

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Updated July 27, 2020*



These FAQs are current as of July 20, 2020. Because of the fluidity of the environment some of these FAQs will be updated. As of July 20, these questions and answers are a great resource for families to prepare for the return to school in Fall 2020.

### **What does the Blended Learning Model look like for my student(s)?**

Pekin Public Schools has developed a blended learning model which places student and staff safety as a priority. The intent of the blended model is to allow students in person instruction while maintaining CDC and IDPH guidelines for physical distancing through a reduced number of students in each building.

Students will follow an A/B style schedule Monday through Thursday. Students on the A schedule will attend school in person on Mondays and Wednesdays. Students on the B schedule will attend in person on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays will alternate as in-person instruction days with A schedule students attending one Friday and B schedule students attending the following Friday. Families will be assigned the same schedule for student continuity across schools.

Students with special needs will be attending in-person Monday through Friday. Pekin Family Education Center students will also attend in-person Monday through Friday.

### **How will I know if my child is on the 'A' schedule or 'B' schedule?**

Each school will be developing their schedules and class lists as they have in the past. This information will be made available and posted as soon as possible after registration and prior to the start of school.

### **What if I have multiple children in the district at different schools?**

It is our goal to ensure all students from the same family are in attendance at school on the same scheduled days.

### **What if I have multiple children in the district at different schools and one is in the high school math program?**

It is our goal to ensure all students from the same family are in attendance at school on the same scheduled days. If an 8th grade student is in the high school math program and he/she has siblings at other schools in the district, we will make sure that all students attend school on the same schedule.

### **Will the Blended Learning Model be in place the entire school year?**

It is our goal to evaluate the situation with regard to the magnitude of the pandemic in our region and its effect on school at the end of the first trimester(October 30). Depending on the situation at that time, the feasibility of moving to a 'Full In-Person' model will be assessed. If the Blended Model remains in place after October 30, it will be assessed again at the end of the second trimester on February 19.

### **Is it possible that there could be intermittent times of classroom or school closures?**

It is realistic to be prepared for the possibility of short term and/or long term closures based on the spread of the Coronavirus. The temporary closure of a classroom and/or a school would likely be the result of a recommendation from our local health department addressing confirmed positive cases of the virus. A longer closure would likely be the result of a state-wide order similar to what took place last March.

### **How does my child participate in remote learning instead of blended learning?**

Parents wanting their child to participate in 'full remote learning' need to opt in through online registration in Skyward. If selected, a student must remain in the full remote learning model through the first grading period of school (October 30). At that point, a student may continue with full remote learning or opt to change to the 'in-person' model offered for the next trimester. The same guidelines for changing learning options will also be in effect for the last two trimesters.

### **What will full time remote learning look like?**

Once registration is complete, prior to the start of the school year, remote learning classes will be developed and assigned to highly qualified teachers. Classes will be established from students across the district in each grade level. The curriculum will include all core subjects and aligned to Illinois Learning Standards. Physical education, art, and music will also be included in the curriculum as much as possible. A social emotional support component will be incorporated as well as needed. The remote instruction and learning activities will be delivered through an electronic/virtual platform. All students opting for remote learning will be provided with a device to use from the school district.

Although there will be some flexibility as to when students will be able to complete assignments and assigned school work, there is an expectation that they are available online during general school hours on each scheduled school day as per the district calendar. More specific information will be provided as classes are established at each grade level.

Once the school year begins, students participating in the remote learning will not be able to change to blended in person learning until the end of the trimester (October 30).

**Will my child have the option to switch from Blended Learning to Remote Learning after school starts?**

Yes. If a parent wishes to change their student from blended learning to remote learning after school has started, he/she will be assigned to the appropriate grade level 'remote learning class' and will no longer be on the class roster of his/her original blended learning class. The student will be required to remain a full time remote learner until the end of the current trimester. If the student opts to return to blended learning at the end of a trimester every effort will be made to assign the student to his/her home school, but it can not be guaranteed.

**Will meals be provided for students on the full remote learning plan?**

Yes. Meals for students on a full remote learning schedule will be provided at designated locations that will be determined prior to the start of school.

**Will the school start times or dismissal times change when the Blended Learning Model is in place?**

All school start times will remain the same. The dismissal times will be slightly earlier than the past. Dismissal for preschool will be 11:10 a.m. and 3:10 p.m., the primary schools dismissal will be 2:40 p.m., intermediate schools dismissal will be 2:10 p.m., and junior high dismissal will be 2:00 p.m.

**What will I do for childcare in the A/B schedule?**

Pekin Public Schools is partnering with the Tazewell County Health Department to investigate solutions for our families to assist with childcare. It is also a possibility that some PCHS students will be available to provide child care on their remote learning days.

**On in-person learning days, what safety protocols will be in place during arrival and dismissal?**

Building staff will implement safety protocols at their building, including student pick up and drop off procedures to maintain physical distancing in alignment with CDC and IDPH guidelines. The procedures at each school will be communicated to parents in advance of the first school attendance days.

**When is the first day for student attendance?**

The first day of attendance for group 'A' will be Thursday, August 20 and the first day for group 'B' will be Friday, August 21.

**Will there be an 'in-person' back to school activity?**

Our Back to School activity is always an important part of the beginning of the school year. However, this year it is probable that our schools will plan a virtual activity on Wednesday, August 19 that will allow parents and students to interact with their principal and teacher(s) prior to the first day of attendance.

**Will there be sports and extracurricular activities at the junior high school?**

On Friday, July 24 the Illinois Elementary Athletic Association (IESA) announced that the 2020 fall sports regular seasons and state series contests are canceled. This includes baseball, softball, cross country, and golf. According to the IESA, a decision regarding girls basketball which is scheduled to begin on August 31 will be made at a later date. Please see the IESA website for further information. <https://www.iesa.org/>

**Will buses run as normal?**

With the blended learning model, the number of students attending school each day will be reduced. We anticipate accommodating all students who qualify for bus transportation on their scheduled attendance day and time with significantly reduced bus capacity and increased physical distancing. At this time, it is uncertain if bus passes will be available.

**Will PEAK (child care) be offered before and after school?**

We anticipate that the PEAK program will be available for before school and after school child care for students during their scheduled in person instruction day.

**Will there be field trips?**

At this time based on guidance from the IDPH we anticipate that no field trips will be scheduled during the 2020-2021 school year.

**What will be the procedures for lunch during on campus and off campus days?**

Breakfast and lunch will be served at each school. The school will determine their specific breakfast and lunch procedures and schedule in order to maintain physical distancing and a sanitized environment. We plan to offer a 'grab and go' food option distributed to students at school for the remote learning day.

**Will students still move from class to class?**

This will likely vary depending on the school and the level (primary, intermediate, junior high). The size of the school enrollment and available physical space will be taken into consideration as each school develops their specific daily procedures.

**Will parents and/or visitors be allowed in the building?**

All visitors including volunteers to the school will be strictly limited. There will be a conveniently designated contactless drop off area at each school. The drop off area will be used if parents need to deliver items to school during the school day such as lunches, and or supplies, etc. If there is a need for a parent to enter the school, a specific appointment must be made prior to the visit and all required safety procedures must be followed. The specific related procedures for each school will be communicated before the first day of student attendance.

**Will physical distancing happen in all settings?**

By reducing the number of students in attendance each day we will be able to effectively provide optimal recommended physical distancing between students within our schools and in our classrooms.

**Please provide information on other classroom protocols besides assigned seats. What would be some examples?**

There will be a concentrated effort focused on regular hand washing/sanitizing and hygiene. Students will not be allowed to share supplies. High touch areas such as shared computer keyboards will be reduced or eliminated. Other high touch areas such as restrooms and door handles, etc. will be regularly cleaned during the school day. Water fountains will be turned off. Students are encouraged to bring a full water bottle to school for their individual use. Each school will provide additional details specific to their facility prior to the start of the school year.

**Will students be required to wear a face covering/mask?**

Per the requirements from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education, students and staff are required to wear face coverings/masks while inside of the school building, even when physical distancing is achieved.

**Will families be required to provide their own face coverings/masks?**

Parents are expected to provide face coverings/masks for their students. However, each school will have cloth and face coverings/masks available for anyone who needs one.

**Will teachers and staff be required to wear a face covering/mask?**

Per the requirements from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education, students and staff are required to wear face coverings/masks while inside of the school building even when physical distancing is achieved.

**Are students and staff required to wear face covering/masks when they are outside?**

As per the IDPH and ISBE requirements and guidelines, students and staff will not be required to wear face coverings/masks when outside if a minimum of six feet of physical distancing can be maintained at all times. This would include but is not limited to, physical education class, teacher directed class activities, and recess.

**What will the daily health screening be for students and staff?**

Only students and staff who are healthy should report for in-person learning. Students and staff with any of the following symptoms of COVID-19 must remain home:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- A measured temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Known close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19

Temperature and symptom screenings are required for all students and staff prior to entering the building.

**If there is a positive case of anyone who is regularly in the building, will the building be shut down for deep cleaning automatically?**

The district will consult with the Tazewell County Health Department and follow the procedures they put in place for addressing confirmed positive cases and/or suspected cases, and/or contact tracing. The decision regarding quarantining individuals or groups, closing classrooms, and/or schools will be made with the guidance of the TCHD.

**Will temperature checks be given to students?**

Temperature and symptom screenings are required for all students and staff prior to entering the building.

**What will be the protocol for a sick student?**

The district will consult with the Tazewell County Health Department and follow the procedures they put in place for addressing confirmed positive cases and/or suspected cases, and/or contact tracing. The decision regarding quarantining individuals or groups, closing classrooms, and/or schools will be made with the guidance of the TCHD.

**What will be the protocol for a sick teacher, staff member, or school personnel?**

The district will consult with the Tazewell County Health Department and follow the procedures they put in place for addressing confirmed positive cases and/or suspected cases, and/or contact tracing. The decision regarding quarantining individuals or groups, closing classrooms, and/or schools will be made with the guidance of the TCHD.

**How will families be notified if their child is required to go home?**

The school Health Clerk, District Nurse, and/or school office personnel will notify parents if a child is symptomatic or ill and needs to be picked up from school.

**What will be the protocol when a case is confirmed in the school?**

The district will consult with the Tazewell County Health Department and follow the procedures they put in place for addressing confirmed positive cases and/or suspected cases, and/or contact tracing. The decision regarding quarantining individuals or groups, closing classrooms, and/or schools will be made with the guidance of the TCHD.

**Will there be increased opportunities for handwashing and hand sanitizing around the school buildings?**

Regular hand washing and/or sanitizing will be an important routine part of the daily procedures when students are at school for in-person instruction.