



Frequently Asked Questions 2020-2021

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q 1. Is it either 100% face to face OR 100% virtual option?

A 1. Yes, each student must select one or the other. This way, we can arrange appropriate class loads with teachers.

Q 2. Are there going to be enough substitutes if a teacher has to go on prolonged leave because of COVID-19?

A 2. We are working to recruit more substitute teachers, as this is always a concern for public schools. Some of the reasons that we are following the required safety options is to keep our staff healthy and our schools open.

Q 3. Do you have an example of a “typical day” for both in-person and virtual instruction?

A 3. An In-person day will look somewhat like the past years, with more safety protocols. Virtual will look differently as some parents need a flexible time option to work outside of a typical school day. For 7-12, a draft idea might be that they use google classroom to get class messages/assignments, view recorded material, join live meetings or discussion boards, and work on assignments. We will not have students on screen live for the entirety of the day, or attending each class live. For DK-6 we have some sample schedules that we are reviewing that have class sessions (live or recorded) of around 30 minutes, with brain breaks and independent practice in between.

Q 4. Will class sizes be limited? Is there a “cap” on the number of kids that will be in a class regardless of how many sign up for virtual or in person?

A 4. We have caps on our classes per the contract that we follow. Once we have the virtual numbers we will be working on how best to set up the classes.

Q 5. At what point would Ionia Public Schools consider going 100% virtual? What criteria would need to be met?

A 5. We watch the numbers daily, and will work with the health department to see if they deem cases high enough that a building would need to close. Also, we follow the guidance from the state, which in Stage 4 allows for school to be opened with the required safety protocols.

Q 6. How many team members are being assigned to technology support?

A 6. We have our IT team available, and you can contact help@ioniaschools.org for support. We also will be setting up times with teachers to help with troubleshooting issues.

Q 7. When does the first semester end and second semester start?

A 7. First semester ends on January 22, 2021 and second semester starts on January 25, 2021.

Q 8. What efforts are you making to allow for teachers that want to be virtual to get a virtual position?

A 8. The application window is open, and depending on numbers and Highly Qualified areas that the applicants are allowed to teach, we will place as many as we can.

Q 9. If school has to close in Phase 1-3, will the students step right into the same classes as those choosing the on-line option?

A 9. DK- 6 Virtual students will continue as they have been. DK-6 Face to Face students will continue with their same teacher, just virtually, with some hard copies mailed if there are WIFI/device concerns. 7-12 will continue with their teachers, just online.

Q 10. Is there a discussion board that the district is using or should we rely solely on weekly updates?

A 10. Please visit our Ready to Learn website for updates and check IPS social media as well. Updates at this time may come out more frequently, and buildings will also be communicating before the start of school. Please email questions to: questions@ioniaschools.org

<https://www.ioniaschools.org/district-information/return-to-learn-plan>

Q 11. Still seems like an awful lot of unknowns for everyone...any chance of our decision day getting moved back?

A 11. We can consider moving the date, but we also have to keep in mind that we need to rearrange our staff schedules and review the staff certifications.

Q 12. Why is the hybrid teaching method not being considered (all children are not on campus at the same time)?

A 12. The Return to Schools Committee discussed a hybrid model but found it lacking in adequate face to face learning opportunities.

FACE TO FACE QUESTIONS

Q 1. Can we elaborate some on face to face learning in the aspect of the emotional environment that will be? I am concerned that the environment of the school will seem cold and sterile.

A 2. School will look differently with masks, hand washing, cleaning, and distancing when possible. However, we are still educators here for students. We are increasing our socio-emotional learning supports, working to find connections with students, and trying to be as “normal” as possible.

Q 3. For face to face students what is the plan if we go back down to phase 3? Will the face to face kid’s teachers be ready to teach virtually?

A 3. Yes, we are providing more Professional Development learning around virtual coursework, so that we will be prepared for a more rigorous virtual classroom than the spring, if we have to be virtual due to quarantine or phase change.

Q 4. Is this year going to result in multiple shutdowns? How do I prepare my student for constant change?

A 4. It may be that as we look at the data, there may be times when quarantine and Phase change will have schools/classes closed. We will have support available for parents to talk to their children as we move forward on the Family Support Resources tab, but having direct conversations about those possibilities with your children is a great start.

VIRTUAL QUESTIONS

Q 1. Will students participating in virtual instruction still be able to receive school meals?

A 1. The virtual students will be able to continue to get breakfast and lunches from our IPS Food Service Staff from Noon - 1:00 pm on Monday & Thursdays at Ionia High School, 250 E.

Tuttle. This program will be only for virtual learning students enrolled at Ionia Public School. If school is closed for a holiday, break or for an in-service day, no meals will be available. Ionia Public Schools will provide free breakfast and lunch for all DK-12 students.

Q 2. If they do the virtual instruction option, do they have to be tested before coming back next semester?

A 2. With regard to academic testing, students will be graded on participation and academic standards throughout the 1st semester regardless of the instruction delivery method you choose for your child. With regard to COVID testing, there is no current rule or requirement that students be tested for COVID prior to entering school. We will follow local, state and federal laws if they change and require such testing.

Q 3. What if I choose virtual and it isn't working out? Can I switch to face to face? Any chance of switching to face to face at the quarter..not at the semester mark?

A 3. Unfortunately, to balance classes, we need a 9 week commitment for Virtual learning. We will have more support in place to help you to be successful in that option.

Q 4. If virtual is the chosen option. Will students still have access to hard copies of books and paper assignments? Especially due to connectivity issues in the area.

A 4. There may be some access for materials that may be needed (textbooks, etc.) but ultimately, you should not choose the Virtual option if you have connectivity issues, unless you are willing to drive to an area to access our WIFI.

Q 5. Will there be certain times the children will have to get on the computer with the teacher? My husband and I work until 3:30 and she won't be home to do anything on the computer until around 4.

A 5. We know that it isn't always possible to log in at the same time as the teacher, when you are a working parent. We will have recorded lessons as well, to allow for more flexible access to the program.

Q 6. You addressed the open houses briefly for students entering a new school, and I am wondering if I choose to do first semester virtual learning, will my child have an opportunity to tour the school prior to the start of the second semester?

A 6. This will of course depend on what phase we are in at the time, but we will plan on transitions for the students returning, and if it is possible to arrange a meeting or tour, we can plan that option.

Q 7. If I sign my child up for virtual learning, can my daycare provider help her with her school work seeing that I work 8-5? Or does it have to be a parent. Also, does there have to be a designated person or would she still be able to do work at her father's house?

A 7. Your child can work on their work virtually from any location, and with any person that agrees to help. However, due to FERPA privacy, we may not be able to share your child's personal information (grades, conferences, etc) with a third party.

Q 8. Will there be a resource for parent groups to make contact with one another so we can potentially gather small groups of virtual students face to face for study/peer to peer time?

A 8. We have not worked on this idea, as the Virtual Option was designed to have less interaction with others. However, if you know people that are willing, or your student knows other students that they can reach out to, that is an option that you could arrange.

Q 9. Will virtual students be negatively affected when applying for college?

A 9. No, virtual students are still working on a standards based curriculum, and earning grades/credit. Colleges have been instructed by the MDE to be flexible regarding admission.

Q 10. What are kids looking at on average for screen time per grade, if they go virtual?

A 10. We have guidance on maximum daily learning time:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u>Maximum Daily Learning Time</u>	<u>Recommended Length of Sustained Attention</u>
Kindergarten	90 minutes	3 – 5 minutes
1 st	90 minutes	5 – 10 minutes
2 nd	90 minutes	5 – 10 minutes
3 rd	120 minutes	10 – 15 minutes

4 th	120 minutes	10 – 15 minutes
5 th	120 minutes	10 – 15 minutes
6 th	180 minutes	1 subject area or class
7 th	180 minutes	1 subject area or class
8 th	180 minutes	1 subject area or class
9 th	270 minutes	210 minutes a day
10 th	270 minutes	210 minutes a day
11 th	270 minutes	210 minutes a day
12 th	270 minutes	210 minutes a day

Q 11. Will her teacher be the same or is the virtual teacher going to be different than the in school teacher?

A 11. This depends on the grade level. For DK-6 students, our virtual students will be assigned specific virtual teachers whenever possible. For 7-12 students, it is likely that virtual and in-person students will share the same teacher, depending on the specific course.

Q 12. Can we clarify how students will get technology if they do not have it? Will you provide it for free/for a fee?

A 12. We have devices that can be loaned out for the semester, with a signed parent agreement for care and use.

Q 13. How do you plan on teaching Choir, Band, PE or STEM virtually?

A 13. We are working with our teachers to create those lessons virtually, but there are classes that cannot be replicated well virtually. Those courses may look very differently than Face to Face.

BAND/CHOIR QUESTIONS

Q 1. What options are being offered in terms of band in online learning?

A 1. While it is not possible to replicate the live course virtually, there are virtual options for music classes in the Virtual Instruction option. This might look like: recorded classes that can be followed at home, recorded home performances that are emailed for feedback from teachers, music theory online lessons, music posted online in Google Classroom for students to learn, etc.

Q 2. If band and/or choir aren't offered to virtual students, if a parent registered her students as Homeschool would they be able to participate in band/choir?

A 2. This is optional for school districts and at Ionia Public Schools is determined on a case-by-case basis depending on class sizes and availability of resources.

Q 3. Will IPS have fall sports and will virtual student be able to participate?

A 3. Those decisions are made by leadership in those areas (MHSAA, etc.), and they are dependent on the Phase we are in. Students enrolled in either Virtual Instruction or Face to Face will be allowed to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities.

ELEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Q 1. So, my first grader will have to wear a mask walking into school and not be required to wear it in class?

A 1. According to the CDC guidelines, In stage 4, masks are required to be worn by DK- 5 students at all-times except during breakfast/lunch and recess.

Q 2. How much parenting help and time is needed for elementary students? Do I have to sit with her throughout her school day?

A 2. The amount of support students will need will depend on age, grade and skill level.

Q 3. Where will breakfast and lunches be held? And will there be play time and recess?

A 3. Meals will still be held in the classroom, with as much planned spacing and separating as possible. There will be playtimes and recess, with safety mitigations.

Q 4. Will younger children be in the lunchroom together as usual? Is that what is planned for them, rather than eating in the classroom to minimize their contact with more children?

A 4. Elementary children will eat in their classroom. Weather permitting students will have outside recess in order to mitigate exposure as much as possible.

Q 5. I am assuming that IPS's overall philosophy with DK-5 is to keep the children with their classroom as much as possible to mitigate the risk of the virus spreading when children come into contact with another classroom, grade level, etc. Is this assumption correct - that IPS will try to keep classrooms as pods as much as possible?

A 5. Yes, we will be following our local health department recommendation to keep students grouped in cohorts or pods. An example might be, two second grade classrooms are paired and they will be assigned a section of the playground for recess. No other pairs/groupings/pods/cohorts would use that section of playground during that same time. This paired grouping/cohort/pod would not change so we can mitigate exposure as much as possible.

Q 6. How are children going to sit in classrooms and use class supplies?

A 6. We will be working on having less shared supplies and more frequent cleaning to alleviate this concern. Seating will depend on how many students choose the virtual option, and how much we can arrange for spacing.

Q 7. Will parents be allowed to escort their children to class?

A 7. In Phase 4, visitors will not be allowed in the buildings without administrative approval, COVID screening and proper PPE.

Q 8. How is Kindergarden Roundup being handled?

A 8. Testing will be conducted during the first two weeks of school and recommendations for place will be established.

HIGH SCHOOL QUESTIONS

Q 1. What about HS students who were enrolled in college courses through Ionia County ISD?

A 1. Communication should have been sent to each student via email and/or US mail directly from Ionia County ISD if students are enrolled in the Heartlands CTE program. This contained specific information about each program and the instruction method being used. If you did not receive this information, please visit their website at: <http://www.ioniaisd.org/> here you can find contact information and further guidance.

Q 2. My incoming freshman will be virtual to start and his schedule says he has Band, Robotics and Phys Ed. How will this be handled? Will other classes replace those? Will he be able to take those at a later time? How will he earn those credits if he's virtual?

A 2. We will need to look at the virtual student's HS schedule and potentially do schedule changes if we cannot replicate those courses. If his schedule allows, he could possibly take these at a different time and take a course virtually that is more fully supported in a virtual classroom. All courses will be credit earning, with the goal of completing before graduation.

Q 3. What electives will not be available for HS students if they elect virtual instruction?

A 3. Our goal would be to have as many students participate in their schedule virtually as possible, but we are going to have to work with our teachers to see if the classes that have a more hands on approach would be available. We will not know that as of yet, because the teachers do need to weigh in.

Q 4. Would my students be given the option to physically attend class for any big class activities and test taking if we choose virtual?

A 4. No, virtual instruction will be fully virtual

Q 5. My son will be in 9th grade this year. Last year he took Algebra 1 in 8th grade and passed the final. My concern is if we choose virtual can we be guaranteed he will take geometry this year?

A 5. Yes, virtual or face to face, he can still have geometry in his schedule

Q 6. How will high school students be social distancing in the classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms and who will enforce that they keep masks on?

A 6. Social distancing will depend on the amount of students that go Virtual. In stages 4-6 social distancing is not required, and may not be possible in the classrooms and hallways. Masks will be required, and we will work with our administration and staff to allow enforcement. Pre-

educating your student, and having them practice wearing masks will help, but this is a requirement for school and will be enforced as other school expectations.

Q 7. My child is in high school and had a hard time focusing during the spring semester. What do you have to help keep children on track?

A 7. In the spring, per the state, the classes could only be credit/no credit, which lowered expectations for some students. The accountability for this year has increased and students will be given grades based on performance and attendance.

Q 8. Will there be monitors of restrooms?

A 8. We do not have monitors during all hours, but, administration is aware of the areas of the school where students can congregate, and will check them when possible.

SCHOOL OF CHOICE QUESTIONS

Q 1. How many school of choice students will we take and will priority be given to families currently enrolled as school of choice?

A 1. Schools of choice spots are currently unlimited through September 11, 2020. Students currently enrolled under schools of choice are automatically renewed from year to year unless they choose to unenroll at IPS. However, if we see an uptick in SOC enrollments, we will look into hiring more staff to accommodate.

MASK QUESTIONS

Q 1. Will there be specific mask requirements? Size, style, etc.

A 1. Students will need to follow their building dress (including accessories) code which may include: may not advertise, promote, or depict alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, violent behavior, or other inappropriate images, lewd, vulgar, obscene, or offensive language or symbols, including gang symbols.

Q 2. If a student can't wear a mask, what documentation is needed? Will they still be included in face to face learning without feeling isolated?

A 2. If a student is medically unable to wear a mask then medical documentation will need to be completed by a medical professional (MD, DO). You may also consider opting to enroll in our Bulldog Virtual education.

Q 3. Will masks be required during physical activity times, such as gym?

A 3. According to the required aspects of the MI Safe Schools Roadmap masks are required in stage 4 for 6-12 students and during transportation/transitions/hallways for DK-5.

Q 4. If you are face to face and your child is DK-5 and you change to them wearing masks all day can they then go virtual? That is a huge factor for us if kids are required to mask all day our child will not attend in face to face.

A 4. It is possible that the state could change guidance at any time and require masks. The recommendations are based on health data, and this pandemic has been unpredictable. However, we would need the commitment to go virtual by our deadline, so as a family, you will need to make the decision that is the best for your child.

SPECIAL EDUCATION QUESTIONS

Q 1. Can special education services be addressed? As a parent to a DK student that requires extra help, we feel a little forgotten. How will their day look? Will their extra help come into the classroom? Are they taken to a separate room? Are the services still available?

A 1. Special education services will happen, with consideration to keep students from breaking their cohort at the lower levels. This may mean push in services, or pull out with other IEP students in their class. Details will be worked out within the first weeks of face-to-face instruction.

Q 2. What about special needs children that can't do the online learning and a weak immune system? My son has an IEP, what are you planning on doing to help him if virtual learning is chosen?

A 2. Each IEP is different, and may need different supports. Face to Face supports will be different than Virtual, as the mode of instruction is vastly different. Special Education teachers will develop virtual lesson plans based on the IEP goals and will support General Education teachers via the virtual classroom.

Q 3. What are your plans for freedom acres?

A 3. Freedom Acres is not an Ionia Public Schools program. The Ionia County Intermediate School District operates Freedom Acres.

Q 4. What is the plan for support staff such as speech pathologists and occupational therapists who provide services to children across classrooms? Will there be additional safeguards since these persons would be pulling and interacting with students from many classrooms and possibly be present at multiple schools?

A 4. Support staff will follow the same protocols established for all IPS Staff.

SAFETY PROTOCOL QUESTIONS

Q 1. Outside of new air filtration, hand washing stations, and mask wearing, are there any additional precautions being taken for students?

A 1. Yes, we are looking at different options for recess, transitions, classroom set up, and potentially having less students in the building with the virtual option. Each building has different logistical needs, and we are working on those details now. Additional information will be provided on our website.

Q 2. Are parents allowed in the school with masks on?

A 2. During Phase 4, guests will not be allowed into our buildings unless prearranged with the building Principal.

Q 3. If a student has a fever at school are they going to be isolated away from other students and staff while they wait to get picked up?

A 3. Yes, it is a requirement that all buildings have a quarantine area for students that are showing symptoms, that they must wait in, with a mask, until picked up.

Q 4. Will plans be sent out for what students can expect in their day to day and how it will be different? I'm thinking limited hall traffic, lunches in classrooms if that's a thing, any other safety protocols (outside of masks), etc. to help parents communicate what to expect.

A 4. Yes, we have a list of areas that parents will need communication on, and will be sending one page information sheets out periodically as we get closer to the start of school.

Q 5. What are going to be your daily cleaning procedures for classrooms and common areas?

A 5. Cleaning will occur every four hours in common areas (before school, mid-day and after school) and classroom desks will be cleaned in between class movement.

Q 6. Symptom assessments and temp checks: will you be having parents fill out a symptom assessment daily prior to kids even getting on the bus, or coming into a school building?

A 6. We will send out a daily health screener that parents need to review before sending their student to school. We are working with our health department on this <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:fc5c5847-2377-4164-baec-106ceaa0901b>

TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONS

Q 1. What if student A rides the elementary school bus. Those buses carry multiple buildings on them; Boyce, Jefferson, Emerson and Twin River students. Does the whole bus need to self-quarantine?

A 1. We will follow the guidance of our health dept. (see link in the above questions) and bus transportation. Transportation will also look differently this year, with mandatory assigned seats, students grouped by family, sanitizer used as they enter and leave the bus (mounted station available by the driver), and masks worn.

Q 2. Does the district have enough bus drivers in case bus drivers have to go on leave because of COVID-19?

A 2. We are always recruiting bus drivers, and this is a concern, which is why we need our parents supportive of our safety procedures, to keep everyone healthy.

Q 3. How often are busses being cleaned?

A 3. We have increased cleaning on our busses. Busses are cleaned at the end of each route.

Q 4. If we can provide transportation just to school, would you like us to do so? Our students would need transportation home from school?

A 4. We encourage parents who are able to transport their children and to and from school.

Q 5. How are you going to handle all the extra traffic? The schools already had an issue with parking and traffic control without all the parents dropping and picking up.

A 5. We are working with our transportation department and local law enforcement to help with traffic issues.

QUARANTINE/ISOLATION QUESTIONS

Q 1. If a classroom has to self-isolate for two weeks, are they going to be online learning in the virtual classrooms already set up or are they going to be virtual learning with their assigned teacher(s)?

A 1. This will be with their assigned teacher, for more continuity of learning.

Q 2. If someone gets sick in a class will the whole class have to quarantine?

A 2 Per the Health dept. Information, not necessarily. They consider the amount of time spent in close contact and various other factors to make those decisions. We will be in close contact and follow their guidance.

Q 3. If someone in the buildings gets sick will the whole building have to quarantine?

A 3. Not necessarily. We will be working closely with the health department to do contact tracing and to determine which students and/or staff would need to quarantine.

Q 4. If students are home due to quarantine, how many negative tests will they have to have in order to return to face to face?

A 4. The local Health Department will provide you with a letter that says you are “cleared” to return to work/school. We will require that letter in order for your child to return to school.

Q 5. One of the questions was regarding quarantining all children from one family should one of them get sick. Is this only if there is a positive Covid test?

A 5. Yes. We know that students will continue to deal with the seasonal cold and other common illnesses. With Health Department guidance, we will not require students to quarantine unless they have tested positive for COVID or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive.

Q 6. How will learning be structured for children in testing positive and in quarantine? Considering the student could be out for almost 30 days. Asking this because I have 2 students and while the other would hopefully not be ill and able to continue learning without stopping. Will the online and in person lessons be on the same lesson plan?

A 6. We are working with teachers to provide lessons on Google Classroom and SeeSaw in a similar format. Content will be delivered on these platforms and students will continue to be able to access this content and communicate with their teachers regardless of whether they're in a face-to-face setting, in our virtual program, or are in quarantine.