



UPDATED FAQ on the Donegal School District Re-Opening Plans

Please carefully read all of the information below to assist your family with making a decision on a return to school in the fall. All information is subject to change, based upon updated guidance from governmental entities. This is not an inclusive list, rather it addresses the most frequently asked questions we have heard. This document will be periodically updated as we receive common questions related to the re-opening.

*New items are denoted with an asterisk.

What are the options for the fall? The educational options in the fall are dependent upon the color phases and what the Governor and Department of Education mandate to us. There are choices in each of the color phases. If you decide that you do wish to change your option at any time, please contact your building principal. We do ask that you attempt to remain in your selected option for a minimum of one month. **For more detailed information on the learning options, please review the “Donegal Learning Options” document on the “Donegal School District Re-opening Schools Information” page.**

If in the **green phase**, families will have the following options:

On August 13, 2020, the Board of School Directors voted to keep the existing green phase planning and not follow the recently released recommendations from the Department of Health and the Department of Education.

- In-person learning – Students will return to DSD and follow a “typical” school day. Special restrictions/requirements will be in place, as detailed in the Health and Safety Plan.
- Online learning with DSD staff and curriculum – Students may participate in online learning that mirrors what he/she would be doing if physically present. At the elementary level, it may be that students are assigned to a teacher who exclusively teaches online or it may be that students view a live

stream of what is occurring in the classroom. At the elementary level, this will be dependent upon teacher availability due to the number of students that choose to not attend in-person learning. At the secondary level, students will participate by viewing a live stream of what is occurring in the classroom. This will be different than what occurred in the spring. There will be increased expectations for academics and attendance. Traditional grading practices will be present.

If desired, a family may choose a blended approach to in-person learning and online learning. The requirements for selecting this option are that families must select a minimum of two days for in-person learning and the days must remain the same for the duration of schools operating in the green phase. In addition, parents/guardians must notify their child(ren)'s school principal in writing of their desire to choose a blended approach. The written notification must also indicate the days of the week that are being selected.

- Donegal Virtual Academy (DVA) – Students participate in a more traditional cyber school experience in DVA. You may have previously heard this program referred to as “Virtual Solutions.” DVA has been utilized in Donegal at the secondary level for many years. It is supported by Intermediate Unit (IU)13. More information on DVA may be found at <http://www.donegalsd.org/instructional-services-e57b2b3a/donegal-virtual-academy-be742fac> or on the IU 13 website at <https://www.iu13.org/educators/instruction/instructional-technology/llvs/>. Students have access to non-DSD teachers, should assistance be needed. There is no direct cost to families who choose this option. There is a cost to the District that is significantly lower than the tuition charged to us by private cyber schools. Those costs are added to the District budget.

If in the **yellow phase**, families will have the following options:

- Blended learning – Students will be placed into cohorts and attend one day per week in-person. We will attempt to align in-person attendance for all children in a family on the same day. The remaining days will be online with DSD teachers.
- Online learning with DSD staff and curriculum – Please see the information about this option as described in the green phase.

- Donegal Virtual Academy (DVA) – Please see the information about this option as described in the green phase.

If in the **red phase**, families will have the following options:

- Online learning with DSD staff and curriculum - Students participate in online learning. This version of online learning will be a blend of both synchronous (live with a teacher) and asynchronous (pre-recorded and/or posted content) instruction. There will be increased expectations for academics and attendance. Traditional grading practices will be present.
- Donegal Virtual Academy (DVA) – Please see the information about this option as described in the green phase.

Who decides when we move from one color phase to another? That decision is made by the Governor and Secretary of Health. The District does not have the ability to change a designated color phase. We are able to alter educational plans within any color phase, depending upon the virus conditions at any given time.

Will the school be screening my child for COVID-19 symptoms? We are asking each family to screen your child(ren) on a daily basis. This may include temperature checks. There is not an appropriate method for the schools to screen and provide temperature checks on a daily basis without creating situations where students are congregated and significantly delaying entry into the buildings.

If your child experiences any symptoms of illness, it is critically important that he/she remain at home until all symptoms are gone. Do not send your child to school and request that the nurse check him/her. Directions on how to screen your child(ren) will be sent home to each family.

Directions on how to screen at home were sent via email on August 6, 2020.

***UPDATED Will my child be required to wear a face covering?** Yes. The Secretary of Health and Governor's face covering order is still in effect. The Department of Health and Department of Education provided guidance on July 16th that states: Children two years and older are required to wear a face covering unless they have a medical or mental health condition or disability, documented in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or IDEA, that precludes the wearing of a face covering in school.

*On August 17, 2020, new requirements related to face coverings was released. The new requirements from the Department of Education and the Department of Health are more restrictive and may be viewed at this link:

<https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/emergencyplanning/COVID-19/Waivers/MaskWearing/Pages/default.aspx>.

If your child has a documented medical/mental health condition or disability and you are requesting an exemption from wearing a face covering, please forward the requests from a treating physician to Mrs. Dana Blair at the District Office.

Some organizations recommend social distancing of 3 feet and others list it as 6 feet. Which standard are you following? Our target distance is 6 feet.

Whenever possible, that is the distance we will maintain. There may be times, depending upon the size of the classroom and number of students attending in-person learning, where 3 feet will be in place.

Will there be opportunities for hand washing during the day? Will hand sanitizer be in every classroom? Yes, to both questions.

Will kindergarten still be a half-day program? Yes. Extra custodial staff will be on hand to clean classrooms between sessions.

How will breakfast and lunches work? Breakfast at all levels will be “grab and go.” Students will eat breakfast in their classrooms. Plans for lunches have been created by building principals, but they vary by level. At the elementary level, it is planned for students to eat in their classrooms or in a combination of classroom and cafeteria. At the secondary level, additional lunch periods and tables have been added to reduce numbers of students and increase social distancing in the cafeteria. Whenever possible, lunches will be served as “grab and go.” School nurses will work with principals to ensure that students with food allergies are kept safe.

Will drinking fountains be available to students? Drinking fountains will be turned off and not available. Water bottle fillers will be available to students at the drinking fountain locations. We encourage every student to bring their own water bottle to school. If your child does not have a refillable water bottle, please contact your child’s school.

Will lockers be available to students? Lockers may be available to students only for non-academic items, such as coats when the weather gets cooler. Access to

lockers will be very limited. When it is cooler and coat storage is needed, staggered access to the lockers will be put in place by each building.

Are students allowed to bring backpacks? Yes, backpacks are permitted.

How will hallway traffic be minimized? Principals have created traffic patterns for times when students must move (beginning/end of day, transitions between periods, etc.). The traffic patterns are designed to minimize congestion and congregation during these periods of time.

If my child rides a bus, how many will be on it and what cleaning will occur? At this time, we are unsure how many students will be on a bus. It is dependent upon how many families indicate they will use District transportation. We will not know that until we receive the results of the survey. What we do know is that there are not enough buses or drivers available to add buses and keep children six feet apart at all times. It is highly likely that children will not have a seat to themselves. All children who ride district transportation will have an assigned seat. All drivers will wear personal protective equipment.

Face coverings will be required to board District transportation and throughout the entire ride, unless a documented medical condition exists. The transportation contractor has indicated that buses will be disinfected following each bus run, a minimum of twice per day.

May I volunteer at the school? Unless there is a specific need, volunteers and visitors will not be permitted at this time. If a specific need for a volunteer would arise, the opportunity will be coordinated through the building principal.

My child has an IEP/504 plan. Will his/her needs be accommodated in the educational options? If you are considering a virtual option, such as the Donegal Virtual Academy, please contact the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services, Mrs. Dana Blair, to discuss your child's learning needs and the most appropriate option available. Mrs. Blair may be reached at (717) 492-1313.

What special cleaning will take place in the school? Most of the special precautions are detailed in the Health and Safety Plan. Cleaning during the school day will require a team approach. Students, teachers, para-educators and principals will all play a role in helping to clean desks, materials, etc. throughout the school day. High touch areas and bathrooms will be cleaned by custodial staff throughout

the day as well. Every evening, after students depart, the custodial staff will disinfect all areas of the school building.

Please refer to the Health and Safety Plan for more information about other cleaning, HVAC, social distancing, health, etc. protocols.

What can you tell me about the HVAC system in the schools? The HVAC systems installed in each school are designed to constantly exchange indoor air with outdoor air. The hours of operation for each building's system will be extended to assist with air flushing, as recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). In addition, all filters in the HVAC systems will be upgraded to a Minimum Efficiency Rating Value (MERV) 13.

What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? If we are notified of a positive case, we will call the Pennsylvania Department of Health, provide the relevant details and follow their guidance. Cleaning protocols will be implemented to immediately clean any areas where the student or staff member may have been located.

Will educational trip requests still be allowed? According to Pennsylvania Law, we must continue to honor educational trip requests. If a family does travel outside of Pennsylvania, a recommended voluntary quarantine based upon the state to which you have traveled, is currently in place. We ask that you consider the types of activities in which your family participated, how often you were out in crowded areas and the safety measures you followed when determining whether or not you quarantine prior to a return to school.

Will Bright Horizons still operate at DPS and DIS? Bright Horizons surveyed families and has determined that there was not enough interest in their programming to run before/after school care in DSD schools this year. We are contacting other child care providers in the district to inform them that there may be an increased request for child care.

On social media, I saw... Please do not trust what you see on social media. Over the past week or so, we have learned that there is a lot of inaccurate information being shared in the community. Please continue to monitor the information posted on our website ([Re-Opening Schools Information](#)) or call your child's school with questions.