

Optional Virtual Learning Q and A

- 1. Is it possible to start the school year in the hybrid model and then switch to virtual only later in the school year?**

Due to the complexity of arranging schedules for hybrid in-person learning, we cannot allow families to switch to virtual only after the deadline. We will need to allocate staff for the virtual learning program and need to have finalized numbers prior to the start of the school year. The only exception is students that obtain medical documentation indicating they must move to remote only.

- 2. Is it possible to start the school year in the virtual model and then switch to hybrid later in the school year?**

Due to the complexity of arranging schedules for virtual learning and hybrid in-person learning, we cannot allow families to switch to hybrid learning after they make the commitment to virtual learning. If a student is not successful in the virtual only learning program, parents will be expected to first contact the teacher to discuss solutions. If need be, a referral to the Student Support Team will be made to discuss other interventions, which may include a return to in-person learning if other interventions are not successful.

- 3. What if the pandemic improves dramatically, and school is able to return to full-time, 100% capacity. Can our children then return back to school from the virtual program if we choose?** (Southwestern will commit to a semester long virtual only option for the high school and a yearlong virtual only option for the middle and elementary students regardless of the status of the pandemic)

If the pandemic dramatically improves and we can return to full capacity, families can choose to come back to in-person learning because the demands for our schedule will not be as significant and we will be able to safely place students in to schedules.

- 4. What will the hours be for virtual teaching? Will it be the same as a typical school day?**

This will be explained further at each building level. However, elementary students will NOT be expected to participate in virtual learning in front of a computer all day. We will make sure each virtual requirement is developmentally appropriate for your child's age. Older students (middle and high school) will be expected to participate in live streaming of new content when it is taught. However, it would be very unusual for a student to be required to live stream for an entire class period. Expectations will be explained thoroughly by each grade level at the middle school and by each teacher at the high school.

5. Will virtual only students be eligible for extra-curricular activities?

Yes! Virtual only students are eligible to participate in all extra-curricular activities offered to their peers. This includes sports when they are allowed, student council, music courses, etc.

6. My child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Who do I talk with to discuss needs and services?

Please contact Amy McCloskey, Pupil Services Director, to set up a time to discuss your child's needs in a virtual only program. Amccloskey@swcsk12.org

7. Will there be a schedule to follow for virtual only?

Yes, you will receive specific information as this varies by grade level.

8. Will there be pre-recorded lessons to watch at our convenience around our work schedule?

Attendance is mandatory for all students, including virtual only students. If you have a specific need based on child care or your work schedule, please contact your child's principal to discuss how we can help accommodate your needs.

9. Will there be regular check-ins with my child's teacher?

Yes, your child will have contact daily with an instructor, as well as regular lessons.

10. What benchmarks and assessments will my child need to participate in?

All students grades k-8 will participate in the reading and math benchmark assessments given three times a year (iReady). We are assuming students will be required to take the New York State 3-8 assessments in the Spring, as well as Regents exams for high school students in January and/or June. If state assessments are cancelled like they were in the 19-20 school year, we will let families know that immediately.

11. What materials will the school provide?

The school will provide a 1:1 laptop for all students grades k-12. The school will provide all curricula and materials such as worksheets, books, videos, etc. Families will be asked to provide basic materials such as pencils, crayons, paper, etc. A family does not need access to a printer to participate in virtual only learning. Learning packets for younger students will be provided by the school.

12. Will children have the same teachers as kids going to school?

All children will have SWCS staff with appropriate certification for the classes they are teaching virtually. More information about specific teachers will be provided during the required parent meeting for virtual only learning.

13. Will students be able to do music, art and PE?

Yes, students will participate in the same specials as their peers. The instruction may look different (e.g., PE will be something like a list of activities to choose from), but music and art will be streamed from the classroom while other children are participating.

14. Will there be any type of gap between students in the virtual program vs. hybrid learning?

Students will participate in the same curricula as in-person learning. The same New York State standards will be addressed. Families will need to work closely with their children to check on work progress and contact the school if the student needs additional support.