

Whitmore Lake Public Schools

Return to Learn
Frequently Asked Questions

#TROJANPRIDE

Updated: August 31, 2020

Whitmore Lake Public Schools is preparing to open schools to our students this fall for in-person instruction in Phases 4-6. We are following Michigan Department of Education (MDE) guidelines as well as the Governor's Executive Orders. Our goal is to stay true to our mission by providing an exceptional, personalized education in the safest way possible.

In preparation for the upcoming school year, WLPS has purchased enough Chromebooks and iPads to give each student. We've added new technology in our classrooms so remote learning, if necessary, can happen with more teacher contact. And, each building will have equipment which can sanitize rooms in minutes to better ensure furniture, equipment, and heavily-touched surfaces are germ free.

Below are frequently asked questions posed in recent meetings with teachers, parents, and area health officials. I will be updating the FAQs weekly. If you have a specific question relative to your needs, feel free to reach out to me at tom.dekeyser@wlps.net.

Instruction

- **Is my child going to have in-person instruction this year?**
 - Yes. In Phase 4, WLPS is opening on August 31 for in-person instruction.
 - **Please note WLPS will begin on August 31 with a week of half days Monday (8/31) through Thursday (9/3).** (No school on Friday, Sept. 4). Staff will remain on site and will use the afternoons to adjust to issues associated with starting school during this crisis.
 - On August 10 our Board of Education approved our preparedness plan to offer a 5-day-a-week, full-day schedule with hygiene, mask, and distancing protocols. You can view that meeting [HERE](#).
 - In order to minimize congregating in common areas before school, our buildings will open for student drop-off later than in the previous years.
 - WLES K-4: 8:40 a.m. for students getting breakfast and 8:45 a.m. for everyone else.
 - WLES 5-6: 7:40 a.m. for students getting breakfast and 7:45 a.m. for everyone else.
 - WLHS 7-12: 7:40 a.m.
- **Will there be a virtual option?**
 - Yes. WLPS has developed its own virtual school, the [Whitmore Lake Virtual Academy](#). The goal is to provide an option for students to have virtual learning facilitated by WLPS

teachers or a WLPS mentor with a WLPS-aligned curriculum. You can learn more by viewing the [August 19 Zoom Q and A](#).

- Families who know in-person instruction won't work for their situation this fall but expect to return to WLPS classrooms in January or next fall should choose this option.
- The Whitmore Lake Virtual Academy will begin after Labor Day and is a semester-long commitment.
- **Will there be any remote learning options available?**
 - If WLPS moves into Phase 3, students enrolled in in-person instruction will be taught in a remote learning environment. This will look a lot different than the spring. We've invested in one-to-one technology, so every student will have a device. We have also invested in new technology for our teachers. Expect a more rigorous learning environment demanding a high level of student participation and engagement, live (synchronous) lessons with teachers, and graded assignments.
 - Additionally, if a student is temporarily unable to attend in-person classes due to health issues, we will provide synchronous remote instruction.
 - These temporary situations will require medical documentation to be submitted to the building principal.
- **What will the WLPS Virtual Academy be like?**
 - You can find details on the WLPS Virtual Academy [HERE](#) and listen to the [August 19 Zoom Q and A](#)
 - Additionally, the WLPS Virtual Academy will:
 - Require a home internet/wifi connection.
 - Require a minimum semester-long commitment.
 - We know it can be hard to commit to a semester when COVID causes our family and work situations to change frequently. We require that commitment so we can devote the necessary resources (staffing, funding, equipment, etc.) to make both our in-person and virtual academy successful.
 - A two week grace period will be applied which will allow parents time to evaluate their own situation and comfort level with virtual learning. If virtual learning is not the right fit, you have until September 22 to change and enroll your student in in-person instruction.
 - If you would like to discuss your particular family's situation and ways we can support you, please contact Superintendent DeKeyser directly at Tom.DeKeyser@wlps.net as soon as possible.
 - Allow for some personalization at the high school level for college-level or technical coursework.
 - Work best if families establish study zones within their homes for appropriate learning time.
- **How do I let WLPS know if my student(s) will be attending school in-person or the WLPS Virtual Academy?**

- We sent a survey out to our families by email on August 1 to let us know their plans regarding instruction and bussing. We are asking families to fill the survey out by August 18 to help with planning. You can find the survey [HERE](#).
- Once you have chosen which option, please complete your re-enrollment through our new online registration program [HERE](#). **IT MUST BE COMPLETED BY AUGUST 21.** This is where you will be giving us your final decision on which option you are choosing.
- If you plan on not attending, WLPS please call the appropriate building office to let us know.
 - K-6: (734) 449-2051
 - 7-12: (734) 449-4461
- **How will you use the data from the survey, and why was August 18 chosen as the deadline?**
 - We will be using the data from the survey to properly staff each option. We chose the August 18 deadline in anticipation of more information coming from the state and want to give our families time to digest all information before making their decision.
- **What if we send our child for in-person learning, but decide mid-semester or later to do virtual, will that be an option?**
 - Yes. It is not recommended due to the academic disruption it causes, but it is an option.
- **What will specials at WLES look like?**
 - WLPS plans to bring the elementary music and art to the general education classroom. We will be using outdoor activities for physical education as much as possible. When required to be indoors, we will use gym and cafeteria facilities.
- **Are we offering middle school and high school electives?**
 - WLPS will offer all electives. Physical education and band will begin the year using outdoor spaces as much as possible.

Health and Safety Expectations and Considerations

Facial Coverings and Social Distancing

- **Will my child be required to wear a facial covering in school?**
 - In Phase 4, yes.
 - The WLPS plan requires the following:
 - Face masks for all students on school buses.
 - Face masks in Grades K-4 in all common areas (e.g. hallways) and when doing group work in classrooms. But not in classrooms while working independently or when students are eating breakfast or lunch.
 - Face masks in Grades 5-12 in classrooms and common areas (except when students are eating breakfast or lunch).
 - Students who have a medical reason not to wear a face mask are not required to do so. Medical documentation is required to be submitted to the building principal.
 - All face masks must be appropriate and meet school dress code requirements.
 - Fabric facial coverings must be washed daily.
 - Disposable facial coverings must be disposed of at home at the end of each day.
- **Can my student wear a facial covering even when it isn't required?**
 - Yes. Even if masks are not required by the Return to School Roadmap, they are strongly recommended.

- **Will the district be able to provide facial coverings (and any other necessary supplies) for students in need?**
 - Yes. We will be providing a neck gaiter to each student. Additional masks will be available to any student in need.
- **Can my student bring his or her own facial covering?**
 - Yes. Students can bring their own neck gaiters or face masks from home. Currently, face shields do not qualify as facial covering. Please make sure your student's facial covering is labeled, discuss with your student the importance of not sharing masks with others, and see the note above about washing.
- **Will my child's teacher be required to wear a facial covering in school?**
 - Yes. We are working with our staff to provide the best facial covering options. Your child will see a variety of cloth masks, clear masks and face shields.
- **Will there be social distancing in the classrooms?**
 - The Return to School Roadmap does not require desks to be spaced six feet apart. However, every effort will be made to space students as far apart as feasible. Where possible, all desks will face the same direction toward the front of the classroom.
- **Is the district seeing an influx of School of Choice students?**
 - WLPS has seen an increase in School of Choice enrollment. To be proactive in maintaining small class sizes, starting last week, we restricted new School of Choice students in grades K-6.

Illness Screening and COVID-19 Response Plan

- **Will staff and students be subject to daily temperature checks?**
 - Currently, no. The CDC does not recommend schools conduct widespread symptoms screenings. It suggests parents check their children at home before coming to school. Parents need to check students' temperature at home every morning. Students with a temperature above 100.4 degrees or greater, or other unexplained symptoms including coughing and shortness of breath, should stay home from school. We are a school community and need to be able to depend on each other to do what is right to keep each other safe. If we want to stay open, we need to work together to stay safe. It is that simple.
- **What happens if a child or staff member gets sick at school?**
 - They will be sent home as soon as possible with on-site quarantine until they are able to go home. They can return to school only when symptom free.
- **What happens if a child or staff tests positive for COVID-19?**
 - Knowledge of a positive COVID-19 case should be reported to Tom DeKeyser, Superintendent, 734.449.4464.
 - WLPS will notify the school community via email if a positive case occurs in our buildings, at a student event/activity, or district-sponsored function.
 - WLPS will work in conjunction with health department officials to begin contact tracing to identify who may have been exposed. Parents will be alerted if their student has been in close contact with a positive case, and the appropriate next steps will be identified.
- **Will my student interact or be interviewed by a health department employee if they have symptoms or have been exposed to someone with symptoms without parental permission or representation?**

- No. We are aware there is unfounded mis-information on social media claiming students could be interviewed, and even taken, by health department employees. It is not true.
- **Will we be notified of who tests positive?**
 - In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to maintain the privacy of any student, teacher or staff member, WLPS will not share the names of individuals who test positive for COVID-19.

Lunch and Recess

- **How will lunch be provided at the Elementary School?**
 - Lunch will be delivered to each classroom with limited menu options in Phase 4.
 - Our cafeterias are now cashless. We offer an easy and convenient way to add funds to your child's account through sendmoneytoschool.com. You may utilize a credit card or your checking/savings account. This is a safe and secure way for you to make sure your child has the funds available to purchase breakfast or lunch. Please do not send cash or checks to the school.
- **How will lunch be provided at the Middle/High School?**
 - Lunch menu choices will be limited in Phase 4. Many items will be grab-and-go style or prepackaged.
 - Students at the Middle/High School will be split into three lunch periods with assigned seating. During each lunch period, students will be in two zones -- the cafeteria and gymnasium. Students will maintain social distancing in the lunch zones.
- **How will recess be handled at WLES?**
 - There will be no lunch recess in Phase 4.
 - Recess will be scheduled with the classroom teacher.
 - Playground will be separated into zones so children stay with their classroom. Thanks to the Whitmore Lake Community Recreation millage, we are expanding resources at our Elementary playground and building a new high school sized basketball court that will be completed before school starts to provide an additional zone.

Cleaning Procedures

- **How will WLPS provide additional classroom cleaning during the day for commonly touched surfaces, desks and lunch activities that take place in the classroom?**
 - WLPS will be bringing in daytime custodians to utilize an electrostatic cleaning device to sanitize rooms and other parts of the buildings as well as our buses.
 - We are limiting rotating classrooms to our secondary classes (5-12) and exploring ways to limit those movements as much as possible. Desks in classrooms where rotating classes cannot be avoided will be disinfected every time a class rotates.
- **Will WLPS clean and disinfect playgrounds and outdoor athletic facilities?**
 - Yes. They will be cleaned regularly.

Transportation

- **Will WLPS offer busing to students?**
 - Yes.
- **Will masks be required on buses for students and drivers?**
 - Yes. Masks are required for students and drivers.
 - Weather permitting, windows will be used for ventilation while the bus is in motion.

- In addition to masks, all students will sanitize their hands at sanitizing stations before entering the bus.
- A student without a mask will be given a disposable mask. A student refusing to use a mask will not be allowed to utilize our buses for transportation
- **Will we practice social distancing on the school bus?**
 - It is not possible to ensure social distancing on our buses.
 - It is expected that riders from the same household sit together.
- **Will WLPS implement extra cleaning and disinfecting in between routes?**
 - Yes. Buses will be cleaned and disinfected before and after each route.
 - To minimize time in the buildings and provide time to clean in between routes, expect later bus pick ups in the mornings. Exact times are still being established and will be communicated on our Back-to-School Guide website.

Extracurricular Activities

- **Will WLPS be offering athletics?**
 - WLPS will follow the guidelines developed by the MHSAA (Michigan High School Athletic Association) as to whether sports will occur in the fall (or any other time throughout the 2020/21 school year).
 - You can find updates regarding athletics at <https://wlathletics.com/>.
- **Will WLPS be offering extracurricular activities (band, choir, drama, enrichment)?**
 - If a safe plan for sports is accepted, then WLPS expects to host as many extracurricular activities as possible.

Early Childhood Center and Kids Club

- **Is WLPS ECC offering preschool this year?**
 - Yes. There are some changes to our preschool program. You can find details on what is available for Head Start, GSRP and Tuition Preschool on our Back to School Guide site. Have specific questions, contact our ECC Director, Sue Wanamaker at sue.wanamaker@wlps.net.
- **Is WLPS ECC offering Kids Club?**
 - Yes. Kids Club will start the first day of school on August 31 and be available before school and after school each day, even half days. Spots are limited. Contact Sue.wanamaker@wlps.net to enroll. Drop-ins will not be available.

Family Information

- **Am I allowed to visit my child at school?**
 - Only if necessary. However, WLPS will be screening guests and limiting building access.
- **Will I be able to volunteer with the school organizations, teams, programs, etc. that I'm committed to?**
 - To be determined.
 - There will be no WLES classroom volunteers to start the school year.

Communication and Community

- **How can I get communication as things change and develop?**
 - WLPS will be updating the community weekly.

- We will be hosting a Zoom Q and A meeting on August 19, 2020 11 a.m.-12 p.m. This will be recorded and posted on our website should you be unable to make it. Feel free to email questions you would like answered to Tom.DeKeyser@wlps.net. Click [Here](#) to join.
- **How can I support WLPS staff and students?**
 - Reassure our students that we are all in this together and here for each other. #TrojanPride means a lot of things, but to many it means family. Our small school community gives us a huge advantage in navigating these unprecedented times together, and just being there to support each other will make a big difference as we do our best to educate our children and support our families safely.
 - Donate PPE (masks, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes) or funds to purchase PPE. Any donations can be dropped off at the Administrative Offices at 8845 Main Street.
 - The Whitmore Lake Foundation for Education is running an annual Back-to-School Wish List drive through Amazon. You can check out what our staff members have wished for here: <https://amzn.to/2YTEI25>.

Virtual Academy

- **Who will my child(ren)'s teacher/mentor be?**
 - K-3rd Grade: Megan Stoetzner
 - 4th-8th: Jennifer Petzke
 - 9th-12th: Julie Fleury
 - You will be contacted by our WLHS counseling office regarding their schedules, which will be created with a blend of WLPS staff, and online vendors, such as, Edgenuity, Michigan Virtual, and Washtenaw Community College.
 - Other teachers from WLPS will be assisting in specific subject areas.
- **When will we "meet" our teachers?**
 - Teachers will be reaching out this week to introduce themselves.
 -
- **When do I get my devices and/or supplies?**
 - K-6 students - Wednesday, September 2, from 1:00PM-3:00 PM, Virtual Academy families can pick up their materials and devices at the rear Kiss N' Go entrance at Whitmore Lake Elementary School.
 - 7-12 Students - Thursday, September 3, from 1:00PM-3:00PM, Virtual Academy families can pick up their materials and devices at the front entrance of Whitmore Lake High School.
 - You can use your own device for virtual classes but WLPS will not provide technical support to devices not owned by WLPS.
- **If I receive free or reduced lunch, how do I get food?**
 - You can pick up five breakfasts and five lunches weekly at the rear (west side) entrance of Whitmore Lake High School on Tuesdays at a time to be determined.
 - If you plan on taking advantage of this program, please [fill this form](#) out ASAP.
- **What will my student's schedule be like?**
 - Parents and students should be prepared for a normal school day which will include periods of synchronous (live class in some way) and asynchronous instruction (work on your own without the teacher) from 8:00AM to 3:30PM. While we don't expect students to be online for over 7 straight hours, it is likely that a student would login to a

class for a 30 minute session at 8:00 am and be asked to work independently for another 30 minutes. That pattern may repeat itself a few times each day. We would not expect younger students to be engaged as long as older students, though.

- **What supplies do my students need that aren't provided by WLPS?**
 - K-3rd:
 - Notebooks, sticky notes, and earbuds with a microphone. Our staff are prepping backpacks with other supplies that will be needed.
 - 4th-8th:
 - Pencils, a notebook or notebook paper, headphones with a microphone and sticky notes.
- **Will there be school pictures for Virtual Academy students?**
 - Yes. Picture details are being established and a date and time will be communicated to families.

Special Education

- **Will my child's IEP be followed exactly as it was written last school year?**
 - We will attempt to follow it as closely as possible. However, a Contingency Learning Plan may need to be developed as a temporary IEP if the learning location (virtual and remote options) and your child's needs change. Your child's case manager will reach out to discuss your individual situation and paperwork, as needed.
- **Will Special Education services be provided remotely if my child needs to temporarily quarantine at home until they can resume in-person learning at school?**
 - Yes. Please contact your child's case manager as soon as possible to be added to the remote schedule for Special Education services. It's possible these remote services will be provided by a different staff member than the in-person instructor.
- **Will Special Education services be provided virtually if I choose the semester-long Virtual Academy option for my child?**
 - It depends on which services are included in your child's IEP and the grade level of the child. All Teacher Consultation services will be provided virtually, preK-12th grades. If your child requires Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, and/or Social Work and he/she is in preschool-6th grade, appointments will be scheduled for in-person therapy at the Elementary School. If your child is in 7th-12th grades, these services will be provided virtually.
- **What will ancillary services (Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Social Work) look like if my virtual-learning child has an in-person appointment at the Elementary School?**
 - We will make every effort to schedule multiple services back-to-back so only one trip is needed. Additionally, if multiple children from the same family require these services, we will attempt to group household siblings together. Parents will drop off their child in the back Kiss and Go loop where a therapist will greet them at the scheduled time. The child will receive their individual therapy in secluded offices, removed from the traffic flow of the regular school building. Individual therapy will be provided using face coverings and sanitized materials. Once all therapies are complete, the therapist will walk the child back to their parent's car.

- **What happens if my child or I can not keep our in-person or virtual appointments for Special Education services?**
 - Special Education service providers will attempt to reschedule, but it's not guaranteed due to their busy schedules and the need to work with other children during their scheduled times. If you need to permanently change a weekly appointment to a different time/day, please contact that service provider to check on availability.
- **Can I temporarily suspend Special Education services for my virtual-learning or remote-learning child?**
 - Yes, parents have the right to request a Contingency Learning Plan to modify the IEP temporarily, until in-person instruction resumes. When the child returns to the school, the traditional (annual) IEP will take effect immediately. Please contact your child's case manager for more information.
- **Will my child's IEP meeting be in person?**
 - We prefer hosting virtual IEP meetings using Zoom for social distancing. If this option is not possible, please contact your child's case manager to arrange alternative meeting details.
- **How will my child learn if they attend a WISD program?**
 - Washtenaw Intermediate School District has decided to begin the school year virtually for all county-based programs. Whitmore Lake students attending WISD programs should expect communication directly from WISD as they slowly transition to in-person instruction.