

KANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

# OPENING OF SCHOOLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS) SCHOOL YEAR 2020-2021



KANSAS CITY  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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# General Questions

## When are classes starting for the 2020-2021 academic year?

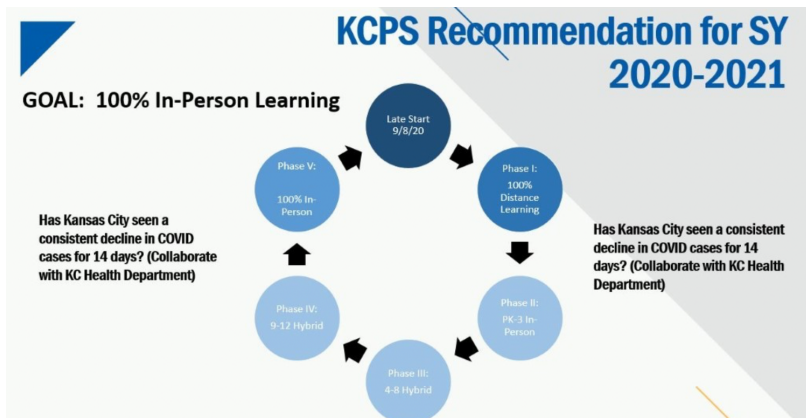
The first day of school will be Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020. This is about two weeks later than we had planned originally.

## Why is KCPS delaying the start of classes?

Delaying the start of school to Sept. 8 provides a number of benefits. It gives additional time for public health officials to track the pandemic in our community and provide valuable guidance to us. We will use the additional time to continue to gather our KCPS-issued laptop computers from families so that they can be prepared for the new school year. This delay will also help us prepare staff, students and parents for the instructional models that we will be using this year.

## Will classes be held in person when the new school year starts?

All students will engage in distance learning or virtual learning when classes start on Sept. 8. The COVID-19 pandemic is a national crisis that poses a serious health risk for everyone. With this in mind, we developed a phased back-to-school plan for the 2020-2021 year. In-person classes will start for students in pre-K through grade 3 only after the number of COVID-19 cases in our community decreases for 14 days in a row. This process will be repeated in phases for upper elementary, middle school and high school students. Our goal is to be back to 100 percent in-person learning when it is safe to do so.



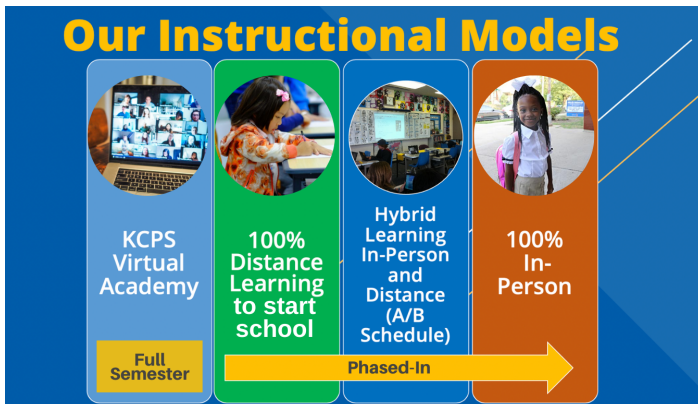
## How and when will KCPS decide when to bring students back to campuses for in-person classes?

The decision to reopen our school buildings for in-person classes will be based on data and science. We will work closely with public health officials before re-opening any of our school buildings. This process will not follow any predetermined timeline but will rather evolve based on the status of the pandemic in our community. Our response will balance the need to protect public health and provide a public education.

## How will classes be conducted this year?

Teaching and learning in KCPS this year will involve four different models. Students and teachers will use these models based on the status of the pandemic and their grade levels:

- Distance Learning – Teachers and students engage in classwork online using a variety of digital tools and applications, including Zoom and Google Classrooms. All classes will start with this model when classes begin on Sept. 8, 2020.
- Blended Learning – Students have an “A/B” schedule, attending classes on campus for part of the week and doing distance learning for the other days.
- In-Person Learning – Students and teachers engage in learning on campus every day that class is in session.
- Virtual Learning – Students use digital tools and virtual platforms for self-paced teaching and learning through the Kansas City Virtual Academy (KCVA). Students and parents will be asked to commit to this option for the entire semester if they choose to enroll in this academy.



## **What's the difference between distance learning and virtual learning?**

It's easy to be confused by our use of the terms “distance learning” and “virtual learning.” The curriculum for both models is aligned to Missouri standards. Both models involving using digital tools and applications. Students using these models will be guided and supported by high quality teachers. There are, however, some important differences in these two instructional models. These distinctive features mean that each model is best suited for different types of students.

### **Distance Learning**

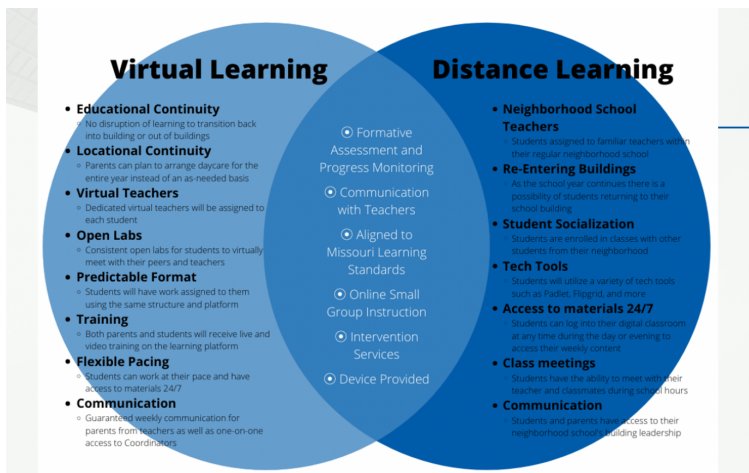
- Students who are enrolled in their Neighborhood or Signature School and engaging in distance learning are essentially engaging in a traditional public school class but doing all the classwork from home.
- These classes will be led by the same teacher those students will have when we re-open our campuses.
- The teachers will teach daily lessons at certain set times, track how well students are picking up the curriculum and provide support when and how it is needed.
- Students in these classes will interact and collaborate with each other on a regular basis.

### **Virtual Learning**

- Students who enroll in the KCPS Virtual Academy (KCVa) will be using the virtual learning model of instruction. KCVa students have flexibility to engage with the curriculum at any time, day or night.
- KCVa students will have the opportunity to engage in daily classroom activities, as their schedules allow.
- KCVa students have an individualized intervention program.
- KCVa students have a learning coach who works with the families to provide support, updates, information, and feedback on a consistent basis.

- KCVA students are taught by certified KCPS teachers.
- KCVA students will be allowed to participate in activities, sports, and other events through their Neighborhood Schools.
- Recommended time needed for KCVA lessons and coursework:

Grade	Recommended Hours Per Day	Recommended Hours Per Week
K-3	3-4	15-20
4-12	4-5	20-25



## KCPS Virtual Academy & Distance Learning

Grade Level	KCPS Virtual Academy Resources	Distance Learning Resources
K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edgenuity</li> <li>• Self-paced, online curriculum</li> <li>• Enrolled for entire semester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted curriculum with digital and print resources</li> <li>• Students responsible for participation in teacher lessons and completing assignments</li> </ul>
6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odysseyware</li> <li>• Self-paced, online curriculum</li> <li>• Enrolled for entire semester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted curriculum with digital and print resources</li> <li>• Students responsible for participation in teacher lessons and completing assignments</li> </ul>
9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odysseyware</li> <li>• Self-paced, online curriculum</li> <li>• Enrolled for entire semester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted Curriculum with digital and print resources</li> <li>• Students responsible for participation in teacher lessons and completing assignments</li> </ul>

# Health and Safety

## **What is being done to ensure that buildings are clean and ready to open for students in the upcoming months?**

Every school site will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized according to CDC standards before students and staff members enter the building for the new school year. We also plan to increase the amount of time custodial staff members spend sanitizing facilities during the school day and after school.

## **When in-person classes restart, will the district require students and teachers to wear face masks during the course of the school day?**

Students, staff and visitors will be required to wear face masks while they are in our buildings. Students and staff will be required to wear face masks on the school bus, during transition periods and larger group activities like lunch. We will strictly enforce state regulations and requirements related to wearing face masks. These mandates may change depending on the status of the pandemic. Mask use may vary based on student's age.

## **Will students have the opportunity to wash their hands and use sanitizer during the course of the school day?**

Schools will provide multiple opportunities for students to wash their hands and use sanitizer during the course of the school day. A substantial number of schools in the district have sinks in classrooms and sanitizer will be readily available for any student who needs it. Sanitizer will also be available for students during the breakfast and lunch periods.

## **Can schools guarantee that social distancing practices will take place during the full school day?**

Procedures and routines have been developed at every school to maximize the level of social distancing that occurs in school facilities each day. Although safety plans are being carefully developed, no school can guarantee that social distancing practices will take place for a full day for any student. We strongly encourage parents who feel uncomfortable with the in-person school option to utilize the virtual learning model.

## **How will the district track contacts during the course of the school day?**

School opening plans have been developed to limit contact and interactions among students as much as possible. In most cases, students will spend the majority of the school day with the same cohort. This will be especially true for our elementary school students. Interaction among students will increase at the middle and high school levels. To increase the level of safety for our older students, masks will be required during periods of the school day where interaction is increased (hallway transitions, entry, dismissal, etc). Seating charts and sign-in logs will also be used to track student contact.

## **What will happen if a student in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19?**

We will consider all local, state and federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations when making decisions related to responding to positive student cases of the coronavirus. We will work with public health authorities to complete contact tracing and facilitate testing for the appropriate individuals. The following steps may be taken if a student tests positive for COVID-19:

- Parent called and student sent home
- Student placed on quarantine
- Classroom or cohort placed on quarantine
- Deep cleaning of all appropriate facilities
- School closure

Students who test positive for COVID-19 will not be able to return to school until they are cleared by a medical professional. This clearance process will include documentation of two negative tests for the person who was diagnosed. Appropriate stakeholders will be notified when students or staff test positive. Please see our "Health Service Reopening Plan" for details about this process.





### **What will happen if a KCPS staff member tests positive for Covid-19?**

We will follow local, state and CDC guidelines for staff members who test positive for COVID-19. We will work with public health authorities to complete contact tracing and facilitate testing for the appropriate individuals. In most cases staff members who test positive will:

- Notify our HR department
- Self-quarantine
- Receive medical clearance before they are able to return to work

Our custodial staff will conduct a deep cleaning of all appropriate facilities following the report of a positive test by a staff member, student or visitor. Teachers may still participate in virtual and distance learning and other staff may work remotely if they test positive. Please see our “Health Service Reopening Plan” for details about this process.

### **My child has a pre-existing condition that makes them more prone to acquire COVID-19. Can I still send them to school?**

We are recommending distance or virtual learning for students and staff members with medical conditions that make them more prone to acquire COVID-19. Our goal is to make the learning experience as safe as possible for every student and staff member. Please contact your school directly if you have additional questions or concerns about this topic.

### **Will students and teachers have to be tested for COVID-19 before they are allowed to enter a school?**

We are not requiring any stakeholders to be tested at this time. This may change during the course of the year based on local, state and federal mandates.

### **Will parents/guardians and visitors be allowed in the school building?**

Parents/guardians and visitors will not be allowed in our schools during the pandemic. We are making every attempt to ensure the safety of our students and staff members. We will monitor safety practices as the year progresses and make changes to this policy based on the status of the pandemic in the metro area and recommendations from local, state and federal public health authorities. Parent conferences will be held virtually or in alternative settings when needed.



**I'm apprehensive about sending my child to school based on what I have seen on the news regarding the coronavirus. I want to keep my child in the district. Do I have other options?**

We are offering a virtual school option for students in every grade. Students who participate in our virtual option will be provided with grade-level class content and held accountable for all rules and policies associated with grading and attendance. Parents/guardians must complete a virtual school application in order for their children to take part. We're asking parents/guardians to complete the enrollment form for the Kansas City Virtual Academy by Aug. 5 if that is the option they want to select for their children.

## Transportation

**Is the district still providing school bus transportation for students?**

We will continue to provide bus and other forms of transportation to and from school for students who qualify. Buses will continue to pick students up and drop them off at their normal stops. Bus transportation will require families to opt-in this year. This means that families will sign up for transportation services. To opt-in for school bus transportation, contact the KCPS Enrollment Office at (816) 418-7505, email [transportation@kcpublicschools.org](mailto:transportation@kcpublicschools.org) or call the KCPS Transportation Hotline starting on Aug. 10 at (816) 418-7888.

**Have bus procedures changed as a result of COVID-19?**

Bus procedures have been adjusted to adhere to the safety and social distancing guidelines identified by public health authorities. Social-distancing practices will be implemented on all buses and students will be required to wear face masks, which will be made available on buses. In some cases, bus routes and pick up times may have to be adjusted to satisfy safety and social-distancing guidelines. Seating guidelines will also be adjusted to ensure as much distance between students as possible.

**My child participates in an after-school activity. Will transportation home still be provided?**

We will continue to provide transportation for students who participate in after-school activities like sports and band.

**My child was picked up by a cab and transported to school each class day last year. Will that process continue?**

Alternative forms of transportation like cabs will continue for students who qualify. Again, families will need to sign up for transportation services.

**I do not feel comfortable sending my child on the bus. Can I provide transportation?**

Parents can always make the decision to provide transportation for their children to and from school. Parents have the right to choose the transportation option they feel most comfortable with.

**Has the district changed bus routes or requirements for students to catch the bus or walk?**

We have not made any changes to bus routes at this time. Our criteria for walkers also remain the same. Parents will be notified if bus routes or the criteria for students to walk to and from school change.

## **In Person General School Day Procedures**

**What are the distance learning and virtual learning classwork expectations for students?**

Students will be expected to participate in daily classwork. Teachers will be grading student work per our KCPS policies. Students will not be held harmless as they were when school buildings were closed in the spring. Their grades will reflect their classwork.

**Will my child have to get their temperature checked before entering the building as in-person classes begin?**

All students, staff members and visitors will have their temperature checked before they enter the school building each day. Participation in this process is not optional.

## **Have class and course offerings changed as a result of COVID-19?**

Class and course offerings have not been changed as a result of COVID-19. Students will still have the opportunity to take the same classes offered during the 2019-2020 school year. Core courses will be offered as both in-person and virtual classes.

## **How will the “hybrid” instructional model work?**

The hybrid learning model would be triggered if students are participating in a blend of A Days and B Days - meaning, some days in-person and some days at home. This could be an option for learning so that we can ensure safe social distancing practices. Students would receive instruction through a variety of classwork options that could include computer-based platforms, home-based written assignments, projects and any other form of instruction outside of the in-person classroom that promotes student mastery.

## **I can't decide on having my child take in-person classes or allowing them to participate in virtual learning. What model is better?**

We have structured both models to ensure that students receive high quality instruction each class day. We are offering the virtual option for parents who may not feel comfortable enough to send their kids to school during the pandemic. Research has shown that students who are more independent and functioning on grade-level have greater success with virtual instruction than students who need more intense academic support. Parents are encouraged to contact their schools directly for additional information related to the best possible options for their child.

## **Can my child alternate between in-person classes and virtual learning?**

Students who enroll in our virtual learning model will receive instruction each day at home via a computer-based platform. Parents who select the virtual learning model must keep their students enrolled virtually for the entire first semester starting on Sept. 8. Exceptions may be made during the first few weeks of the school year.



### **Will students still change classes during the school day when in-person classes resume?**

The movement of students around school buildings and campuses may be limited in some cases. Schools will make every effort to following social-distancing guidelines and limit the amount of contact between students. Students will still participate in elective classes like art, music and gym. Students in middle and high school will be required to wear face masks when traveling in the hallways during transition periods and during the time they are in the restroom.

### **Will school dismissal procedures remain the same?**

Some schools may change dismissal procedures to ensure that guidelines related to COVID-19 are followed. Schools may stagger their dismissal time to reduce the amount of contact between students as they leave the building. Schools will share detailed information related to dismissal, entry and other areas prior to the official start of the school year. Parents and guardians will not be allowed into school buildings to pick up their children, at least during the first few weeks of classes.

### **What will be the procedures for recess?**

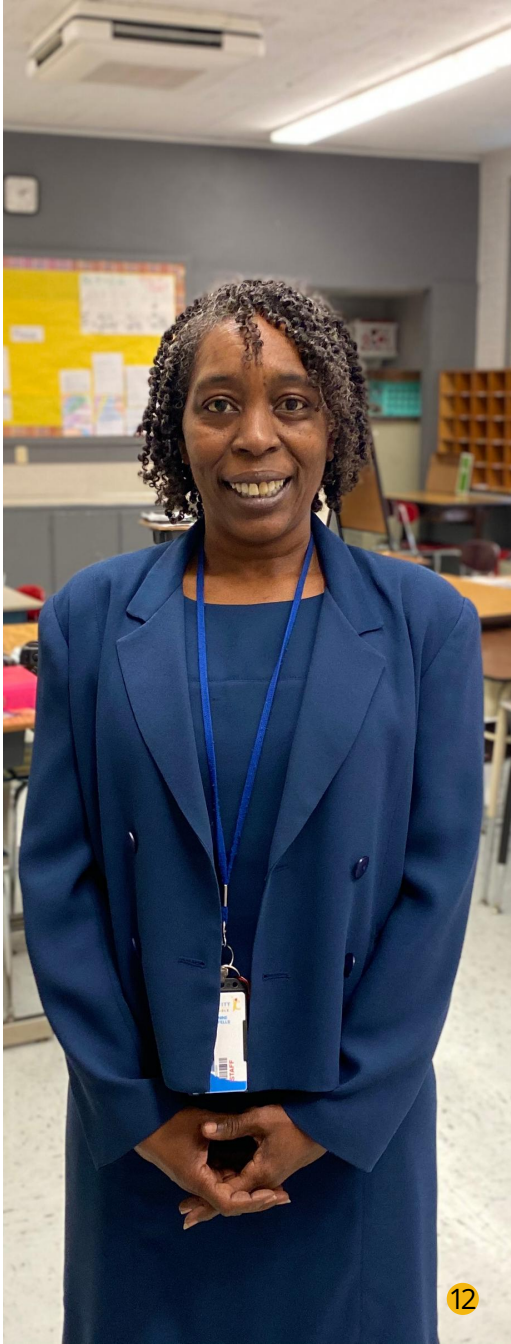
Recess is an important part of the school day for students. Pupils will have multiple opportunities during the school day to positively interact with their peers. Each school will create a schedule for recess. Recess may occur indoors or outdoors. Playgrounds will only be utilized if they are properly sanitized. Teachers and support staff will supervise students during recess to ensure that they are behaving in a safe manner.

### **Will counseling and other social-emotional support services still be offered?**

School counseling services will still be offered. These services will be offered in-person and virtually. Other social-emotional and trauma-sensitive supports will still be offered for students as needed. More specific information related to the exact supports offered by each school will be shared in the lead-up to the start of classes on Sept. 8.

### **What protocols are in place for student behavior and discipline?**

Practices related to student behavior and discipline will remain the same for the upcoming school year. Students will still be expected to follow the expectations detailed in the KCPS Student Code-of-Conduct for the 2020-2021 School Year. Consequences for inappropriate student behavior are still in place.



# Child Nutritional Services

## **Will breakfast be served for students at school?**

School breakfast will continue to be an option for students in the morning. Breakfast will be served in the cafeteria, classrooms or other identified spaces in each school. All breakfast items will be packaged in a manner that ensures student health and wellness. Schools will provide specific information leading up to the start of classes on Sept. 8 that detail breakfast procedures for each site.

## **Will students eat lunch in the cafeteria?**

Processes related to food handling and school meals will be adjusted in most of our schools. Lunch schedules and procedures will reflect guidelines for social distancing. In some schools, the number of cafeteria periods will be increased to ensure social distancing. In other cases, students will be required to eat in assigned classrooms or other spaces. All students will still have the opportunity to eat breakfast and lunch free of charge during the regular school day.

## **Can my child still bring their lunch from home?**

Students will still be able to bring their lunch from home. We will strongly encourage students not to share their lunch with their classmates.

## **Is it safe for my child to eat the food from the cafeteria?**

Our Child Nutrition Services staff follow all local, state and federal guidelines related to food handling and distribution. In addition, our Custodial Services staff are taking extraordinary steps to deep clean our schools every day. Every precaution will continue to be taken to ensure the health and safety of every child in the district.



# Attendance

Will students still be held accountable for attendance this school year? Student attendance will be closely monitored this school year. All students will be held accountable for attending school and adhering to established instructional expectations. Students must adhere to the following:

- Follow all state attendance requirements
- Adhere to all virtual learning requirements (time spent online engaged in meaningful instruction, etc.)
- Understand that grades and student performance are impacted by attendance

Teachers will take attendance daily for distance-learning and Kansas City Virtual Academy classes. Students will be expected to log-in every class day to be counted. Teachers will closely track both student log-in records and completed classwork.

## Special Education Services

### **My child receives special education services. Will they receive the same services when school starts?**

In most cases, Individual Education Plans (IEP) for students will continue to be implemented as written. Parents will be notified by school staff if any aspect of the IEP needs to be adjusted.

### **My child has an IEP. Can I select the virtual learning option?**

Students with IEPs must get approval in order to use the virtual learning option. Parents who complete the virtual learning application will be notified by school staff regarding approval. Students may need to have their IEPs modified in order to participate in virtual learning.



**In the past, my child has been pulled out of the regular class setting to receive special services. Will this continue? I'm worried about the increased interaction with other students.**

School staff will do everything possible to limit the amount of interaction between students each day. In some cases, students will be pulled from the regular classroom to receive services. Social-distancing guidelines will be followed as much as possible.

**Can I still request special education services for my child?**

Parents still have the option of requesting special education services. The process for referring students for special education services has not changed.

**Will my child receive special education services if school buildings close temporarily for any reason?**

Special education services will be provided regardless if students are taking classes in-person or remotely. If school buildings close temporarily, classes will pivot to virtual or remote instruction.

## **Early Childhood (Headstart, Pre-K & Kindergarten)**

**Have arrival and dismissal procedures changed for younger students?**

Younger students will no longer be walked to classrooms by parents or guardians. Staff members will meet students outside of school and walk them to their classrooms. Entrance and dismissal locations may also change for our younger students. This is being done to maximize student safety. Some schools may also stagger dismissal and entry times. School sites will provide more specific information related to student entry during the upcoming weeks.

**Will parents and visitors be allowed to visit Headstart, pre-K and kindergarten classrooms?**

Parents and visitors will not be allowed to enter school buildings during the first few weeks of school. This policy may change as the school year progresses and depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic. The district will notify parents of changes to this policy.

**Will class size adjustments be made for Headstart, pre-k and kindergarten students?**

Class size adjustments may have to be made for our younger students given the increased level of possible interaction. Schools will contact parents regarding potential class size adjustments. All students will be provided with the opportunity to access instruction even if class size adjustments are made.

**Will younger students be required to wear face masks?**

Younger students (Headstart-kindergarten) will not be required to wear face masks during the course of the school day. This aligns with the latest research and information provided by the state health department and the CDC.



**I do not feel comfortable sending my younger child to school.  
Do I have other options?**

Remote and distance learning opportunities will be provided for our younger students. These opportunities may include some level of virtual instruction. Parents must complete the virtual learning application to enroll their children in one of our alternative instructional programs.

## English Language Learners (ELL)

**Will my child still receive ELL services this year?**

We will still offer ELL services. Your child's schedule may be different depending on their grade level, but the same services will be offered.

**We just moved into the area. Can my child still be screened for ELL services?**

The process for screening students for ELL services has not changed. Students who may need ELL support will be screened. Learn more at [www.kcpublicschools.org/families/language-services](http://www.kcpublicschools.org/families/language-services).

**Will the ACCESS test be given to ELL students this year?**

The state has not cancelled any required assessments at this time. The ACCESS test is still scheduled to be given during the upcoming school year.



**For more information visit: [www.kcpublicschools.org](http://www.kcpublicschools.org)**