or prerecorded sessions to support COVID quarantined students for reasons related to travel, exposure and/or illness.



- If a family member is exhibiting symptoms related to COVID, we would ask that all children in the household stay home, while symptom monitoring to determine progression and potential of COVID. In this event, it is best to call your school nurse.

When should I call my child's school nurse?

- Your child/ren or anyone in your household has/had tested positive for COVID 19.
- Your child/ren or anyone in your household has/had close contact exposure with a CONFIRMED case of COVID 19
- Your child/ren has recently traveled, on or after August 10, or intends to travel, to one of the hotspots in the US or internationally.
- If your child stayed home as a result of answering "yes" to any of the home health screener questions, we ask that you call your school nurse prior to returning your child to school.

What social distancing protocols will be in place throughout the school day?

- All classrooms have six feet of social distancing accommodating 100% of our enrollment; we have converted large spaces such as libraries to classrooms to provide the recommended six feet. Due to social distancing guidelines being met in all classrooms, class sizes will not be altered. However, class sizes are below average as a result 27%-30% of parents opting for online instruction and students not attending daily.

How will transportation work this school year drop-off/pick-up times?

- Approximately 51% of parents choosing the in-person option for their child/ren are willing to assist with driving them to and/or from school. We greatly appreciate the support.
- Drop-off (8:25 am) and pick-up times (3:25 pm) at the elementary schools remain the same. We do expect a longer wait (about 10-minutes) due to the anticipated amount of drop-off and pick-ups. For middle/high school, buses arrive on campus at 7:20 am and begin unloading between 7:20-7:35 am. Student drivers and students dropped off by parents/guardians arrive between 7:35-7:45 am.
- If a family opts to drive their child/ren to school, it does not take away your bus option. You may still utilize the bus service any time. Please notify your child's principal when this applies.
- Bus routes remain consistent from last school. Expect most elementary school students to be dropped off 10-15 minutes later due to a staggered bus dismissal schedule at the elementary schools.
- Middle school and high school students will still ride the same bus. We will not seat students by their grade. Siblings and frequent "quarantine" friends are asked to sit together. Students will fill the back of the bus first and move to the front. Students riding the bus will have assigned seats.
- All students riding the bus must wear a mask. Buses will be disinfected after the morning run and again after the afternoon run. Hand sanitizer will be available on all buses.
- All special transportation arrangements should be made with the bus company and the school principal prior to the start of the school year. Transportation changes during the school year may take 3-5 days to process.



How does the School Reopening Plan impact my child who may have an IEP or 504 Service Agreement?

- Each student's IEP or 504 service agreement team will work collaboratively to determine safe and best practices related to individualized student needs. Parents and guardians are active participants in their child's education; thus, they will be included in such conversations and decisions. Any student with a disability who cannot wear a mask or face shield due to a medical condition is not required to wear face coverings as per guidance received from the PA Department of Education; however, this must be recommended by the student's medical doctor and documentation is to be provided to Ms. Tammy Adams, Asst. to the Supt for Special Education and Student Services. Alternatives to face coverings will be provided such as plexiglass desk enclosures.
- Students who receive special education services will continue to receive services if their education is delivered virtually. IEP teams and special education teachers will facilitate IEP meetings to determine the frequency and delivery for such services.

What health and wellness protocols will be in place for students and staff?

- To view the District's complete plan for mitigating spread and keeping students and staff safe, please see the [West Allegheny Health and Safety Plan](#).
- The Governor's [Targeted Mitigation Order](#) does not apply to classroom settings but does apply to school activities outside of the classroom that are not related to educational instruction. School activities and gatherings not related to educational instruction that are held indoors are limited to no more than 25 people. This includes meetings, assemblies, etc. At this time, outdoor gatherings are limited to 50 participants as per ACHD orders, rather than the 250 person gathering in the Governor's Order.
- As students enter the school daily, a **thermographic camera** will be used to take their temperature, and parents will be notified if a fever is detected or if the student is displaying symptoms.
- The West Allegheny Health and Safety Plan relies on all of us following the health organization mandates to do what we can to mitigate the spread of COVID-19:
 - MUST follow ACHD and PA Department of Health guidelines such as travel quarantine and exposure quarantine guidelines; reporting exposure, COVID illness and symptoms
 - MUST complete daily home health screen prior to coming to school
 - MUST comply with PA Mask Order
 - MUST comply with social distancing rules
 - MUST comply with hygiene and safety precautions
 - MUST stay home if symptoms of illness are present
- West Allegheny nurses made five videos that are accessible on our reopening website including symptoms and screening, hand washing, sneeze and cough proper techniques, social distancing and mask etiquette and safety. We encourage you to watch these with your child/ren.
- Health organizations are strongly recommending everyone get a flu shot. We support that recommendation for students planning to attend our in-person model.



What are West Allegheny's procedures for notifying families of exposure at school and/or during activities?

- The Allegheny County Health Department will be notified immediately of a positive case. As part of all COVID-19 case investigations, information will be quickly obtained from the student or staff member as to their close contacts since the onset of their symptoms. The actual nature of the contacts will be explored in detail, and multiple variables (i.e. was the case actually symptomatic during school or did the case only develop illness at home) will be considered. Once the information has been gathered, students and staff considered close contacts to the case (if any) will be notified of their exposure, using as little identifying information about the case as possible. Close contacts due to exposure will quarantine for 14-days. Any mitigation steps will then be evaluated by the school and the health department. The individuals will be provided information on symptom monitoring during the 14-day quarantine. Our lead nurses will be contacts throughout the quarantine period to monitor symptoms and provide support prior to return to school. Please see the question on accessing learning while on quarantine.
- ACHD will work directly with us on **contact tracing**. We will notify any individual if they were exposed and expectations for quarantining. The guidance for requiring quarantine based on exposure depends on the time of exposure (for 15 minutes or more) and on the distance from the ill person (less than six feet). We will notify parents with information as quickly as possible once we have direction from ACHD. Notification will be school specific. Closing a school for cleaning or just a classroom depends on the contact tracing and numbers of individuals impacted.
- The District will not require COVID testing for every student/staff illness. COVID testing will be recommended based on the symptoms present; based on symptoms (and if testing is not possible), we would follow the quarantine protocols. West Allegheny nurses will not be COVID testing students or staff.

What changes will be made to kindergarten screening, classrooms and instructional programming?

- Schools have sent incoming kindergarten family a kindergarten readiness checklist that can be conducted at home highlighting key areas children can work on in preparation for the school year. Once school starts, kindergarten teachers will conduct a modified screening process with students throughout the course of the first two weeks of school. For students participating in synchronous online learning, these screenings will occur virtually. Please refer to the Kindergarten Orientation materials on our reopening website.
- We will attempt to do as many regular classroom based activities while maintaining and following suggested social distancing guidelines. When students are participating in classroom based activities with less than six feet of social distancing, they will be asked to wear a mask. Students will have their own materials to utilize during classroom activities.
- We are unable to consider a half-day model for in-person instruction at this time. As a result of offering elementary families three choices: in-person, Synchronous Online Learning Academy (SOLA), and West Allegheny Virtual Academy (WAVA), we are not planning to offer a half-day in-person kindergarten option. The half-day option poses many challenges for transportation as well as for families related to child care issues.



How will technology support my child in or out of school?

- The District has moved to a 1:1 technology plan and has purchased Chromebooks for each child regardless of educational delivery model. Kindergarten students will be provided with an iPad. The District has purchased HP Chromebooks 11 G5, G6 and G7 education edition (EE) models. We recommend parents wait until your child/ren's device is issued to confirm whether it is G5, G6 or G7 model. Chromebooks will be used in classrooms and at home. Students in grades 3-12 will take their Chromebooks home daily.
- We **will not** be honoring a "Bring Your Own Device BYOD" program. Students attending in person or virtually, through SOLA or WAVA, have been issued a district Chromebook. Students need to use the district issued device to access specific district-approved learning resources such as educational applications placed on the device.
- West Allegheny will have a new Learning Management System beginning this school year. We selected Canvas as our Learning Management System (LMS) after a multi-stage evaluation process led by a Technology Panel that included teachers, staff, and administration. During the evaluation process, the Tech Panel participated in product evaluations, tested each of the leading systems using "sandbox" demonstration accounts, and participated in multiple Question and Answer sessions with each of the leading vendors. The Tech Panel completed their review of Learning Management Systems, and recommended that the district adopt Canvas in the 2020-2021 school year. Canvas was chosen because it is a fully featured LMS that integrates with tools that teachers have already been accustomed to using, both in the classrooms and during remote learning, including both Google Drive and Microsoft 365.
- Canvas is a feature-rich platform that can serve as a centralized communication hub for teachers, students, and families, offering an app for each user group and communication tools that include built-in videoconferencing as well as integration with Zoom. All users will have access to assignments and gradebooks and the ability to set custom notification preferences.

Will my child be able to participate in electives/specials in all Educational Delivery Models?

- We intend to offer all classes/courses with some modifications as necessary during in-person instruction. An example is that students will not change for gym class or swim in the pool. Students will be asked to wear comfortable clothing and appropriate shoes on their **physical education** days. Physical education activities will be modified appropriately to encourage and promote social distancing. Activities will include light fitness and wellness based activities such as walking, stretching, yoga, light weight lifting, etc. During physical education classes teachers will provide social distancing markers and cues as developmentally appropriate for various grade levels. If six feet is not possible, students will be asked to wear their masks.
- Our 6-12 chorus and band teachers will provide asynchronous/synchronous instruction to our students participating in 6-8 SOLA and 6-12 WAVA participating in any of the educational delivery models. In person students will continue to participate in band and chorus electives. There are some modifications being made for elementary band and chorus for both in-person and online students. Additional information will follow.



Will there be significant changes to meal service?

- The menu options will remain consistent as in the past. Students will have lunch choices as well as ala carte options. All food will be handed/served to students rather than allowing students to self-serve. Elementary school students will select their lunch in the cafeteria line and then return to their classroom to eat. Elementary students will also continue to have recess time as part of their lunch period at the elementary schools. Students eating in their classrooms will still follow protocols regarding allergies.
- Lunch times for middle and high school remain the same as does our supervision model. Middle and high school students will select their meal options using the food court as has been done previously. Middle and high school students will be eating lunch in assigned areas in the school with seating charts. Middle school students will be using the cafeteria, which has been divided into cafeteria pods, the former locker bay area and gymnasium. High school students will be eating in the cafeteria, which is partitioned into cafeteria pods, and also a stage area.

Will my child be able to participate in the meal service program if enrolled in SOLA or WAVA?

- Your child may continue to participate in the meal service program, including both breakfast and lunch, if they are enrolled in SOLA, WAVA and/or a 9-12 Hybrid student. Meal service is available daily from 9am to 10am **OR** 12pm to 1pm at the middle school cafeteria, regardless of what school your child attends. Please pull up to the cafeteria entrance in the back of the middle school and your meal(s) will be brought to your vehicle.
- Your child/ren's meals will cost the same as they did previously. Checks and money will be taken and placed on your child's School Café; however, no change will be given, as we are using a cashless (no change) system this school year. We will place all checks and money into your child/ren's School Café account. Please continue to place money on your child/ren's school café account <https://www.schoolcafe.com/https://www.schoolcafe.com/>. There will be a google form sent to all SOLA and WAVA families inquiring about your desire to participate in the meal service program and how frequently you intend to participate.
- Meal service will begin on Tuesday, August 25 for all students. SOLA and WAVA families may pick-up meals for the week including breakfast and lunch.

What Educational Learning Options were available to High School students?

High School Educational Delivery Model options included In-person, Hybrid, or the West Allegheny Virtual Academy (WAVA).

- The hybrid option is having your high school student attend in-person for part of the day and WAVA the other portion.
- The WAVA option is having your high school student take all of their classes online from home.
- West Allegheny offers 137 in-person courses at our high school and 136 courses in West Allegheny Virtual Academy (WAVA). WAVA provides 110 comparable courses to our in-person courses at the high school and is supported by our high school teachers. Your child's brick and mortar schedule as well as their IEP and/or 504 service agreement can be accommodated in WAVA. WAVA also includes 32 additional courses not offered in-person. There are 25 courses only offered at the high school and not part of the WAVA program of studies. As such, the



WAVA model provides flexibility so that your child does not need to be online at a pre-determined time.

- WAVA credits will transfer seamlessly as WA has operated WAVA for several years. All WAVA courses are NCAA approved. Through WAVA, physical education courses require students to complete a physical activity log, which requires 15 hours per quarter for a .5 credit course and 30 hours per quarter for a 1.0 credit course.
- Hybrid and WAVA students remain West Allegheny students and are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics and band.
- If your child receives special educational services, they will continue to receive support from our special education teachers related to goal attainment and progress monitoring, implementation of specially designed instruction, accommodations and tutoring.
- To view the course options available through both In-person and WAVA, see the [Enhanced WAVA Course List](#) and the [Course Comparison](#). Most of our Advanced Placement classes are available in our virtual academy (WAVA), which our teachers support.
- We are not offering synchronous options at the high school as a result of the ability for students to access WAVA, which offers comparable courses to courses offered in-person, as well as the option to attend in a hybrid model, which allows students to attend in-person for part of day and complete other courses online. The synchronous model offered at K-8 does not offer live streaming into classrooms. There are dedicated teachers K-8 to instruct online at a set time. At the high school, due to the large number of specialty programs and courses offered and requirements for teacher certifications, we are unable to staff a fully online synchronous model. However, our WAVA program offers comparable courses which can accommodate your child's schedule. For privacy reasons, we do not feel it appropriate to provide live streaming and cameras in all of our classrooms.
- CCAC courses are not able to be taught online as our teachers are qualified and approved as affiliated CCAC professors. We are unable to live stream CCAC eligible courses. We strongly encourage considering a hybrid model where students attend a portion of the day to complete their college eligible courses and complete other courses in WAVA.
- Work release will be available to high school students who are meeting their indicated credit requirements.
- We believe the best model for academic learning is in-person. However, families have to make the choice based on your comfort level with the safety measures in place. West Allegheny cannot 100% mitigate all COVID risk.

What were the Educational Delivery Options offered to K-8 students?

- West Allegheny offered three options from which parents could choose: In-person Learning (planned for five days per week); Synchronous Online Learning Academy (SOLA) for K-8 families requiring a set schedule for live in-person instruction; or West Allegheny Virtual Academy (WAVA), which allows flexibility in scheduling and provides teacher support but not in real-time (asynchronously).
- For the elementary in-person model, students will not switch classes for ELA and Mathematics. Their teachers will share two classrooms and switch rather than having students move. This allows for students to maintain one desk and not touch multiple desks.



- Also at the elementary level, we are encouraging classes to use outdoor areas (weather permitting) as part of regular classroom instruction to provide breaks and fresh air to our in-person students.
- **K-8 SOLA** provides 5 days of live instruction with the same expectations and curriculum as the in-person 5-day a week model. West Allegheny's K-8 SOLA provides real-time instruction with a West Allegheny teacher(s) on a set daily schedule. Elementary online instruction begins no earlier than 8:30 am and will conclude on or around 3:15 pm. Middle school online instruction begins no earlier than 7:45 am and will conclude on or around 2:35 pm.
- K-8 SOLA requires the same amount of time as our in person instructional model. Students are live with teachers online for their core content, which is several hours. They have additional hours where assignments and activities need completed for each content. Our synchronous model is a strong model because the in person curriculum is enacted online and students do not lose anything allowing for a very smooth transition back to in-person when the pandemic is over.
- In K-8 SOLA, your child will be able to interact in real-time with their teacher and their online SOLA peers.
- K-8 SOLA does **not** provide live streaming or Zooming into classrooms.
- Please refer to the SOLA presentation on our reopening page for additional details.
- **WAVA K-8** students will participate in asynchronous instruction and complete assignments independently with parent/guardian support according to their own schedule. WAVA offers over 180 courses allowing students to develop robust schedules meeting diverse academic needs. Students have 24-hour access to a full online educational program.
- Please refer to the WAVA presentation located on our reopening page for additional details.

What items should my child/ren bring to school?

- Plan to send your child to school with a mask/face covering; a non-breakable bottle with water; a book bag; and household disinfecting wipes that you feel comfortable with your child using throughout the day, if you are not comfortable with them using the district provided disinfectant. It is suggested that you have multiple masks/face coverings for your child/ren to avoid daily laundering and please practice with your child/ren so they become comfortable wearing a mask/face covering. We also recommend putting your child's first and last name on their masks in permanent marker.
- School and class specific supply lists are provided on the reopening page.

Will the school calendar remain the same and when will schedules be released?

- All students will follow the [2020-2021 School Calendar](#), regardless of their chosen educational delivery model (in-person, SOLA, WAVA, or 9-12 Hybrid)

What is the Parkway West Career and Technology Center Plan for return to school?

- To learn more about Parkway's Health and Safety Plan, please visit the link below:
<https://www.parkwaywest.org/News/48#sthash.Kx6ik3rn.dpbs>



Will preschool still be offered at the high school?

- We are running the pre-school at the high school with preschoolers rotating on an A/B schedule and remote learning every Friday. Preschoolers will follow the same mask guidelines as the PA Mask order applies to children 2 and older. Your teacher will provide more specific information and we will incorporate multiple mask breaks throughout the day.

Will my child be able to check out books from the school library?

- Until further notice, we will not be circulating library books. We will be using e-books as a result of all students having their own Chromebook.

Will Middle and High School students use their lockers?

- We will not be using lockers at the middle or high school. Students should plan to carry their laptop and books in a backpack.

What are the procedures for student late arrival and early dismissal?

- In the event your child has an early dismissal, you will pull into the designated parking lot and call the front office. You will be asked security verification questions. A staff member will escort your child to your vehicle and ask for proof of identification in elementary and middle school.
- If your child/ren are getting dropped late for school, please send them to the main office, wait in your vehicle and a staff member will call you once temperature screen is completed. Once admitted to school, you may leave school campus.

What disinfecting and ventilation protocols are in place and can be expected?

- We will be following the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting buildings on a daily basis. Our custodial team has developed checklists of high touch surfaces and will be following the guidelines to clean and disinfect these areas daily. Additionally, the custodial staff will be using backpack sprayers and aerosol-based disinfecting room foggers for use in identified high traffic areas.
- The District has hand sanitizer stations in every classroom and in high touch areas throughout the schools for student and staff use.
- For additional protection, the district will provide a disinfectant for wiping of desks between use that is classified as non-hazardous and requires no precautions for use. Parents who opt their child(ren) out of using the product should send disinfectant wipes to school with their child(ren) to wipe down student surfaces between use. Elementary and middle students will wipe their desks after the teacher sprays the disinfectant on the desk. Desk disinfecting will occur in the elementary before and after lunch minimally. Middle school desk disinfecting will occur anytime students change classes. High school students will have access in every classroom to disinfectant spray bottles and paper towels to spray and wipe their desks and then hand sanitize their hands.
- Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected on regular intervals throughout the day using staggered closings when necessary.



- Aerosol disinfecting foggers will be used in certain areas and are hospital grade. They will be used when students are not in school. They will be used to disinfect sensory rooms, locker rooms and sports equipment; as well as being deployed in empty rooms if we have a reported case of Covid-19. The active ingredients are Ethanol and Petroleum gases.
- Closing a school for cleaning or just a classroom depends on the contact tracing and numbers of individuals impacted.
- Increased filtration is being provided as well as increased outdoor airflow in all schools.