

## General Q&A from New Castle Parents

**Q: Why did the calendar and school hours for students change?**

A: Most of our teachers will have students enrolled in the Virtual Academy. Because of this change and the fact that we are not outsourcing our virtual program to a third party, additional time (3 days before students arrive) is needed for professional development pertaining to our virtual education. The additional three days will also allow us to have more time to install bottle refill stations, and plexiglass into designated areas as well as train the 3 new (additional) custodians we hired specifically to disinfect student desks, tables, and surfaces.

To ensure virtual and brick and mortar students receive the same instruction daily, and to make it easier for a student to transition from one to another, teachers need daily additional time to plan, record, and post lessons on Google Classroom. We still meet or exceed the daily hourly attendance requirements by the state for all grade levels.

**Q: My child goes to Latchkey, does the earlier release at the elementary level mean I will be charged more?**

A: No. We will have staff supervision for students enrolled in the Latchkey program so there will be no additional Latchkey charge.

**Q: Will my child be able to enter the building at 7am like they have done previously?**

A: Unfortunately not. We will open doors at 7:30 so that we can appropriately distance students. Once we no longer have the social distancing issue to contend with, we will revisit opening schools earlier.

**Q: I heard some corporations are charging money for their child(ren) to attend the corporation virtual program. Is New Castle charging?**

No. Our Virtual Academy is free.

**Q: Please clarify what happens if my child is sent home sick with symptoms. Do they need to be tested? When can they come back?**

A: Please see page 2 and 3 of the [Re-entry Plan](#).

1. Untested/Tested Negative - Symptomatic (Persons who are symptomatic but have not been tested, or have tested negative)

Exclude from the school environment until:

- At least 24 hours have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications

and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and

- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared; and
- The student/employee returning must wear a mask at all times for 5 days upon their return.

2. Tested Positive - Symptomatic (Persons who experienced symptoms and test positive for COVID-19)

Exclude from the school environment until:

- The individual no longer has a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medicines); and
- Other symptoms have improved; and
- At least 10 calendar days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
- The individual has been released by a healthcare provider
- Upon return, the individual must wear a mask to school/work for 5 days.

3. Tested Positive - Asymptomatic (Persons who have not had symptoms but test positive for COVID-19)

Exclude from the school environment until:

- The individual has gone 10 calendar days past the test without symptoms; or
- The individual has been released by a healthcare provider
- Upon return, the individual must wear a mask to school/work for 5 days.

**Q: If a child has a confirmed case once, are they required to follow all of the quarantine procedures again the next time they get sick? What about if they have a confirmed antibody test?**

A: Yes, follow the same guidelines as in the first question as COVID has been known to be contracted more than once. Antibody tests have not been confirmed as 100% accurate at this time.

**Q: Can my child attend the Virtual Academy if they are required to be home for 10 days for Covid symptoms so that they are not counted absent for all that time? Younger kids get many colds during the year and missing 10 days for each cold will cause significant disruption.**

A: Absolutely. Our Virtual Academy lessons and assignments will be the same as those in the classroom so students may go to Google Classroom to see their assignments.

**Q: Can we enroll in the Virtual Academy after school has started if we change our minds about in person school or if the number of cases gets worse? When can we switch back to in person school? From my understanding from the phone call, the virtual option would line up with the classroom so it would be easy to switch back. Please clarify.**

A: Students in the Virtual Academy will use the same curriculum and have the same pacing chart as in the classroom. Students may switch to and from the Virtual Academy. We ask that changes are made at the 9 week intervals if possible. If your child has a hard time adjusting to wearing a mask, he/she may change to virtual at any time. Please work with your teacher and principal to do so.

**Q: Will the attendance policy be modified to take into account the requirements for being symptom free before returning? We do not want to be punished for trying to keep our family safe and we also believe that if kids are punished for being absent that parents will not be incentivized to tell the truth or keep their sick kids home.**

A: Students who are under quarantine will be assigned to Virtual instruction and we therefore do not plan on changing our attendance policy.

**Q: If a child is infected, what steps will the school be taking to notify other parents whose children may have been exposed?**

A: We have seating charts & tracing methods in place so we can help the Health Department identify & notify individuals, following HIPPA & FERRPA guidelines.

**Q: How many positive cases will it take to close a school or a classroom?**

A: We must report all COVID-19 positive cases to the Henry County Health Department. They will facilitate the contact tracing protocols and will identify and inform individuals whom they believe have met the definition of exposure.

**Q: Can you describe a typical elementary school day and what steps will take place to protect everyone?**

A: For a full list of interventions such as hiring additional instructional aides and additional custodians, as well as PPE, new equipment used for disinfection, and new cleaning protocols etc., please go to our comprehensive [Re-entry](#) plan.

The following information is not inclusive of all changes made but will help provide an idea as to some of the modifications we have made. Our elementary classrooms will follow the same schedule of instruction of all content areas as we have previously. Students will be appropriately socially distanced with desks in rows facing the same direction. If tables are used currently in the classroom, extra desks will be brought in to help distance students. Grades 3-6 will be required to wear masks at all times. Students in grades K-2 will be encouraged to wear masks but will not be required to do so unless

they are in a setting where distance is less than appropriate (such as a small reading group lesson). Teachers will have cleaning supplies to disinfect tables , desks, materials as needed. Classrooms will be disinfected daily by our custodial staff and possibly twice if they have lunch in the cafeteria. Students will eat breakfast in the classrooms. Lunches will be served in both lunchrooms and classrooms as each building deems appropriate.

Recess will be staggered to reduce the number of students outside at any given time. Restroom breaks will also be hand washing breaks.

Tornado and Manmade Drills will be practiced in small groups to improve social distancing. More entrances and exits will be utilized to help with social distancing at arrival and departure times. There will be no cross grade level grouping of students for instruction meaning students will remain with their classroom teacher in their own room. There will be no large group gatherings or events at this time. There will be no field trips at this time.

Library book circulation will not start until at least after Labor Day- the Corp. COVID Safety team will assess. Students in k-6 will have individual math manipulative kits. Each Student will have an assigned seat on the bus, in the classroom, and in the cafeteria to assist with contact tracing. Bus riders will be required to wear a face mask (all grades). There will be no sharing of devices or materials. Book collections in classrooms will be kept in a quarantine box for 24 hours before reshelving for another student to use

**Q: How will you decide which teachers will be teaching virtually and which will be in classroom?**

A: Most of our teachers will be teaching virtually. At this time, we do not have any teachers who will be teaching virtually exclusively. Please see our Virtual Academy for more information.

**Q: Why are virtual students not allowed to participate in extracurricular activities? This seems incredibly unfair considering that homeschooled children in Indiana are allowed to participate in school sponsored activities.**

A: The board voted on July 23, 2020 to allow students enrolled in our Virtual Academy to participate in extracurricular activities. Virtual Academy students participating in extracurricular activities will be subject to the same student handbooks and Trojan Codes as brick and mortar students.

**Q: I am writing you in response to the Virtual Academy. I have a couple children we are wanting to try this with. My biggest concern is if things are going**

**smoothly in school are virtual students allowed to switch back to regular classes in the school when we feel it is safe to send them back? Is this a year long commitment?**

A: You may go to and from the Virtual Academy - this is not a commitment of a specific timeframe. We ask that changes occur at the 9 week intervals but we understand that there may be a change within the first few days of school if a student has a hard time adjusting to wearing a mask to school (grades 3-12).