

Questions about Full-time Virtual School

Q: What will the schedule look like in the virtual school?

A: The schedule in the virtual school will be both student and teacher directed. Students will be able to access the instructional content and assignments 24/7 allowing for student scheduling flexibility. Teachers will provide regular office hours and ongoing support and engagement as needed by individual students. Parents will need to support students and help them establish a schedule that ensures they are reviewing content and completing assignments in a timely manner.

Q: How much screen time will be required in the virtual school?

A: The amount of screen time required for students will depend on the grade level of the student, the speed at which each student can complete the review of the content and completion of assignments, and also on the courseware that is being procured. Since students are able to access the instructional content and assignments anytime as provided by the teacher, students can take regular breaks from the computer.

Q: How does the full-time virtual learning option differ from the remote learning implementation we experienced in the spring?

A: Teachers in the virtual school will not generally be developing and delivering lessons as they did in the spring in remote learning. The courses being procured will include all of the instructional content and assignments that students will have access to 24/7. Teachers will be providing regular times (office hours) to answer student questions and address student needs.

Q: Are English language learners going to receive ESOL program services in the Virtual School?

A: DoDEA is examining how existing ESOL teachers in schools can provide these services to students in the virtual school. Students who qualify for ESOL services and whose parents have selected for them to attend the Virtual School will be provided services according to their grade level, English language proficiency level and academic needs.

Q: Are elementary students who are receiving AAPS (Gifted Education) Levels of Service III or IV going to continue to receive services in the Virtual School?

A: DoDEA is examining how existing AAPS resource teachers in schools can provide these services to students in the virtual school. Students who qualify for AAPS Levels of Services III or IV and whose parents have selected for them to attend the Virtual School will be provided services according to their advanced academic needs.

Q: Will DoDEA offer a virtual learning option for PreK students?

A: No, DoDEA is not offering a virtual learning option for PreK students. DoDEA's in-person option is the best learning environment for young children. DoDEA PreK and Sure Start programs use The Creative Curriculum for Preschool. This curriculum provides hands-on, developmentally appropriate learning experiences through deep, guided investigations.

Q: Is there a supply list for Virtual School?

A: Students will need access to a computer and reliable internet to use the DoDEA Learning Management System, Schoology. Students will not be able to use a phone or tablet to fully access the materials of the course.

Q: Will laptops and Wi-Fi devices be issued to virtual students?

A: Students who do not have an adequate laptop or internet at home may request to check out a laptop and hotspot from their local school.

Q: Will the Virtual School have books/materials, or will it be 100% paperless?

A: Most Virtual School course materials are embedded into the virtual coursework, with the exception of six AP courses that require physical textbooks.

Q: Do high schoolers need to take summer school if they choose Virtual School?

A: The DoDEA Virtual School has found that high school students who take more than 5 online courses struggle to be successful. However, if families want their high school student(s) to be enrolled in 6 virtual school courses they will be allowed to do so in order to receive a full year of credit. Students can also opt to take two courses over the summer to remain on track to graduate.

Q: If we choose the virtual option for high school, can parents seek out other resources for their student to complete the necessary credits in order to graduate, so they don't have to take summer classes?

A: It is up to the parent to determine whether their student should take any additional coursework outside of what is being offered by the virtual school. However, if you are seeking to have outside coursework count toward graduation requirements, we strongly encourage you to consult with your local school counselor. The counselor can ensure the coursework you're considering meets the requirements for the student's graduation plan. It is also important to note that outside coursework requires principal approval.

Q: I understand that parents asked for a universal platform for remote learning. Can you explain how this will work, and how it differs from the virtual school platform?

A: All brick-and-mortar school teachers will have a Google Classroom landing page with links or directions to their assignments. The hope is that this will simplify things for the parents by providing consistency with the landing pages of each class. During our spring implementation of remote learning, parents shared that it was too confusing to remember what platform each of their children's teachers were using, especially for families with multiple children at different grade levels and different schools. Teachers can link to Schoology resources from their Google Classroom; however, parents will see consistency across the Pacific in the use of Google Classroom as the platform through which their child will access remote learning.

The Virtual School will use Schoology as the platform through which students will receive instruction.

Q: Will those students who choose Virtual School have the option to attend electives in the building so they can stay on track to graduate on time?

A: No, students enrolled in the full-time virtual school option will not be able to enroll in elective courses at their local brick-and-mortar school.

Q: If we are PCSing into the DoDEA Pacific Region after school starts can we enroll our kids in the full-time virtual option?

A: In general, families that PCS following the start of school will still have the option to enroll in the full-time virtual option. Please work closely with your local school, as there are several important factors to consider including PCS date and the curriculum in which the student was previously enrolled.

Q: Will virtual students have opportunities to build friendships with classmates?

A: Absolutely! The Virtual School focuses on building community in the online environment. Students will have opportunities to engage with their peers during group instruction and group assignments.

Q: How will Virtual School address IEPs?

A: The virtual instruction option is available to all families. For parents of students who have an Individualized Education Program or 504 plan, the case study committee/504 team will convene to work with the family and the DVS to determine a free and appropriate public education for the student.

Q: If I enroll in Virtual School and it is not working for my kids, can they return to in-person school?

A: Families must commit to one semester in the Virtual School. Families will have the opportunity to switch their enrollment to in-person school at the semester mark (students enrolled in Virtual School first semester may enroll in in-person school second semester).

Q: Our family is expected to PCS away from DoDEA Pacific Region in early February. Could my children continue using DODEA virtual learning to finish out the year?

A: Please work closely with your local school on your individual situation. There are several important factors to consider, including where your family is PCSing and the grade of the student.

Q: What curriculum will the full-time Virtual School use?

A: We are currently in the process of procuring courseware for the Virtual School. The curriculum will be standards based and aligned to the DODEA College and Career Ready standards and is specifically developed for each grade level in the online learning environment.

Q: Where can families send additional questions related to the full-time virtual school option?

A: Families with additional questions about the DoDEA full-time virtual school option can email vslearningoption@dodea.edu.

Questions about In-Person School

Q: How will outdoor/recess time look like with social distancing?

A: Students will not be required to wear masks if they are actively engaged in outdoor play unless local installation guidelines require them to do so. Social distancing will be encouraged outdoors, and students will be able to wash their hands before and after playground use. Hand sanitizer will also be available.

Q: If my child begins the year at a brick-and-mortar school but we decide we are not comfortable with face-to-face instruction, can we switch to the full-time virtual option?

A: In order to ensure adequate staffing, parents interested in full-time virtual school for the first semester must enroll by July 28. At the end of the first semester, parents will once again have the opportunity to enroll in the full-time virtual school option. All students enrolled in brick-and-mortar schools will transition to remote learning should the installation move to HPCON Charlie.

Q: Will the student to teacher ratio be adjusted to accommodate social distancing in classrooms?

A: DoDEA Pacific will implement social distancing to the greatest extent possible; however, we do not anticipate significant changes to class sizes. We will spread out desks to the greatest extent possible, utilizing clear physical barriers to provide additional separation between students. We will also employ other mitigation strategies, including wearing face masks, healthy hygiene practices, and frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

Q: How will you enforce the use of masks? What about students who cannot wear a mask?

A: Parents are their child's first teachers. We encourage families to talk with their child and demonstrate proper use of face masks prior to the return to face-to-face instruction. Parents of students with health concerns that may prevent them from wearing a mask should contact their school principal to discuss other options.

Q: What are the protocols if a teacher or student tests positive for COVID-19?

A: As soon as someone tests positive, families will be notified that there was a positive case within the school community. The school will close for 2-5 days for a thorough cleaning. We will work in close coordination with the local installation on specifics related to contact tracing and related quarantines, and criteria for returning to school.

Q: How are you ensuring social distancing is maintained for younger children who may not understand?

A: DoDEA Pacific will employ mitigation measures to protect students, including social distancing to the greatest extent possible, the use of clear physical barriers on desks and tables, healthy hygiene practices, face masks, marking traffic patterns on floors, and displaying signage to serve as a reminder of these measures to students.

Q: Do teachers have to wear masks when they are up at the board doing a direct instruction and students are seated at their desks?

A: Each classroom will look a bit different based on space and layout. For example, when teachers are at the front of the classroom and can maintain social distancing, they can remove their masks while they deliver instruction. When moving around the room to deliver individualized instruction to students, the teacher would wear a mask.

Q: How do you plan to ensure course rigor when/if remote learning is put back in place?

A: Following our spring implementation of remote learning, we identified best practices and lessons learned that we are incorporating into our plans for future remote learning requirements. Students will be familiar with the Google Classroom platform, as it will be blended into classroom instruction.

Q: How will staff be trained on the new procedures? How will parents know who is responsible for ensuring students maintain distancing?

A: Staff training on all new procedures and protocols will be conducted the week prior to school starting. Teachers will be responsible for ensuring students follow the appropriate procedures in their classrooms.

Q: If my child has sensory and special learning needs that require accommodations in the in-school setting. What protections will my child have if they cannot wear a mask?

A: Student safety is our top priority; please contact your local school for a specific accommodations plan tailored to your child's needs.

Other Questions

Q: Could DoDEA Pacific consider a hybrid option where students come in every other day or week?

A: Schools across the world are enacting various return to school schedules to best meet the needs of their communities. It is important to consider the local environmental conditions of these communities, which vary from our environment here in the Pacific. While a hybrid option may work for other schools, DoDEA Pacific has opted for full-time in person school with enhanced mitigation measures like masks, hand sanitizer, and clear plastic barriers. We are confident these mitigations will allow students to return safely while also supporting dual-working families. The full-time virtual option is available for families who have health vulnerabilities or concerns and prefer to keep their kids home.

Q: If my child has an IEP and we decide to homeschool, (not full-time virtual learning) can my child still receive services?

A: Yes, as long as the homeschooled student meets DoDEA eligibility requirements, they can access special-education related services.

Q: Will the DoDEA attendance policy allow for flexibility?

A: Our attendance policy will be flexible, as it has been in the past. Parents will be asked to communicate with their child's school regarding their child's absence to ensure their child has access to all assignments.