

Keeping U Safe



2020-2021 Guidance for Instruction, Health and Safety Frequently Asked Questions



INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL - PLAN B

Q: What is Plan B?

A: [Plan B](#) is a hybrid instructional model that offers face-to-face instruction combined with remote learning. Beginning, Sept. 29, students will attend school two days per week, Monday/Tuesday or Wednesday/Thursday, and work remotely on the other three days. All students will work in a remote environment on Friday.

Q: Will students with an IEP, 504, EL Plan be served under Plan B?

A: Yes. Students who have services outlined on their IEP, 504, or EL Plan will be served under Plan B by qualified service providers. Specially designed instruction will be delivered in accordance with the student's plan. If there is an adjustment in instructional time offered each week under remote learning, then services will be adjusted accordingly. Please contact your school with any questions on what to expect for your student during periods of remote learning.

Q: Will AIG students be served under Plan B?

A: Under Plan B students who are eligible will continue to receive AIG support. Please contact your school with any questions on what to expect for your student during periods of remote learning.

Q: How will students know which day to attend school in person?

A: Schools will assign students to either the Monday/Tuesday cohort or Wednesday/Thursday cohort, and every effort to keep siblings and members of the same household together will be made. You should receive additional schedule specific information from your student's school and/or teacher.

Q: What about students in special populations? Will they be able to attend school more than one day per week?

A: Beginning August 17, students who are in a specialized or separate setting EC classes, alternative school, and seniors who have graduation requirements that require face-to-face instruction will have the option to attend school four days per week, Monday through Thursday. After the first two weeks of school, attempts to increase the attendance of students in special populations will be made as long as health, safety, and capacity limitations can be maintained at all schools. The principal will reserve the right to alter a student's attendance day while still allowing for social distancing and meeting health and safety protocols.

The Board is reserving the right to increase the attendance of students where health and safety, including reduced capacity and appropriate social distancing, can be maintained.

Q: What will instruction during remote learning look like for students who are not in attendance?

A: Students will have access to online instruction from their teacher(s) that may be both live and pre-recorded. Some aspects of the remote instructional day may be flexible while others may be structured such that students need to be online at a specific time. Students will complete assignments/activities that are aligned to subject/course standards. There will be opportunities

to learn individually, in small groups, and large groups via teleconferencing. The intent of remote learning is to have students follow the same pacing as the rest of the peers in their class. Please contact your student's school for the specific schedule that will be followed and the format of each subject/course.

Q: What subjects/courses will be offered under Plan B?

A: All subjects/courses in which your student is enrolled will be supported under Plan B.

Q: What grade levels will receive Chromebooks to support remote learning?

A: Second through fifth grade, middle and high school students will receive Chromebooks to support remote learning.

Q: What if I do not have access to technology on remote learning days?

A: Families who enroll in the Virtual Academy will be provided a UCPS device. If your family has concerns with internet access, contact your school for assistance. Parents and students may request print materials from their teacher(s) to complete during remote learning days.

Q: Will I have the same teacher for face-to-face and remote learning for my student?

A: This will depend on the grade, subject and each school's staffing. Teams of teachers may work together collaboratively to ensure that subjects are covered both in the classroom and remotely. Please contact your student's school for your student's specific teacher assignment and the format of each subject/course.



INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL - PLAN D

Q: What is Plan D?

A: Plan D is a virtual-only instructional offering that has been made available to students by UCPS. Students in the Virtual Academy will not attend school for in-person instruction. Instead, they will have flexibility to work at their own pace and schedule over the course of the day depending on family needs. Consistent daily schedules will include online instruction that will be a combination of both live and recorded sessions. In addition, there will be breaks and flexible times for students to meet virtually in smaller groups built into the schedule.

Q: How is Plan D different from Plan B?

A: The [UCPS Virtual Academy](#) will offer a complete education for students through a structured online curriculum. The academy will be staffed by UCPS teachers who will be providing the same quality instruction provided every day in our classrooms. To the greatest degree possible, students will be assigned teachers from their current school. However, this may not be possible in all cases and students may be served by a teacher from a neighboring cluster area school. Regardless of the teacher assignment, students will remain enrolled at their current school and will continue to receive updates, support, and services through school-based staff. Students in the Virtual Academy will have flexibility to work at their own pace and schedule over the course of the day depending on family needs. Consistent daily schedules will include online instruction that will be a combination of both live and recorded sessions. In addition, there will be breaks and flexible times for students to meet virtually in smaller groups built into the schedule. Social and emotional wellness will be taken into consideration in scheduling.

Q: How can I enroll in the Virtual Academy?

A: UCPS accepted applications for the Virtual Academy in July, and again Sept. 25 - Oct. 4 for elementary students who plan to transition to or remain in the Virtual Academy for the remainder of the school year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Will I remain enrolled at my assigned school under Plan D?

A: Yes.

Q: Will students with an IEP, 504, EL Plan be served under Plan D?

A: Yes. Students who have services outlined on their IEP, 504, or EL Plan will be served under Plan D by qualified service providers. Specially designed instruction will be delivered in accordance with the student's plan. If there is an adjustment in instructional time offered each week under virtual learning, then services will be adjusted accordingly. It is important that parents understand that the virtual option may not be the best choice for a variety of students, including those who have difficulty in a virtual environment, those with disabilities or those who require specially designed instruction.

It is important that parents understand that the virtual option may not be the best choice for students with disabilities or those who require specially designed instruction.

Q: Will AIG students be served under Plan D?

A: Under Plan D students who are eligible will continue to receive AIG support. Once you are enrolled in the Virtual Academy, please contact your school with any questions on what to expect for your student during periods of virtual learning.

Q: What subjects/courses will be offered under Plan D?

A: All core courses in grades 2-8 and all high school courses required for graduation will be offered. Course offerings for the Virtual Academy will be built based on the needs of students who enroll. The availability of teachers and the courses that students need will be determining factors in what is offered.

Q: If a student chooses Plan D, what is the commitment for this model?

A: The Board of Education approved updated instructional models at a special called meeting on Sept. 22. Elementary families who choose Plan D must commit to this model for the remainder of the school year. Middle and high school students will be required to assess their commitment at the end of the semester.

Q: What if I do not have access to technology?

A: Families who enroll in the Virtual Academy will be provided a UCPS device. If your family has concerns with internet access, contact your school for assistance.

Q: Can students still participate in athletics and student activities at their assigned school?

A: Yes. Students may participate in athletics and student activities at their assigned school as long as they meet all eligibility requirements.

Q: How will Exceptional Children's (EC) students receive their accommodations during remote learning?

A: EC teachers and service providers will provide special education and related services to students with disabilities following the same timelines outlined on their IEP. When core instructional time is modified during remote learning, then special education and related services will also be modified to reflect the change in percentage of time.

Services for each student with a disability will be considered on a case-by-case basis, with parent input, to determine if instruction from a distance is possible and appropriate. Parents will be invited to discuss a Distance Learning Plan that will address the student's ability to access distance learning and the mode of access most appropriate for the student. Below are several options that may be considered:

- Virtual classes: providing virtual classes on a platform that the student is accustomed to using.
- Phone calls: using a telephone call to work on an assignment aligned to an IEP goal, either online or a classroom packet. This could include a conference call including a small group of other students.
- Interactive exchange: utilizing a chat room or a shared Google Doc.
- Video with a follow up: providing students with pre-recorded instructional video and activities based on their IEP goals. Follow up with instructive feedback by means listed above.
- Assignments with teacher support: providing assignment(s) (based on IEP goals) in Canvas or paper packet that students complete and a follow-up phone call to provide instruction.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Q: What is the guidance for staff/student COVID-19 cases?

A: Students and staff:

- Who test positive for COVID-19
- Show symptoms of COVID-19
- Had contact with a person with COVID-19

Should stay home and not come to school or report to work in the school facility until certain criteria has been met.

Q: What is the criteria for returning to school or work at a school or office facility (adhere to the following process for allowing a student or staff member to return to school).

A: If a person has symptoms, and then has a negative COVID-19 test, they can return to school once there is no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines and they have felt well for 24 hours.

If a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional based on a test or their symptoms or does not get a COVID-19 test but has had symptoms, they should not be at school and should stay at home until they can answer YES to the following three questions:

1. Has it been at least 10 days since the child/person first had symptoms?
2. Has it been at least 24 hours since the child/person had a fever (without using fever-reducing medicine)?
3. Has there been an improvement, including cough and shortness of breath?

If a person has the following symptoms: fever, chills, shortness of breath or difficult breathing, new cough, new loss of taste or smell, they should go home, stay away from others, and call their health care provider. Household members (e.g. siblings) should also quarantine for 14 days from last exposure, unless the symptomatic person is cleared as a result of a negative test for COVID-19.

A person can return to school if there is a confirmed diagnosis from a healthcare provider, other than COVID-19 (e.g., stomach virus, ear infection). Persons should follow normal school policies to return to school.

- If a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they must remain out of school until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.
- If a person that has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has been presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, they are not required to have documentation of a negative test in order to return to school.
- If a person has been determined to have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, they must remain out of school for 14 days since the last date of exposure unless they test positive. In which case, exclusion criteria above would apply. They must complete the full 14 days of quarantine, even if they test negative.

Q: What are procedures for staff, students and visitors who enter a school or facility?

A: All schools and facilities will:

- Temperature check any student, staff, or essential visitor entering the building or facility. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater will not be allowed to enter the school building or facility.
- Screen for COVID-19 symptoms anyone entering a building or facility utilizing the screening tool provided by NCDHHS/NCDPI.
- Limit non-essential visitors entering the building or facility.

Q: Will social, emotional and mental health support be available for students and staff? Is the support available in a face-to-face, remote and/or virtual setting?

A: Yes. Social, emotional, and mental health support will be available at each school. School counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, and school-based therapists will provide needed support for students and staff in crisis or as needed on an ongoing basis. Social, emotional, and mental health support will be available in face-to-face, remote, and/or virtual settings.

Q: Is a face covering/face mask required?

A: Yes. Face coverings will be required for all K-12 students, teachers, staff and adult visitors, unless the person (or family member for a student) states that an exception applies, such as if the person is eating, drinking, or strenuously exercising. Face coverings must be worn by K-12 students, and all teachers, staff, and adult visitors inside school buildings, and anywhere on school grounds, including outside. They are also required by traveling on buses or other school transportation vehicles. Cloth face coverings are required when anyone is in-person in public schools in Plan A or Plan B.

Q: Are there exceptions to wearing face coverings/face masks?

A: Yes. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.
- Other health exceptions may also apply. Employees or students must provide medical documentation that exempts them from wearing a face covering/mask.

Q: Are face shields an allowable substitute for a cloth face covering/mask?

A: Based on recommendations from the CDC, Executive Order 163 notes that face shields do not meet the requirements for face coverings in any setting. NC DHHS does not include face shields as acceptable substitutes for face coverings within the StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12). Teachers who require mouth visibility should use transparent face masks. There is some evidence that face shields can protect the wearer from respiratory droplets spread by others. Unlike with face coverings, it is not known if face shields provide any benefit in controlling the spread of respiratory droplets to others (source control). Employees or students must provide medical documentation that exempts them from wearing a face covering/mask.

Q: Are mask breaks for students, teachers and staff recommended?

A: Yes. It is recommended schools consider building in time throughout the day when students, teachers, and staff can take short breaks from wearing face coverings at times and in settings where risk for transmission is lower (e.g. outside, when air circulation is increased by opening windows, and when people are consistently 6 feet apart).

Q: Will all schools have nurses for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Yes. All 53 schools will have an assigned nurse for the 2020-2021 school year.

Q: Is there potential for classrooms or school facilities to close due to COVID-19?

A: Yes. UCPS will continue to work closely with the Union County Health Department to take appropriate steps in the event a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19. Each situation is unique and may require cleaning of a classroom/area, school facility, closure of a classroom, or closure of a building.

Q: Are fire drills, lockdown drills and tornado drills required?

A: After conversations with law enforcement, fire marshal's office, and emergency management, a decision was made to complete all drills in a simulated manner. Students and staff will remain in the classroom and review procedures and guidelines for fire, lockdown, and tornado drills. This would be completed with groups of students during the first week of school and once per month. This process will be followed until further notice.



TRANSPORTATION

Q: How many students may ride my bus?

A: The [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services \(DHHS\) guidance](#) suggests a maximum of 1 (one) student rider per seat for Middle and High school students; on a typical UCPS bus, the maximum number transported will not exceed 24 students. Siblings from the same family household may ride together in one seat on the bus without affecting the maximum number assigned to a bus. In other words, the true maximum may exceed 24 students when an allowance is made for siblings sharing a bus seat.

Seating capacity for elementary school students changes effective Oct. 5, with the Governor Cooper's updated guidance for returning K-5 students to school. When UCPS elementary students return to school on Oct. 26, there will be no limit to the number of students that may ride the bus per DHHS requirements.

Q: What will be the cleaning protocol for the school buses?

A: School buses will be cleaned in the mornings after all students are transported to school and again in the afternoons after all students are delivered home with a focus on areas recommended by DHHS. Drivers will clean handrails after each school is served. Additional cleaning will take place on Fridays when schools are not in session. Cleaning will be performed when the bus is well ventilated and students are not present.

Q: What type of chemicals are used for cleaning the bus?

A: The cleaning supplies are state approved chemicals that are found to be safe when used on our school buses, yet effective against COVID-19. The chemicals are the same as used in our school buildings and will be stored in compartments on our buses that are not accessible to students.

Q: Will drivers wear face coverings?

A: UCPS will require face coverings and face shields for all drivers and safety assistants that are able to wear them on the bus. Face shields are being provided as an additional layer of protection, but are not mandatory.

Q: My bus stop has changed and now my student(s) must walk further to the bus stop. Why has this changed?

A: Bus stops have been consolidated into community stops where possible (resulting in more direct routes, less ride time and fewer cul de sacs/neighborhood streets travelled). This strategy has been put in place due to COVID-19 and a need to ensure

routes are as short as possible so that buses may arrive on schedule at schools. Parents are encouraged to provide transportation to/from school when possible. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to escort their student(s) to and from the bus stop or have students walk together when possible while practicing social distancing on the way to and while at the bus stop location.

Q: My children would like to sit together. Is that a possibility?

A: Students will be required to sit one to a seat on the bus, unless they are siblings. Children that reside in the same household will be able to sit together.

Q: My children often have friends over after school and that spend the night. Will they be able to ride to and from school with my child?

A: Due to our strategic plans with bus ridership, we cannot allow other students to ride buses they are not assigned to at this time. UCPS will remain diligent in making sure that we stay within the guidelines for the maximum number of bus riders.

Q: What happens if my child forgets their face covering? Will they be allowed to ride the bus?

A: Bus drivers will have a supply of face coverings on the bus and will provide one for your child if they do not have one. What happens when another student gets on the bus and refuses to wear a face covering, then that student sits in the seat beside, in front of or to the rear of my child. What will be done to ensure my child's safety?

Inevitably, a student(s) will board the bus without a face covering and either refuse to wear one or be unable to do so based on a stated exception (see StrongSchools NC Public Health Toolkit). Bus drivers will request any student that boards the bus to wear a face covering and will request that student to sit away from other students on the bus when possible. For example, a student may be asked to sit in a seat by him/herself next to the window to minimize contact with other students. However, there is no practical way to ensure that students wear face coverings 100% of the time or keep a student without a face covering from being exposed to other students during transport. It should be noted that UCPS will NOT deny transportation for any student, whether or not they are wearing a face covering.

Q: Will my child's temperature be checked at the bus stop?

A: UCPS bus drivers will not check temperatures at the bus stop. Once students arrive at school, all screening protocols will be followed upon entry to the school. School bus drivers will focus on operating the school bus safely, including the loading and unloading of students at bus stops. UCPS supports the notion that safe loading practices are our focus while students are at bus stop locations; any process that increases load time for students is most often not in the best interest of our students and families.

Q: Will hand sanitizer be provided for students while on the bus?

A: Guidance from DHHS suggests that bus drivers will have access to hand sanitizer while on the bus and that "older" students may be provided hand sanitizer. Bus drivers have been instructed to use hand sanitizer for personal hygiene, but will not be distributing hand sanitizer to students on the bus unless an unusual situation warrants use of the product. Students will be allowed to possess/use small quantities of hand sanitizer so long as it is not used inappropriately on the bus (i.e. squirting on other students, etc.)

Q: My bus has air conditioning, so why are the windows down on the bus?

A: DHHS guidance encourages buses to operate with a continuous supply of fresh air in an effort to mitigate transmission of COVID-19. It is possible that buses will operate with 1 or more windows down to promote the circulation of fresh air. Bus drivers will use their discretion based on outdoor temperature and the ability to ensure operating the bus is done so with safety in mind for all passengers.

Q: My student attends a daycare in the afternoons; will s/he be allowed to ride the bus to the daycare?

A: Daycare transportation via school bus service will continue to approved day care facilities as scheduled in the past.

Q: Is social distancing required on the school bus or at the bus stop?

A: It is recommended that social distancing be practiced (minimum of 6 feet) while walking to/from the bus stop, waiting at the bus stop and while loading/unloading the bus. DHHS guidelines recommend 1 student per seat for middle and high school students except where siblings are assigned to the same seat by the principal. Effective Oct. 26, there is no maximum number of elementary students that may ride the bus.

 **OPERATIONS**

Q: What protocols are being put in place to ensure the buildings will be properly cleaned and safe for students and staff?

A: UCPS will follow all state guidelines related to cleaning and sanitation. Custodial support will be increased during the school day and UCPS will provide continuous cleaning of all high-touch surfaces such as door knobs, handles and railings. Sneeze guards will be in place in all reception areas. [Updated cleaning products list for schools to purchase.](#)

Q: How will meals be served to students in school?

A: Students will receive their meals in the cafeteria with additional restrictions, such as social distancing and pre-packed meals in place. Self-service options will not be available. Depending on the school, students may eat in classrooms, in limited numbers in the cafeteria, or in other locations in the school.

Q: Will students have access to meals if they are in remote learning or in the Virtual Academy?

A: UCPS is consulting with the federal government about meal programs for students when they are not in the school building. When more information is available, details will be shared with parents.

Q: What are the bell schedules for the 2020-2021 school year?

A: Due to new transportation guidelines related to COVID-19, the Transportation Department has [proposed new bell times](#) for middle and high schools, and Stallings Elementary. School buses will operate at a reduced capacity with one student per seat, to allow for social distancing. In addition, double runs will be increased and bus stops will be consolidated to shorten routes.

The Board of Education will vote on the final bell schedule at the August 4 meeting.

Q: Will UCPS offer an After School Program this school year?

A: The After School Program will not operate at the start of the school year. District leaders will continually reassess opening the program as resources and guidelines allow.