

Frequently Asked Questions about the 2020-21 School Year for Parents

Warsaw Community Schools (WCS) is opening the 2020-2021 school year on Tuesday, August 18th. Many adaptations and modifications have been made to the school environment for the upcoming year. Please refer to our infographic linked below for the overview of the key changes. We have also created this FAQ sheet to address specific questions. Thank you for your understanding and grace as many areas continue to be fluid and flexible.

- (Spanish) Elementary Plan LINK: <https://5il.co/i297>
- (Spanish) Secondary Plan LINK: <https://5il.co/i298>
- (English) Elementary Plan LINK: <https://5il.co/i29e>
- (English) Secondary Plan LINK: <https://5il.co/i29h>

Instructional Questions

Does WCS offer a Distance Education Option? Yes. Both distance and physical options are available to WCS students.

Why is there a cutoff date and the requirement of committing to at least a semester for the distance education option? WCS is working to allocate teachers and class sizes appropriately. This cutoff was to ensure there was proper staff. The same is true for the request to commit a semester to the distance education option. As we are past the cutoff date for the distance option, requests will be honored if capacity for class sizes is still available.

Will distance education look the same as last March? No. We are extremely proud of the work our teachers did last year out of very challenging circumstances. As a school corporation, we learned a great amount and have reviewed our best practices. Distance education will look different. In elementary, each grade level will be assigned a teacher strictly dedicated to a grade level distance education class. The curriculum will focus on reading, language arts and math. At the secondary, students will have a teacher overseeing and working in conjunction with the APEX learning system. While there are limitations to areas such as lab classes and courses requiring specific hands on content, Apex provides a wide catalogue of traditional and AP classes.

When will I be notified about who my teacher(s) is for either distance or in-person? WCS is currently working to finalize class lists. Schools or the distance learning teachers will be reaching out to families prior to the first day of school on August 18th.

Were there any changes to the WCS calendar? Yes, the WCS calendar was modified for the 2020-2021 school year. PLC 50-minute late start was moved to Monday morning and an average one Monday per month is designated as an E-Learning Day. Students will complete assignments from home on that day. This change was to provide additional time for deep cleaning of the schools, continued use of digital platforms with students across all grade levels

and professional learning in digital platforms and pedagogy with WCS instructional staff. eLearning days are highlighted on the WCS District Calendar.

- (English) WCS District Calendar LINK: <https://5il.co/hyfd>
- (Spanish) WCS District Calendar LINK: <https://5il.co/hyfe>

What if there is a 2nd wave of COVID this fall/winter? How would this look different?

Together, we learned a great amount with online instruction this past spring. We will apply the lessons learned from last spring to improve upon our eLearning format which will continue each month on the designated eLearning day, during weather cancellations or if our schools would be required to shut down due to local COVID conditions. While some of eLearning will look similar, there are other parts of distance education that require a more synchronous approach depending on the specific circumstances. The governor has also provided statewide guidance to ensure socio-economics and rural connectivity would not be a determining factor in an equitable education for all students and the expectations of school facilities. Many of the logistics would be dependent on specific local health orders.

Health and Safety Questions

What can parents do to help? Parents are the most important factor in helping to prevent the spread of COVID in our schools. Please take time to check daily for symptoms or signs of COVID with your child. Daily temperature check, helping to find a mask with correct fit, and keeping a child home if sick are all factors to promote a healthy school environment. We also encourage close monitoring of large weekend gatherings, carpooling and enclosed spaces with multiple people. These are all areas known to spread COVID.

What are the signs of COVID? WCS has created a COVID-19 protocol presentation for students. Please see the link for specific information on signs of COVID and also specific protocols on COVID tests, close contact exposure and specific timelines of return.

- WCS Student protocols LINK: <https://5il.co/imle>

How will WCS make specific decisions that deal directly with COVID? WCS works in conjunction with the Governor's office, the Warsaw Community Education Association, state health department officials and the local health department. These collaborations help ensure we are in constant review of our local health conditions and working in tandem with our local health department. Daily, we monitor Kosciusko County COVID data with our local health department. Key metrics include the number of cases per 100,000, positivity rate and specific tracking of COVID spread in areas that could impact our schools. The following article from the Times Union addresses our relationship with the Kosciusko Health Department.

- WCS Works with KCHD on Reopening Plans. Full Article LINK: <https://5il.co/jepl>

Is my student required to wear a mask? Yes. Governor Holcomb released an executive order requiring face coverings in Indiana schools. The newest executive order was released on Thursday, July 30th. Other points of interest include:

1. (1) All students in Grades 3 through 12, all teachers, all staff members, all vendors, all contractors, all volunteers, and all visitors must be required to wear face coverings while physically present in school buildings and facilities and on school grounds. This directive continues until it is rescinded or modified by the Governor. Exemptions to this requirement are listed in paragraphs 4 and 6.c. in the Executive Order. Some of the relevant exemptions include persons with certain medical conditions, are deaf, and the person who is less than 2 years old.
2. (2) All students, all teachers, all staff members, all vendors, all contractors, all volunteers, and all visitors are required to wear face coverings while on a school bus or other school-sponsored mode of transportation.

The exemptions to the above requirements for public schools are as follows:

1. Food Consumption: while eating and drinking
2. Faculty/Staff Areas: Faculty and staff while working together in a room, office, or place where social distancing of 6 feet or more from each other may be maintained.

This does not apply to when staff is preparing food or meals.

3. Children Between the Ages of 2 and 8: Face coverings are not required UNLESS on a school bus or other school-sponsored transportation. Otherwise, strongly encouraged for students in this age group to wear a face covering.
4. Classroom Settings: Masks must be worn unless the classroom setting provides 6 ft social distancing for students and instructor, or desks are configured in straight rows in a space that allows between 3-6 foot social distancing at all times for students and the instructor is still 6 foot away.
5. Recess: Face masks and coverings may be removed during recess provided social distancing can be maintained.
6. Extracurricular Activities/Co-Curricular Activities: Students, teachers, instructors, directors, coaches, trainers, volunteers, and any other personnel must wear a mask or face covering when not engaged in strenuous physical activity or can maintain social distancing of six feet or more.

Will there be additional hand-washing/hand sanitizer breaks? Yes. All elementary and secondary schools have specific hand washing protocols. This includes additional breaks for handwashing and hand sanitizers and additional stations set-up throughout the schools. Please contact the school for specific details pertaining to these protocols.

What if someone travels to a COVID “hot spot”? Do they need to report this to the school?

For those traveling, please review CDC guidance and continue to monitor personal health signs.

Will the school take my child’s temperature everyday? No. This is an area the school greatly needs parents to assist. We request that each parent take the child’s temperature every morning in the home. This will greatly assist the schools in identifying the onset of sickness prior to arrival at school and reduce the further spread of Covid-19.

If a student arrives at school sick, what will happen? If a student is sick, they will be sent home immediately.

My child has seasonal allergies and these are similar symptoms to COVID. Please take time to document these illnesses with a family doctor/physician. This will help our school nurses understand your child’s health conditions and needs.

If my child is tested for COVID, but results come back negative, when can they return to school?

- o The student is not allowed in the school building until test results are received.
 - If the test results are negative and no known close contact exposure exists, the student can return to the school setting.
 - If negative, but there is known exposure (15 continuous minutes within 6 ft.), the student continues in quarantine (14 days since last exposure to confirmed positive). Can return to school after quarantine is completed.
- o Symptomatic students must isolate for 10 days and be symptom free for 24 hours.

What happens if a student tests positive? If a student tests positive (results can come from either parent self-reporting, or through Kosciusko Health Department), the following steps will then be taken:

- o If a student tests positive (results can come from either parent self-reporting, or through Kosciusko Health Department), the following steps will then be taken.
 - Principal and school nurse reviews seating charts, speaks with the teacher to determine close contact exposures (15 continuous minutes within 6 ft.) of students and/or staff.
 - COVID positive tested students and close contact exposures need to be communicated with Central Office immediately. Please contact Dr. Hoffert, Mrs. Barkey, Dr. Robertson, Mrs. Akers and Ms. Wilfong.
 - Central Office will communicate positive COVID case as reported by parent and close contact exposures with Kosciusko County Health Department.
 - Kosciusko Health Department will contact COVID positive students with isolation requirements (10 days from onset of symptoms).
 - Kosciusko Health Department will notify close contact exposure cases with quarantine requirements (14 days since last exposure).

- Kosciusko Health Department will confirm contacts have been made in an email to Dr. Hoffert, Mrs. Barkey, Dr. Robertson, Mrs. Akers and Ms. Wilfong.
- WCS will send a letter of classroom (or activity) positive case explaining that personal contact from Kosciusko Health Department has already been made for anyone determined as a close contact to exposures. If you have not received a call from our health department, you are **not** considered to be close contact/exposed. All phone calls for close contacts/exposed have been made at this time (prior to sending this letter). You are receiving this letter because your student was not a close contact/exposed. You are receiving this letter as a notification for caution so you may continue to monitor for symptoms.
- Isolated students (Positive COVID) can return after 10 days from symptom onset date. Quarantined students can return 14 days from last exposure.
 - o FYI Side note: Indiana Department of Health will also be doing a separate contact tracing. This is separate from the Kosciusko Health Department or WCS involvement.

Where can I find out more health and specific information about COVID. The Kosciusko County Health Department has created an informational packet to coincide with the WCS student protocols. This packet has many detailed pieces of information on how the local health department will be working in conjunction with WCS.

- Kosciusko County Department School Response Plan LINK: <https://5il.co/j7rs>
- WCS Student Protocols LINK: <https://5il.co/imle>

School and Classroom Environment

How will physical classrooms look different this fall? There will be many changes in the classroom setting. These changes are to provide additional space for social distancing. Our maintenance and custodial staff is working with teachers to remove unneeded and bulky furniture. CDC recommendations are to place desks in straight rows to limit potential exposure of COVID with social distancing.

How will hallways look different? When possible, schools will stagger breaks and limit the numbers in the hallways. Traffic in hallways will not always be able to be socially distanced. Each school is creating specific modifications due to the physical structure of space in each school building.

What will lunch/Cafeteria look like? To start off this year, lunches will be “grab and go” or prepackaged meals. Each school is creating a plan to assign seats and limit the number of students together for lunch. This could include lunches in the classroom or a rotation. At the high school level, additional spaces will be utilized for lunch seating and social distancing.

Will my son/daughter be able to still do band, choir, dance, arts at the secondary level, or be able to participate in special at the elementary schools? Yes. We have worked with each of these specialty areas to create specific safety protocols. While there are parts that might have to look different, WCS is proud to continue these offerings and thankful for our teachers who are making necessary modifications.

Will my child have recess? Yes. At the elementary, recess will still take place. Special plans will be put in place at each school to cohort recess groups. Please contact elementary schools for building specific plans.

Will WCS be offering field trips this fall? To ensure safety, we will be postponing out of town field trips. Schools are exploring other options to create virtual experiences. Once health conditions allow, out of town field trips will be reinstated.

Are visitors permitted? Visitors will not be permitted in buildings as we start the 2020-2021 school year. As a school system, we will look to offer virtual experiences to allow parents access into our schools.

What if my son/daughter forgot something? How do I bring this to school? Each school will be setting up a table in the vestibule. This table will provide contactless drop-off of items to the school. Parents will not need to enter the school.

Will there be attendance awards? This year, all WCS schools will not be offering attendance awards or incentives.

Will water fountains be open? As we start the year, drinking fountains will be shut off. Water bottle fillers have been installed at all schools and additional temporary water refill stations will be provided. We request students bring their own filled-up clear water bottle every morning to start the day.

What extra cleaning precautions are being made? Our custodial and maintenance teams have been hard at work this summer preparing for the school year. Each building has at least one electrostatic sprayer for daily use. Each classroom will have disinfectant spray and wipes, hand sanitizer, additional masks and face shields. Air filtration is being monitored and additional cleaning crews and supplies have been implemented.

Extra and Co-Curricular Activities / After and Before School Care

Will YMCA and BYC still be offering before and after school care for elementary students? Yes. Please refer to their websites and contacts for additional information and offerings. We are very thankful for both of these organizations and their community offerings.

Extra and Co-Curricular Guidance? WCS will follow all IHSAA and IDOE extra and co-curricular guidance.

- IHSAA Guidance LINK: <https://5il.co/jicw>

Will parents be able to attend sporting events? Yes. IHSAA has provided specific guidance on attendance at events. Attendance will be limited under this guidance, but specific accommodations will be made under the guidance to provide priority access to the family of the participants.

- 2020-21 Warsaw Phased Return to Play Plan: <https://5il.co/jidb>

ALL POINTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO CHANGES IN STATE OR LOCAL EMERGENCY HEALTH MANDATES INDIANA GOVERNOR ERIC J. HOLCOMB EXECUTIVE ORDERS:
<HTTPS://WWW.IN.GOV/GOV/2384.HTM>

UPDATES WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE DISTRICT WEBSITE <HTTPS://WWW.WARSAWSCHOOLS.ORG>