

Parent & Student Handbook



Distance Learning August 2020

INTRODUCTION

Wythe County Public Schools would like to welcome you to the new school year. We recognize that this will be a challenge, filled with new learning experiences for everyone. WCPS will continue its commitment to provide every student a high-quality education in a safe and supportive environment, with access to resources and support.

We hope that this handbook will be a helpful informational guide for families as we begin this extraordinary journey together.

BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

The first day of school is **Tuesday, September 8**, but we will need you before then!

Individual Schools will contact you to schedule Back to School Visitation/Distance Learning Orientation. This will occur August 26 through September 2. During your visitation, you will:

- Complete online registration (if they have not done so already)
- Receive general school information and class expectations
- Receive your child's daily schedule
- Receive your child's Chromebook and learn how to access digital learning, and sign the WCPS One to One Device Agreement
- Test device and connectivity
- Receive any textbooks, workbooks, supplies, and other resources your child may need
- Meet your child's teachers
- Learn who to contact with questions, concerns and technology issues
- Learn about obtaining meals
- Learn about checking out library books

When visiting WCPS buildings, all visitors must wear a face covering.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance Learning is defined as instruction in which the students and teacher are in different locations. Distance Learning includes a variety of methods and strategies delivered digitally. In order to experience success, WCPS and our student families must work as a team to co-facilitate learning, design consistent routines, and establish a learning environment in which students can thrive.

Types of Distance Learning:

Synchronous Learning: Remote learning where everyone from a given group/class is online at the same time using Google Meet.

Asynchronous Learning: Remote learning where students access recordings or recorded Meets or lessons any time during the day.

WCPS teachers will use both types of learning in order to best meet the needs of students and families. While we encourage those able to attend as many live, online meetings as possible, we understand that this may be difficult at times due to limited internet access and the unique daily schedules of individual families. For these reasons, all live, online meetings will be recorded and available for viewing at a later time.

WCPS will also provide the following Distance Learning opportunities:

Independent Activities and Practice: Will be part of your daily activities and lessons. Children will have assignments they can work on independently when not directly engaged with Synchronous or Asynchronous learning.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Daily SEL checks are important to help support students. Identifying concerns and addressing them appropriately is necessary.

Distance Learning Schedules:

For Middle and High School Students: Your child will follow his/her daily schedule and class times.

Live meetings will be offered as follows:

- Classes will have live meetings every day during class time **except Fridays** (Distance Learning instruction will still occur)
- Google Meet will be used for all live meetings
- Students may also access live meetings by calling in by phone (the number to call in will be listed with the Google Meet notice in the calendar)
- Be sure to note the times for your live meetings in each teacher's CANVAS calendar

Live meetings will vary in length and purpose. The teacher may simply be checking in with students, hosting a questions & answers session, reviewing work, or teaching a mini-lesson. The bulk of teaching will occur in pre-recorded videos that will accompany the resources and assignments in CANVAS.

Distance Learning Instruction:

Teachers are prepared to deliver quality instruction to your child through Distance Learning. WCPS will use CANVAS as its Learning Management System. Weekly schedules, assignments, materials, links, and videos/recordings will all be available through CANVAS. Due dates will be assigned, and students will receive grades. Tests and quizzes will be given through Distance Learning. It is important to pay attention to instructions and due dates in order to complete assignments successfully.

Teachers may request that your child participate in small group or one-on-one instruction/remediation.

Some teachers will use online learning programs to supplement your child's educational experience. If there is no offline option for these programs, the teacher will provide instruction that is the academic equivalent of the program for those without internet access.

As with traditional school, teachers will provide a variety of assignments through Distance Learning. If you or your child has questions regarding an assignment, you may email the teacher or call the school. Emails and calls will be answered/returned within 24 hours.

If you need supplies for your student to complete any assignments, please call your individual school. WCPS will do its best to make sure that you have what you need to be successful and feel comfortable in this new learning environment.

Teachers will be communicating with families on a regular basis. It is imperative that the school has correct phones numbers and parent email addresses. It is also important that, if calls are missed, that they are returned in a timely manner.

If you need to communicate with your child’s teacher(s), you may do so by email, phone (call your school), or virtual meeting (email or call to schedule). You may contact the teachers Fridays during each teacher’s “office hours” that will be posted on their CANVAS pages.

ELEMENTARY Distance Learning Instruction Outline

Daily Communication

Who	How	When:	Examples:
PK-2	Live - Google Meet, email, phone calls	School Day, Evening if needed	Class meetings, Check-ins, Parent meeting
3-5	Live - Google Meet, email, phone calls	School Day, Evening if needed	Class meetings, Check-ins, Parent meeting

Engagement

Who:	How:	When:	Examples:
PK-2	Live class sessions, Recorded lessons - CANVAS activities	M-TH M-F	Virtual lessons, digital resources, recorded lessons. Hands-on activities, turning in assignments
3-5	Live class sessions, Recorded lessons, CANVAS activities	M-TH M-F	Virtual lessons, digital resources, recorded lessons, turning in assignments

Content

Who:	What:	When:	Examples:
PK-2	Teachers will focus on providing learning opportunities that will expose and allow for new content as well as review, and to practice reading, writing, and math grade-level performance indicators. Science and social studies will be incorporated.	M-F	Standards review, mini-lessons, small group, writing activities, word study, read aloud, morning meeting activities, independent work, problem of the day, virtual field trips, hands-on activities
3-5	Provide learning opportunities that include new material instruction as well as review.	M-F	Standards review, mini-lessons, small group, writing activities, word study, read aloud, virtual field trips independent work, problem of the day

Academic Time (Minimum)

Who:	Core:	Other (Daily)	Specials
PK	90 minutes per day	30 minutes of physical activity, drama, singing, etc...	1 per day M-Th - 30 minutes
K-1	120 minutes per day	Small group sessions (10 - 15 minutes)	1 per day M-Th - 30 minutes
2-3	140 minutes per day	Small group sessions (10 - 15 minutes)	1 per day M-Th - 30 minutes
4-5	180 minutes per day	Cooperative Activities, Projects	1 per day M-Th - 30 minutes
*Teachers may need to gradually increase time depending on age of students	*Divide between live/recording and independent work throughout the day	*Can be live/recording or independent assigned activities	*live/recording, media specialists will schedule times to check out books safely

Grading

Who:	How:	When:
PK-5	Assignments will be graded. Feedback will be provided by teachers.	Teachers will notify students how and when to turn in digital assignments.

English Learners (EL) and Gifted & Talented (GT) Students

PK-5	Classroom Teacher	Tutor/Coach
EL	Provide appropriate support instruction and allow any accommodations from his/her plan, differentiate	Will support students one-on-one or in small virtual groups
Gifted and Talented	Provide challenging activities for students, differentiated options, opportunities for enrichment	Support teachers with activities for students, hold virtual classes when appropriate

Distance Learning Expectations:

Without parent support and student participation, Distance Learning will not be successful. Please review the following students and parent expectations:

Students	Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your teacher's CANVAS calendars each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review teacher's CANVAS calendars each week
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend as many live meets as possible if you have internet access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that your child is ready to start each school day and

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch all live meets that are missed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriately attired to attend live meetings • Limit background noise and other people in the background as much as possible • Make sure that your child watches any live meetings that are missed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete school assignments daily, paying attention to instructions and due dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check to make sure your child is completing assignments • If you do not have internet, make sure that you drive to an access point each Friday and download the next week's work OR be available for your Chromebook pick-up and return each Friday
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow each teacher's virtual classroom rules and procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce how important it is that your child take Distance Learning seriously
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer teacher emails and phone calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open to communication with your child's school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for help when you are having difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for help when you are having difficulties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to the WCPS Distance Learning Honor Code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that your child is completing his/her own work independently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow a daily routine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set your child a daily routine
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a quiet learning space (use headphones or earbuds if possible) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a quiet learning space
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take care of assigned devices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child to be responsible for the device

Special Needs Students

Students with Individualized Education Plans and 504s will have needs that may take extra effort to provide for in the Distance Learning setting. Teachers will work with Special Education teachers, their teams, and paraprofessionals to ensure that these students' plans are implemented.

Resource teachers and regular education teachers will work with every parent/guardian and make arrangements for instruction and support that will create the most positive and successful learning experience.

The Special Education Department will also work with families for those students needing Speech, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Vision/Hearing.

Grading

Students will be required to complete assigned work and participate in classroom activities to receive credit/grades. Low performance on assessments will be met with the chance to re-learn and retest.

Students will be allowed to re-take/re-do work that was not completed or affected by technology issues.

Grading scales for each level will remain the same as before closure.

Gifted & Talented (Elementary & Middle School)

Gifted and Talented teachers will continue to provide Gifted and Talented Instruction.

WCPS DISTANCE LEARNING TECHNOLOGY PLAN

WCPS will use CANVAS as our Learning Management System (LMS). Within CANVAS, teachers will use a variety of resources to deliver instruction. Each teacher's CANVAS home page will include a calendar, syllabus, and the WCPS Distance Learning Honor Code.

In order to best serve your child's instructional needs, it is important that you let your school know if you do not have daily access to reliable internet.

Students who do not have reliable, daily internet access, will need to download new content/uploaded completed content at least once a week each Friday from any available access point. New class material will be available for download each Friday after 10am. Students who do not have access or transportation to an access point, will contact the school office for assistance. School faculties will instruct parents/students on how to download/upload during their device pickup times.

Go Guardian

All students Chromebooks have a program called Go Guardian. Go Guardian allows teachers some control over what students do on their devices at certain times. Go Guardian also sends an alert, with content and pictures, when someone uses the device for what WCPS deems inappropriate or for school. Principals will receive these alerts.

DISTANCE LEARNING ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

It is essential for students to be actively engaged and regularly interact in order to make strides with their academic progress. For Distance Learners, interaction will be the main tool in monitoring attendance. Interaction is defined as appearing in a live meet, logging in to the Learning Management System, turning in assignments on time, or participating in any other type of communication.

Therefore, students are to be in attendance/interactive and actively engaged in digital learning lessons and assignments unless an emergency situation arises. Parents are responsible for contacting their child's teacher as soon as possible any morning that their child(ren) will be absent from participating in the daily online activities.

Teachers will keep a daily log of students who show no interaction.

Teachers will monitor student interaction and follow these attendance guidelines:

- After 5 consecutive days of no interaction with a student, the teacher will notify school administration.
- The student's official school attendance will be marked UNV for those 5 consecutive days by school administration.
- The administration will attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone or a home visit to address the attendance issue. The administration will also send a truancy letter.
- If the student continues to have no interaction for an additional 5 days (10 total), the principal will refer the student to WCPS Truancy Officer. Each additional day the student fails to be engaged will also be marked with a UNV.
- If the student continues to have no interaction despite the efforts of the teacher, school administration, and truancy officer they will be in violation of compulsory attendance laws and turned over to the court system.

Wythe County Public Schools will accept eight (8) days of absences from school, per school year, as excused (verified) with a parent/guardian notification. Absences beyond the eight (8) accepted parent notifications, will be unexcused (unverified), and subject to truancy regulations except in the following circumstances:

- Serious illness or death in the immediate family (sibling, parent, grandparent);
- Observation of religious holy days;
- Student's court or probation appointment;
- Parent departure or return to active military duty;

- School based activity;
- College or university visit (1 per junior and 2 per senior year with appropriate verification);
- Natural disaster

PARENTS & STUDENTS IN THE BUILDING

There may be times that parents and/or students will need to come into the building. These include:

- Picking up supplies needed to complete assignments
- Picking up meals, books, supplies
- IEP/504 meetings
- IEP testing
- SOL testing and other assessments
- Health Screenings (required by the Virginia Department of Education)

Each individual school will provide instructions if you are asked to come to the building. Guests in the building must follow all face covering and social distancing requirements.

ATHLETICS

Middle School

At this time, there will be no middle school athletics or any associated practice/workouts. As circumstances change, this topic will be reconsidered.

High School

Decisions about athletics will be based on guidance from VHSL, the Virginia Department of Health, and recommendations from the Commonwealth of Virginia. VHSL decided to postpone all athletic seasons to with all seasons being played as follows:

Season 1: December 13 -February 20 (Winter Sports: Basketball, Gymnastics, Indoor track, Swimming and Diving, Wrestling, 5 & 6 Theatre, Scholastic Bowl.)

Season 2: February 15- May 1 (Fall Sports: Competitive Cheer, Cross Country, Field Hockey, Football, Golf, Volleyball Forensics and Debate.)

Season 3: April 12- June 26: (Spring Sports: Baseball & Softball, Girls and Boys Lacrosse, Soccer, Tennis and Track and Field.)

This guidance and decisions made about athletics could change based on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic as the school year progresses. Updates with the status of athletics will be shared as they become available.

WCPS DISTANCE LEARNING MEAL DISTRIBUTION PLAN

Beginning September 8, 2020:

1. All ten WCPS school cafeterias will be in operation to provide both breakfast & lunch.
2. National School Lunch Program will be in effect: students will have three pay options for purchasing a meal: free; reduced; full pay.
3. WCPS students will have a two week menu provided in advance beginning August 31st. This two week menu will repeat itself every two weeks as the student meal offerings of WCPS during distance learning.
4. Students will have two options for meal service: meal pick up at their home school cafeteria **OR** pre-order of meal(s) for bus stop delivery through their home school.
5. Meal Pick Up option: students will be given a designated time & location for them to arrive at their home school and purchase a daily breakfast and/or lunch.
6. Pre-order service option: students will contact their home school office up to one week in advance of expected meal delivery and no later than noon Thursday of the week before expected delivery. Upon contact to their home school, students will identify their meal order for any days for the coming week. Pre-orders will be taken one week at a time. The school will record the pre-order request and forward to the cafeteria by Friday morning of the week before delivery is expected.

(For example, a two week menu will be provided to students on Monday, August 31st; students will place their pre-order by noon Thursday, September 3rd for the two week period of September 8-18; school administration will forward all student pre-orders to their cafeteria staff on the morning of Friday, September 4th; Each day, beginning September 8th, bus drivers will pick up pre-ordered meals and deliver to students along their bus route; meal drop off will be the student's assigned bus stop).

7. Students who are reduced pay or full pay will need to deposit meal money in person at their home school or via MySchoolBucks.com in advance of the meal delivery. Students pre-ordering a meal will have their account charged daily and upon receipt of the meal. *Buses will not carry money and will not be responsible for collection of meal monies.*
8. All student's will be fed under current WCPS payment guidelines:
 - A. The student's parent/guardian will be notified when a student's cafeteria account has a negative balance.
 - B. The school office will notify parent/guardian of low or negative balances via either School Messenger alerts, letters sent home with student, and/or telephone calls.
 - C. Notifications to parent/guardian will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, and where to go for questions or assistance.
 - D. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - E. The charge policy is on our website and included in the free and reduced meal application packet.

10 Parent Tips for Distance Learning Success

1 Understand Your Role
Parents are not expected to take the place of their students' school teachers. Instead, parents should play a support role. A good rule of thumb is to keep your children engaged and thinking critically. Staying home from school may feel like a holiday, but remind them that they are not on vacation.

2 Make Space for Learning
Your children will achieve their best work in a quiet, comfortable, and dedicated space devoted to learning. Ideally, this will be a different space than where they normally play games or watch television.

3 Set Clear Expectations
Parents should build time into their remote work day to assist with their students' learning and schedule other activities they know their children will be able to do independently.

4 Encourage Reading
When in doubt, have your children read. When you have time, read with them. For younger readers, consider using audiobooks. If you can't do anything else, have your children read!

5 Plan Your Work & Work Your Plan
Good planning can relieve stress for both children and parents. Check-in with your children about their plans and help them develop a written schedule, not only for the day, but for the week. Help them prioritize and learn to create goals, tasks, and deadlines – just like adults do when they go to work.

6 Show Empathy
Allow yourself, your children, and their teachers some latitude and grace during these unprecedented times. Understand that you (and really no one!) are not going to have all the answers, and this transition is not going to be perfect. Acknowledge this is not an ideal situation for anyone and give yourself permission to be flexible.

7 Take Regular Digital Recesses
Make sure your children take plenty of breaks from computers in order to get time away from the screen. Set alarms similar to those students would encounter at school and encourage them to get up, get some fresh air, have a snack, and participate in physical activities.

8 Ask for Help
Remember that you're not alone in this journey. Don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher for tips and guidance. Additionally, reach out to other parents to see what they've found effective.

9 Use Supplemental Resources
Use any and all available resources to enhance independent learning, such as online games, educational videos, educational television, audio book, and virtual field trips.

10 Don't Forget to Have Fun
It is rare for parents and children to have this much time together, so take advantage of it! Remember, your relationship with your child is what's most important at this time.