

## **Updated Return to Learn Plan-Westwood Heights Schools**

### **Governor Whitmer has asked schools to provide an in-person learning option for students by March 1, 2021.**

As we prepare to welcome back students for in-person learning, we want you to know that our school district will accommodate whichever form of learning your family chooses. While the risk of serious illness from Covid-19 is low among our student population, we recognize that you must consider many factors in your decision. Are there vulnerable family members in the home? How will my student tolerate wearing a mask most of the day? How do we keep our student from falling behind in their education? When will the vaccine be available to students?

Regardless of your decision, be assured that we will do everything in our power to keep your student safe and on track with their education. This letter is an attempt to explain the steps we are taking to reopen safely, and the rationale behind them. Events may force us to change course in the coming months, and we appreciate your patience as we work through these difficult times.

#### **Q: What will school look like for those returning in-person?**

*Students will attend school Monday-Thursday according to an adjusted school day schedule. You will receive the new daily schedule from your building office soon. Depending upon the number of students returning, we will be able to social distance in most classrooms. Fridays will be virtual for all students, allowing the staff to help students recover lessons, attend professional development, and develop blended lessons.*

*As we do not expect 100% of our students to return to full face-to-face learning in February, we will continue to keep the students at home on track. Our hope is that eventually most parents will be confident enough to send their student back to school full time. Until that time, we will incorporate google classroom technology combined with packets and either live streaming or taped instruction that can be viewed at home. Students also have the option of taking self-directed online courses which are completed at the student's own pace. If you do not choose to return in February, you will have the opportunity to re-enter in person on April 6, following our spring break.*

*This model accommodates many scenarios: If we go back to phase three, requiring school buildings to close, we are ready to teach all students remotely. Conversely, if more students begin to return, they will not be behind their peers. Teachers will have a full class assigned to them, and we will adjust class rosters based upon the number of students that show up the first week. If we get a much higher percentage of returning*

*students than we anticipate, we will have overflow rooms prepared, and may have to resort to a hybrid schedule. We are trying to avoid that at this point.*

**Q. What about band and choir classes?**

*We are working on a safe way to allow band and choir classes to be held face-to-face. We are ordering face masks specifically designed for musicians, and due to the size of our band room and auditorium, we will be able to safely distance our students.*

**Q: If a student chooses remote learning, will the teacher be available to interact or answer questions they have during school hours?**

*Yes. In some cases, teachers may be assigned to an all-remote classroom which will operate just as our current online teaching does. In other classrooms, teachers may have students in-person, as well as students watching the same class online. We have purchased the computers, microphones, and cameras to facilitate this type of learning environment. We will be hiring additional classroom technology assistants to keep the online students engaged and fully supported.*

**Q: What if an in-person student wants to work from home for a day?**

This would be possible, but if it becomes a regular practice, that student would be transferred back to virtual learning.

**Q: Will my child be required to wear a mask while in the school buildings?**

*Until we receive further direction from the state, all students and staff will be required to wear a face covering. Masks will not be required during recess, gym class, and meal times, assuming proper distancing can be achieved.*

*All students will be required to wear a mask on the bus and in common areas and shared spaces of the school such as hallways, restrooms, and common areas.*

**Q. If a parent chooses face-to-face instruction but their student or someone in the household has a positive COVID test result, will they have to go to online instruction?**

*Yes. Any student or staff that tests positive for COVID 19, or lives in close proximity to someone testing positive, will be expected to quarantine and will not be allowed to return to school until they have had a negative COVID 19 test, or are cleared to return by the board of health.*

*We will quickly switch these students to the online option until it is safe for them to return.*

**Q: What is the protocol if a student or teacher or household member tests positive for COVID-19?**

*As stated above, the employee or student would be quarantined for 14 days and would also need a negative test or clearance from the board of health before they would be allowed to return to school.*

**Q: Will parents be notified if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19?**

*Families will be notified of the presence of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed cases of COVID-19 in the classroom and/or school to encourage closer observation for any symptoms at home. In the event of a lab or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, immediate efforts will be made to determine any close contacts (those who spent more than 15 minutes less than six feet in close proximity to the student or staff member) so that they can be quarantined for 14 days at home. Students and staff should be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, testing of all students or staff members in the class is not recommended. Only those who develop symptoms will require testing for COVID-19.*

*It is important to note that we will observe all privacy requirements and will work with the county board of health on the contact tracing.*

**Q: Will there be temperature checks before entering the bus and school?**

*The guidance from the Governor's Roadmap is that parents should be expected to take their child's temperature daily before they send or take their child to school. Temperature checks are not required, nor strongly recommended in the State's Road Map. Students will have their temperature checked as they enter school and any student with a temperature above 100.5 degrees will remain in the specially designed Hawk Room until a family member can pick them up.*

## **Foodservice**

### **Q: What will meal times look like?**

*Our plan is to offer free breakfast and lunch to ALL students, and after school meals for students staying late. Elementary students will eat breakfast in their classrooms and lunch in the lunchroom and part of the gym. Grades 7-12 will eat in the commons area and adjoining hallways to allow for proper distancing. We will also stagger release times for lunch to reduce the number of students standing in line.*

*We are developing a plan to allow the families of remote learners to pick up meals at designated times and locations.*

## **Transportation**

### **Q: How will bus transportation work?**

*Our bus service is provided by First Student, which will be sanitizing our buses frequently. Monitors will disinfect the buses between runs to provide more protection for the students. We will distance the students as much as possible, and all riders must wear masks.*

### **Q. What other steps are being taken to protect the students?**

Elementary students will remain in their classroom except for recess and meal times. Physical education, music, and other non-core classes will be provided in the classroom, or in smaller groups. Drop off and dismissal procedures will be communicated to you by your building administration, but will allow you to remain in your vehicle while your student is released.

Passing times will be staggered as much as possible to reduce traffic in the hallways. The buildings are marked for social distancing and the direction of traffic flow. Additional personnel have been hired to assist with daily cleanings and student monitoring.

## **TECHNOLOGY/PROGRAMMING/OTHER**

### **Q. Will the district be able to provide WiFi/hotspot assistance for families?**

*Yes. We will supply hotspots or other devices to families who need internet access.*

### **Q: Are chromebooks being offered to students who opt for online learning and need access to a learning device?**

*Yes. The district will be providing EVERY student a device of their own for online or in-person classes. This will help avoid sharing devices with other students. Elementary students attending school in-person will be able to leave their device in their classroom at the end of the day. Students in grades 7-12 are expected to take their devices home each day and bring them back the next morning.*

**Q: Why is the District not offering an every other day/week option?**

*What is now commonly referred to as the “hybrid” system where students attend school part time and do online learning part time, often in a day on/day off or week on/week off pattern, was considered.*

*In our parent survey in July 40% of our parents indicated they wanted to send their students back for full time face to face instruction. We knew we had to offer an on-line option for those parents who did not feel comfortable returning their students to school. Approximately 85% of our families qualify for free or reduced lunch and many families simply can't afford childcare on the days when their students would not be in school.*

*Numerous parents let us know that part time school does not work for them. We also recognize that kids need to be in school. We all know that on-line learning is not as effective as face-to-face instruction, especially for elementary students. Children need the social and emotional benefits of school and a lot of our students receive important services at school. For all these reasons our goal was to give all of our students the opportunity to return four days each week.*

**ATHLETICS/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

**Q: Would there be extracurricular activities available if you choose online?**

*Yes, following the guidelines put out by the MHSAA. There will be strict limits on game attendance, but we will try to live stream as many events as possible.*

**Q: If my student elects to work from home, will he/she be allowed to participate in sports?**

*Yes. If schools decide to go back into the classroom but also offer parents/students the option of going online out of the classroom, those students who take the online option are still eligible to play sports at that school, so long as the online courses are for active credit/diploma at the school.*

**Q: When will students and staff receive the vaccine?**

School employees are considered essential personnel and currently are eligible to receive the vaccine. The Genesee County Board of Health is working on a plan to streamline the process of receiving their vaccinations. Some employees have already received their first dose of the vaccine. Students are not yet eligible and there are currently no plans to vaccinate children under the age of 16. There is no requirement by the district that students or staff members be vaccinated as a condition to returning in-person.

**WHO CAN I CONTACT?**

**Please feel free to contact the office of the superintendent at:**  
[ptoal@hamadyhawks.net](mailto:ptoal@hamadyhawks.net) or the building principals.

**Students interested in sports should contact the Athletic Director:**  
[clee@hamadyhawks.net](mailto:clee@hamadyhawks.net).