

restart



FORSYTH COUNTY SCHOOLS 2020-21

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Updated 8/20/20

We understand that as parents/guardians, you have questions about our return to school plans. We encourage you to first visit www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/restartforsyth and review the videos and documents posted there to assist you.

A list of frequently asked questions is below. Please note that these responses are based on the date of update given the COVID-19 situation. Any changes regarding COVID-19 could affect these plans. As we continue to receive recommendations from state leaders and health officials, we will communicate promptly any changes to FCS' plans.

1. What are the learning options for my children for 2020-21?

The first day of school is Thursday, August 13. Students may learn at their school with in-person/face-to-face instruction or they may learn from their home virtually. If your child is currently a FCS student and they will be attending in-person at their school, there is no sign-up or registration. However, if your child wants to learn virtually, they must sign up for this option.

The deadline for K-5 and special needs PreK virtual sign-up was July 14; please contact your school directly since the deadline has passed. Note: This sign-up is a commitment for one 9-week period. Parents/guardians may continue virtual learning or change to face-to-face learning for the remainder of the school year at the conclusion of the 9-week period.

Middle and high school virtual learning is through Forsyth Virtual Academy (FVA), and the deadline to sign-up was July 31. Note: FVA is a semester-long commitment.

2. If the number of COVID-19 cases continues to rise, could the district shift everyone to 100% digital learning?

Yes, if conditions worsen and the Governor or health officials call for school closures, FCS could move all students to a digital platform.

3. Can I choose for my children to be on different options... one student face-to-face and the other child online?

Yes, families should choose the option that works best for each individual student.

4. If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 how will that be handled?

The Department of Public Health is continuing to update its guidance regarding COVID-19. Students and employees with COVID-19 symptoms or a temperature of 100.4 and above will be immediately isolated and sent home. School clinics have additional PPE (personal protective equipment). Please see “How we will communicate positive COVID-19 cases” posted at www.forsyth.k12.ga.us/restartforsyth. Note, that when a positive case is reported to FCS, it is confirmed by the DPH.

5. As a precaution, will FCS require all students and staff to be tested for COVID-19 before school starts and they return to campus?

The health department currently does not recommend this widespread testing before the start of the new school year.

6. What happens if a student is attending school in-person and must stay home for several weeks because of exposure to COVID-19?

The student would be allowed to complete his or her in-person lessons through itslearning without being counted absent.

7. How will the district handle students who become sick at school?

The school clinic will continue to serve students who feel ill at school. Each school will have an area or two set up (separate from the clinic) for students who have symptoms associated with COVID-19. Students will be socially distanced and monitored in that area while the parents are contacted to pick them up. It is essential that parents are aware that students who are ill should be kept home and that students who develop symptoms of illness while at school must be picked up in a timely manner.

8. Will students be able to maintain social distancing in class?

Schools will take steps to maximize social distancing to minimize spread of the virus. Where feasible, rooms will be arranged with student desks facing the same direction and students seated at tables will sit on the same side. Depending on the school, hallways may be one-way where practicable. Schedules may be revised to accommodate better traffic flow within hallways and at school entrances.

Am I considered a close contact/direct exposure if I am wearing a mask?

Yes, you are still considered a close contact/direct exposure even if you are wearing a mask around someone that tests positive for COVID-19. Masks are meant to protect other people in case you are infected, and not to protect you from becoming infected.

9. How will sharing of technology be handled at the schools?

Schools have a variety of Chromebooks and computers throughout the classrooms and school. The main emphasis this year will be for students to take advantage of bringing in their own technology to use (BYOT), in accordance with their school policy. This will minimize the amount of technology sharing. When applicable, teachers may assign one device to two students for in class use to reduce interactions. In situations where students will be sharing technology, we will encourage hand

washing/sanitizing after use. At the end of each day, labs and common area technology will be sanitized.

10. Will there be social distancing on school buses?

No. If the district were to social distance per CDC guidelines, each 72-passenger bus would only be able to transport 12 students at a time. FCS does not have enough buses or drivers to accommodate social distancing to this degree. The district runs its buses on a four-tier schedule now, so there also would not be enough time to transport students to school with so few riders on each bus. Some students will be learning digitally rather than in person, so there may be fewer students using school bus transportation. Precautions will be taken to lessen the risk for bus riders. For example, bus windows will remain open to increase ventilation, all bus drivers will be required to wear masks, all riders will be expected to wear masks or face coverings, and buses will be cleaned after all routes.

11. For a child with severe food allergies, will the EpiPen or other rescuer medicine be allowed in the classroom if they are eating in class? Yes.

12. What will Visual and Performing Arts look like this year for face-to-face and virtual learning?

For families who choose the virtual K-5 option, we are creating virtual art and music classes. We do not currently offer Forsyth Virtual Academy (FVA) courses in the Visual and Performing Arts, and there are limited options available in the Georgia Virtual School (GAVS). Students who participate in either FVA or GAVS courses are allowed to return to their assigned school for elective offerings. Students may also participate in extracurricular activities as at their base school as appropriate.

Forsyth County Schools understands that for courses in CTAE, Fine Arts, and Physical Education, face-to-face instruction is necessary for knowledge and skill development and hands-on practice. Our classrooms engage students in learning activities that require both critical thinking, experimentation, and physical activity, so students need to be prepared to enter these classroom and lab spaces feeling safe and comfortable. District support personnel are working with schools and individual teachers on best practices to disinfect/sanitize (not sterilize) supplies and equipment as appropriate between uses. It should be noted that not all touched surfaces can be disinfected. Students are able to provide their own consumable supplies, if appropriate, stored in well-labeled, sealable containers that are easily transported to/from class. Suggested classroom arrangements, lab demonstrations, and other physical aspects of CTAE, Fine Arts, and Physical Education will be shared with teachers based on content-specific best practices.

13. Will the school system be able to offer extracurricular activities and sports? If so, will students who choose digital learning be able to participate?

The school district's ability to continue its sports programs will be determined in large part by Georgia High School Association (GHSA) rules and regulations, along with guidance from health officials. The local school will determine which extracurricular activities it will offer. If FCS can offer sports and extracurricular activities, all students—both in-person and digital learners—will be able to participate. Participation will be on site at the school.

14. What will virtual learning look like for K-5 and special needs PreK students? Will there be live instruction, i.e., watching an in-person class via video, or simply teachers posting lessons online for students to do?

The district and schools incorporated the parent, student, and teacher feedback from spring digital learning and applied those lessons to our beginning-of-the-year plans. We are planning for teachers to provide both live (synchronous) and recorded (asynchronous) lessons and independent work.

15. What do you mean by synchronous and asynchronous lessons?

This means that students will be required to participate in online meetings/lectures on specific days and at certain times with their teachers (synchronous learning), and also complete activities and assignments on their own time to meet assignment deadlines (asynchronous learning).

16. Will the in-person lessons be changed/adjusted for the digital learning environment?

Yes, teachers are being provided guidance and support for how to convert in-person lessons to digital lessons.

17. The information we received said that students will be responsible for a full day of digital learning, following the school schedule. Does that mean students will be expected to be in front of a computer for six-plus hours a day?

It is not likely that students would be online in live classes the entire school day. Based on feedback from the spring, we are encouraging teachers to conduct more live (synchronous) lessons, but with the understanding that occasionally students may not be able to participate at the specified time. Therefore, teachers should record the live sessions for students who need to view the lesson at a different time. Platforms such as Google Meet and Microsoft Teams may be used for these sessions. Other assignments may include other recorded videos are independent work, which can be done any time during the day. We believe the use of a variety of instructional methods will be best for students.

18. Is the school district doing additional staff development for teachers and assisting with the creation of digital lessons so that teachers are prepared to teach a full semester online?

Teachers did a great job transitioning on short notice to digital learning in the spring. Each week, teachers worked hard to improve their lessons to better engage students while at home. As the school year ended, teachers were eager for more professional learning on digital instruction. All summer staff development has been focused on improving teachers' effectiveness for teaching digitally and in-person. Teacher participation in these learning opportunities has been very strong and we believe students will see the impact daily in their lessons. Multiple resources and supports, such as sample lessons and technology training, also are available to all teachers, and schools will assure teachers are using these resources as they plan lessons.

19. Will there be separate teachers for digital and in-person teaching?

Our Human Resources Department is working with school principals to staff their schools based on how many students choose digital versus in-person instruction. The goal in scheduling will be to have a teacher who teaches a class entirely digitally or entirely in-person. There may be some teachers (particularly at the middle and high school levels) who teach both digital and in-person students. Please note that your child's virtual teacher may not be based out of your child's physically districted school and if your child switches to face-to-face learning after the conclusion of the 9

weeks, they will most likely have a different teacher. At this time, we cannot tell you which teachers will be leading in-person instruction and which will be leading digital classes.

20. Will grading and expectations be the same for both digital and in-person instruction?

Yes, they will be similar in terms of expectations for grading and due dates for assignments.

21. Will the district take attendance for both digital and in-person instruction?

Yes, attendance will be taken for all learners but there will be no attendance incentives or awards for 2020-21.

22. I am interested in the digital learning option, but I only have one computer for my three children to share. If students are expected to participate in lessons during the school day, how will my children be able to share a device?

Each child will need his/her own device in order to fully participate in digital learning. If you need a device, please select this when completing the virtual registration form.

23. I am interested in the digital learning but do not have reliable internet service in my apartment. How is the school district addressing access issues?

If you need internet access, please select this when completing the virtual registration form.