

Dear Parent, Guardian, Student of Ash Fork Schools,

I'm sure the news from Governor Ducey came as just as big of a shock to you as it did to us. Having such a strange and unusual fourth quarter last year we were all looking forward to moving on and getting back to empowering. Despite our best wishes, fate would have us once again looking at a campus shutdown and a three and half week delayed school year start.

We have come together as school leaders and educators to find the best possible solution to the current executive order, and would like to share with you what will happen at the beginning of the school year. **School will start on July 22.** Campus will be closed for the general school population, but we will have an online platform for grades 2-12.

One reason we have decided to start the school year with our regular calendar schedule, is that we have no way of knowing how long the current campus closure could potentially last. There may be a chance that this closure could go well into the second quarter. We believe it is better to start now than wait on more potentially bad news of a later start date.

This second round of online school will be different than our first round during fourth quarter. Fourth quarter material was mainly a review with the actual introduction, practice, and learning already completed during the school year. We now have the added pressure of teaching new standards in a virtual environment. It is important to understand that the same level of expectations for completing assignments and participating will be present to students as if on campus. Students will not be allowed to make up missed work during or after the online curriculum time period. Teachers and staff are committed to work as hard if not harder than if they were actually in front of a classroom, and expect the same from our students.

We know that online learning is easier for some than others. Teachers will create lessons that are divided into four day chunks. Students may choose to complete several lessons early, but must not fall behind the assignment schedule. Teachers will be on campus to answer questions from students via email and google classroom. Please be respectful of staff's personal time and realize that you may email during non-school hours, but responses will generally be given between 8-5:00 pm Monday through Thursday. Students that are struggling with the lessons can request in person meetings with the instructor on the fourth day in order to stay on schedule. Teachers may contact students to schedule meetings if they see issues with assignments and academic progress even if a student has not requested such a meeting. We are all here to help our students. The worse thing a student or guardian can do is ignore our attempts to help. If a student is struggling we understand, but please ask for help.

All safety protocols outlined in the districts reopening document will be followed. Masks are required and we are limiting the classrooms to 6 students in order to practice social distancing. Each school will be given the option for student appointments in order to reduce the number of individuals on campus.

The district will provide transportation from door step to door step, if possible, in order to ensure that all students can get to their instructor appointments. Students that finish early will also be given transportation back to their home. The transportation schedule runs in three blocks. First block is from 9-11:00, second block is 11-1:00, and the last block will be from 1-3:00. A student can stay for all blocks if needed. All temperatures will be checked, hand sanitizer applied, and mask given before entering district vehicles.

Student attendance during online learning will be counted two ways depending the age of the student and subject. One way to count attendance online is to check in daily with an instructor. Check ins can be through email, assignments, supplemental digital learning platforms, google classroom, and zoom meetings. Another procedure for being counted for attendance is through completing the weekly assignments an instructor posts. If a student only completes half of the weekly assignments than that student will only receive attendance for two days present and two days absent which is half of the days.

One of our biggest concerns is the added stress that online curriculums can put on families. It is a new level of stress to work all day and then have to help your child with learning new materials. Our vision is “We Empower,” please empower your child by focusing on the ways that your child can utilize their teacher and other resources before just asking you for help. This may be somewhat challenging at first, but will pay off with huge dividends in the future. One of the biggest steps to helping your child be successful with online learning is establishing daily routines that allow students to focus on lessons throughout the day and avoid the problems of assignments piling up. If you are still struggling please contact the district office for help.

In conclusion, this whole situation is not ideal for students, educators, or parents. We hope that we can work together to one day get all of this behind us and move forward

Thank You,

Seth Staples