



2020-21 Alton School Reopening Plan Overview
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PARENTS
Updated: 7/21/20

The following information is based upon current guidance provided by the ISBE, IDPH and the CDC and under Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. The information and current plan are highly subject to change based on further restrictions or concerns involving our region or state. This list of FAQs will be updated as additional questions become prevalent.

GENERAL:

What is the Alton School District's current plan to reopen schools this year?

The Alton School District is currently planning to offer both in-person and remote instruction for students. While this is the current plan, please be aware this is **highly subject to change** based upon further concerns or restrictions involving our region and/or state. Parents must register by July 31 if selecting remote learning. For in-person instruction, students will attend Monday through Friday with a shortened, compacted instructional day (See plan overview and school schedules previously emailed to parents or at altonschools.org).

What are the alternate plans should the district not be able to start under the current plan or need to move to a more restrictive plan during the school year?

The District is also considering, as needed, the use of a blended instructional model. If we need to further restrict the number of students at school/within a classroom each day, it may be necessary to move to an A/B schedule where students only attend two days a week with remote instruction on the other days of the week. Also, we are continuing to plan for complete remote learning in the event a district-wide school closure would be required at any point in the school year. PLEASE CONTINUE TO PLAN FOR ALL THREE OF THESE POTENTIAL SCENARIOS (In-Person, Blended and Complete Remote Learning) GIVEN THE CURRENT PLAN COULD CHANGE SUDDENLY.

I am electing to homeschool my child this year and will not be utilizing any of the District's services, what should I do?

Please contact your child's school, in writing, and let the school office know you will homeschool your child. You are also highly encouraged to contact the Madison County Regional Office of Education in Edwardsville to register your child/homeschool.

Based on the different school schedules for the first semester, I anticipate difficulty in finding childcare. Will the district provide resources for childcare?

The District will provide a list of daycare and latchkey programs with availability. The District is also currently investigating the possibility of offering before/after school programs in some locations if ISBE/IDPH guidelines can be met and school cleaning schedules can be adjusted to support these programs. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Will attendance be taken each day and grades assigned for completed student work?

Yes. Attendance will be taken each day and all grading policies will be in effect for both in-person and remote learning students.

If I haven't registered my child for school this year, do I still need to do so?

Yes. You must register your child for school. Online registration is still open. Schools will have very limited appointments to register in the coming weeks. If you need log-in assistance to register online, please call 474-2600.

If I already registered my child online for school and will be choosing in-person learning, do I need to do anything else?

While you may still enter your choice of remote or in-person instruction in Skyward Family Access, parents not opting their child in for remote learning by the July 31st deadline will automatically default to in-person learning on August 1.

How will student arrivals at school take place each morning?

Students may arrive up to 30 minutes prior to the start of school. Students will go immediately to their classroom or first class of the day each morning. Please refer to your school's upcoming information on student drop-off and pick-up.

Should my student bring water to school?

Yes. Because water fountain access will be limited and restricted in some cases, students should bring water to school in a clear bottle or container when possible.

Will students use lockers?

In order to reduce the number of high touch surface areas and promote social distancing/reduce congregating in hallways, students at Alton High and Alton Middle School will not use lockers. Instead, they will take their belongings with them from class to class. Elementary students may use lockers, depending on school, with staggered times for access.

What are the student limitations on buses?

ISBE guidance sets a limit of 50 persons on a bus and masks are required to be worn on the entire bus ride (to and from) and into the school upon arrival. Social distancing is not possible on buses which is why masks are required. While we will make every attempt to lower the number of students on a bus as significantly as possible, parents are encouraged to transport their child to and from school if possible.

Will there be orientations (Meet the Teacher, 6th grade and freshmen) for students prior to the start of school?

Yes. Schools will be in contact about any orientation processes. While it will look much different than in years past, students will still be provided with an opportunity to acquaint themselves with their new school.

SCHEDULES:

Why do the high school and middle school have to start earlier during the first semester?

Because of the larger student numbers and social distancing requirements (50 or less in one space), it is not possible to serve lunches at AMS and AHS. Therefore, students need to start earlier in the day so that they can finish during the lunch hour. A “grab and go” lunch bag (that includes breakfast for the next morning) will be provided each day. The release of high school students prior to elementary also supports families when older students provide childcare for younger siblings.

Why is the school day shortened during the first semester?

As mentioned, the middle school and high school need to be released prior to lunch due to social distancing requirements for larger spaces. The elementary day is also slightly shortened because teachers will have more direct contact time with students including eating lunch in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to dismiss earlier to provide teachers with instructional preparation time for the next day.

What is the required amount of instruction a student should receive each day?

ISBE requires 5 clock hours of instruction and instructional work for students each day (instruction includes a combination of in-person and remote direct instruction as well as independent work such as homework or online enrichment programs).

Will breakfast and lunch be provided for students while at school?

Elementary students will eat breakfast and lunch at school (in classrooms, outdoors or in scheduled larger spaces when available). Alton Middle and Alton High students will receive a “grab and go” lunch bag as they leave campus each day. Included in their lunch bag each day will be breakfast for the next morning.

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

How will students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) be served under the current plan?

Students receiving special education services and related services will be served regardless of what plan is implemented by the District. In-person instruction is recommended as the best option because services can be provided directly while at school. If a parent/guardian chooses to participate in remote learning, an individualized remote learning plan will be developed by the IEP team to discuss service delivery, IEP goals, accommodations and related services, including the use of a teletherapy platform.

How will students with a 504 Plan be served under the current plan?

Students receiving accommodations through a 504 plan will be served regardless of what plan is implemented by the District. In-person instruction is recommended as the best option because accommodations can be provided directly while at school. If a parent/guardian chooses to participate in remote learning, a 504 team meeting will meet to determine accommodations needed while on remote learning

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:

Can students still participate in athletics and music activities that take place after school if they registered for complete remote learning?

The Alton School District intends to permit after-school extracurricular activities for remote learning students ONLY IF these activities continue to be allowed by IHSA, IESA, IDPH or local level guidelines. Participation for remote-only students could become prohibited or severely restricted based on changes at the local or state level. Remote students participating in after-school activities will be subject to the COVID symptoms self-certification screening by parents and temperature scan upon arrival to practices (if or when they occur). All eligibility and Code of Conduct requirements still apply to remote learning students.

REMOTE LEARNING:

Why is there a deadline to register for remote learning?

In order to prepare for the number of remote learning teachers/classes needed, schools must have an accurate count of how many students will be enrolled for this mode of instruction. The deadline to register is July 31.

Will students receive a district-provided device to assist with remote learning?

Yes. If needed, the district will provide a Chromebook for student use.

Does my child have to be logged on at the same time as the teacher each day?

Yes. Remote students will log in each day for direct instruction with the teacher. Attendance will be taken each day and for each subject as applicable. It is anticipated that students will log in at the same time school starts each day (example: 7:45 a.m. for AHS students). Students will have both direct participation with the teacher and independent work to complete. Traditional grading and assessment will also apply.

Does my home need to have internet access to participate in remote learning?

Yes. Reliable internet access will be necessary to support remote learning and daily remote instructional sessions on the computer with the teacher. For homes that do not have internet service, the District does have a limited number of portable WiFi hotspots that can be loaned to families for instructional use only.

Will all of my child's classes be available via remote learning?

No. A focus for remote learning will be placed on core and required classes at the elementary and middle school levels and on graduation requirements at the high school. Other classes will be available remotely at the high school depending on teacher availability and the number of students registered remotely for those same classes. Some high school students may require a

schedule change if selecting remote learning based on the inability to provide all classes in this format.

During the semester, can my child return to in-person instruction if we choose to do so?

No, not at this time. Remote students will be assigned to remote learning teachers for the entire first semester. Classrooms for in-person instruction will be spaced and schools organized for the number of in-person students that start the year. This is subject to change.

Will remote physical education be provided?

The District is working with schools to determine how remote physical education can be provided and how students can demonstrate minimum requirements from home. More information will be provided as the school year draws closer.

Will free district breakfast and lunches be provided to remote learning students?

Yes. Meal bags will be available on Mondays and Thursdays for pick up at Alton High and Alton Middle School for remote learning students. The timeframe for pick up will be communicated at a later date.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SANITIZING MEASURES:

How will students and staff be screened for COVID-19 symptoms each day?

Parents will be required to complete a self-certification each morning with their student in screening for symptoms. This self-certification should take place prior to placing a student on a bus or dropping off at school. Parents of students presenting any symptoms upon arrival at school, will be called to pick their students up immediately. In addition, student and staff temperatures will be scanned each day.

Will masks/face coverings be required on buses?

Yes – this includes students, drivers and monitors.

Will masks/face coverings be required at school?

Yes – students and staff will be required to wear masks while at school. If your student has a documented medical condition or sensory need, please contact your child's school to request a waiver. Additional documentation, such as specific documentation from your child's physician, will be required before a waiver request is reviewed.

Will masks/face coverings be required during outdoor activities?

No, as long as students and staff are able to maintain social distancing while outdoors, masks will not be required for these activities.

Will social distancing be required?

All schools will observe social distancing to the highest degree possible. ISBE guidelines do not require 6 feet of social distancing at all times and understand that schools and classrooms are not designed to maintain 6 feet of social distance. Modifications (such as moving extra furniture from classrooms) are underway right now to provide as much distance between desks as possible. Desks and seating will be forward-facing in accordance with ISBE/IDPH guidance.

Some classrooms have tables instead of desks and plexiglas dividers and other protective resources will be employed. One-directional hallways, stairwells and other signage will assist students in maintaining social distancing to the highest degree possible.

What is the school/district process should a diagnosed case of COVID be confirmed for a student or staff member?

The District will work directly with and under guidance of the Madison County Health Department. Contact tracing will be used to determine the level of exposure for any and all individuals (those within 6 ft. of the student or staff member for 15 minutes or more). If it is necessary to close a classroom or school for a period of quarantine, all students will be placed on remote learning for those days impacted.

Will schools be sanitized and cleaned at increased levels?

Yes. High touch surface areas, restrooms and other areas of each school will be sanitized regularly throughout school hours with deeper disinfecting taking place after students are dismissed each day. At the high school and middle school, students transitioning to a new classroom prior to the start of a new class period will use a sanitizing wipe to clean their desk surface and chair back prior to the start of each class. Buses will also be sanitized between routes.

Will additional hand sanitizer be available?

Yes, hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms with portable, hands-free stations located in hallways. Additional handwashing opportunities will be provided as needed.

How can I help my child prepare for in-person instruction under the current restrictions and guidelines?

Wearing masks at school, even with a shortened day, will be a challenge for students and understandably so. You may want to consider having younger students practice wearing a mask and for extended periods at a time. Conversations with your child about social distancing, not sharing items and good hand hygiene will also be of support and reinforced by school staff.

Your ongoing questions are very important and this FAQ sheet will be updated as new questions become prevalent. However, we want to ensure you have the opportunity to submit questions and receive answers that still may be of concern or interest. Please email your specific question to parentquestions@altonschools.org and we will send a direct reply. Thank you!