



EDMOND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Empowering all students to succeed in a changing society

August 18, 2020

Dear EPS Families,

The start of the 2020-2021 school year is quickly approaching and we could not be more excited to welcome back students to new opportunities in Edmond Public Schools. While many day-to-day procedures have changed, one thing that has not changed is our commitment to provide every child with the very best education possible.

We continue to receive questions about the start to the school year, and have outlined some important information below:

Masks: The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has released a [clarification](#) on the level of protection provided by face shields (versus the more widely used face masks) with the following warning: "CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings." For this reason, students (PK-12) and teachers attending Edmond Public Schools will be required to wear **cloth face masks** when entering the building and moving through the hallways. The mask requirement also extends to all school facilities, grounds, and classrooms for teachers and students in grades 1-12. Students will be asked to wear masks as they line up for class, or when entering and exiting the building during arrival and dismissal. From time to time, teachers will also be providing brief mask "breaks" for students. ***Students are not required to wear masks on the playgrounds during recess as long as they can practice social distancing.*** If you haven't done so already, it's a good idea to practice having your child wear a mask around the house so they become used to it.

Face shields may be appropriate and used sparingly in some situations such as when an elementary teacher or language specialist is delivering instruction from a small table or desk where seeing the face of the student is crucial. Additionally, face shields may be appropriate for special needs students as prescribed in an IEP.

First Two Days of School: Because we want to see all students in person at least once during the first two days of school, students on schedule A will attend in-person classes on Thursday, August 20, and students on schedule B will attend in-person classes on Friday, August 21. Many parents have asked what students will do during their first at-home learning day (either the 20 or 21 depending on their schedule). Elementary students should have received learning packets from their school with work to complete on their at-home learning day. Secondary students will have work to do in Canvas. Since sixth-grade students have not received instruction on how to use Canvas yet, their first at-home work will be sent from their schools through one of the school's communication platforms.

First Week of School: The first full week of school is August 24-28. The full A/B schedule will resume that week with A students attending in person on Monday and Tuesday and B students attending in person on Thursday and Friday. For more detailed information on how an A/B schedule works, please view this helpful [video](#).

Virtual Edmond: Teachers have started making calls or sending emails to all VE families and introduction videos are being sent out as well. We are still waiting on the logins to be sent to us from the curriculum vendor. As soon as we get those, they will be sent out as well so the students can log in and get started. Thank you for your patience.

Blended At-Home Learning Days: We understand that work/life balance is important and that due to family schedules, students may not be able to participate in remote learning activities during a typical 7:30-3:30 school day. It is perfectly fine for students to complete assignments at night or even on weekends as long as they have the assignments for the week completed by Sunday night at 11:59.

Digital Device Pickup: All EPS students will receive a district Chromebook or iPad, as follows:

PreK-6: Students will receive a district iPad (PreK-3) or a Chromebook (4-6) on their first day of school.

7th-12th: Existing EPS students in grades 7-12 should already have a Chromebook. New students will be issued a Chromebook on their first day of school. Ninth graders will be turning in their Lenovo Chromebook for a new HP Chromebook. (Many have already done so.)

Virtual Students: All EPS virtual students in grades K-12 will be issued an iPad (K-3) or Chromebook (4-12) by their home school. These devices are optional. If you have your own iPad (K-3) or Chromebook/PC/Mac/Laptop (4-12) you may simply decline the device from your school.

As with all district resources, families will be financially responsible for loss, theft and damage to iPads and Chromebooks. The District provides a low-cost Student Technology Protection Plan (STPP) to help offset these costs. Please check the [technology page on our district](#) website daily for updated information on the STPP, as well as information regarding devices, tech support, and general technology information and Q&A.

Canvas Login: A parent's guide to Canvas will be available soon on the [technology website](#), explaining how to help your child log into and navigate through Canvas.

Hotspot Availability: The district has a limited number of Wi-Fi Hot Spots on order, but they have not arrived yet. These devices are intended for low-income families that cannot afford a home internet connection. If you have had a recent loss of income, please fill out our [application](#) for free and reduced meals. A Hot Spot application will be available soon on our technology web page.

Attendance: The district's attendance policy and regulations have changed. A [detailed explanation](#) of attendance issues can be found on the district website. Notable changes include:

- Attendance is vital; however, a child exhibiting any of the COVID symptoms should be kept at home for observation and possible testing.
- Removal of the attendance incentive for high school students, which allowed for the exemption of one semester final.
- Failure to log in to Canvas, turn in any at-home assignments, or reach out to the teacher for help will result in a recorded absence for the three at-home learning days.
- In order for absences (especially those due to illness from COVID-19) to be coded correctly and not result in credit loss, a truancy record, or "Chronic absenteeism" status as defined by the state, parents will have to provide documentation such as a doctor's note or positive COVID-19 test results.

Grades: Grades will be posted following the same timeline, as students would typically receive grades, assessments, or feedback from their teacher. Teachers will outline expectations when school begins.

School Procedures: If you are wondering how lunchtime, recess, clubs, PTO meetings and more will work, please refer to our [Return to School Guidelines](#). The guidelines were developed with every department in the district and are updated as new information about the virus becomes known.

Pivoting to a Different Learning Option: As long as the current COVID-19 risk level remains in the orange (or moderate) category, per the [Oklahoma State Department of Health four-tiered COVID-19 Alert System](#), the district will continue with a blended or A/B model of instruction. If the number of COVID-19 cases decreases and Oklahoma county drops into the yellow (or low) risk

category, the district could shift to in-person learning five days a week. However, this move would not be made abruptly. We would want to observe at least a three-week trend before making this change. If the number of COVID-19 cases increases significantly and Oklahoma County moves into the red (or high) risk category, the district would move to a full remote learning model. Again, we would not make this move abruptly and would want to observe the data for a period of time before making any adjustments.

Special Education: Contingency plans are being developed within the IEP team process in the event of a total school closure or a health/medical emergency related to COVID-19 that would disrupt the current services listed on the IEP. These contingency plans will clearly communicate how special education and related services will be implemented in light of these circumstances. If such an event occurs, school personnel will send you a written notice re-stating the contingency plan and the date that the specific plan will go into effect.

Parents of students with disabilities on a 504 may not see a need to conduct a meeting to create contingency plans since the student's accommodations could be implemented in a virtual or in-person instructional environment. However, parents of children with a disability on a 504 should contact the school counselor if they would like to discuss any concerns about the current accommodations or services listed on your child's 504 plan.

Student Meals: On the days that students are not eating in the school cafeteria, meals will be available for pickup at all school locations. Unlike the summer meal program, meals will need to be picked up at the child's home school because we will need to confirm that they are enrolled, charge them according to their meal status at their school and ensure that the meals are appropriate for the child's grade level. Both breakfast and lunch will be available at the same time. Site-specific times/pick-up locations and menus will soon be uploaded [here](#). Please note that the meals provided will incorporate some of the items in the regular school lunch but will be tweaked to work in a sack lunch. Children do not have to be present at pick-up, but whoever picks up the meals will need to provide the student's name(s) to check off the roster as meals are passed out.

During a normal school year, it takes time for students and staff to settle into a routine. During a pandemic, when nearly every school procedure has changed, it undoubtedly will take even longer for everyone to feel comfortable with the new plans, practices and systems. However, if this pandemic has taught us anything, it has taught us that it is possible to be flexible, adaptable, and calm even in the midst of tremendous uncertainty.

I hope you are looking forward to a great school year. I know I certainly am. What a joy it will be to see students again after such a long absence! Let's commit to giving it our all this school year no matter our circumstances. Have a great last few days of summer and Welcome Back!

Sincerely,

Bret Towne

Superintendent

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