

# Frequently Asked Questions



(Please note that the FAQ below is not all-inclusive or complete at this time. We will continue to update and provide new information as events dictate and new protocols and guidelines become available.) Revised 07/22/20.

## Instructional Questions

### Q. On what day will the new school year begin?

**A.** The 2020-2021 school year will begin on **Monday, August 17, 2020**. That is one week later than originally scheduled. The School Board approved the change to allow school teachers and staff more of an opportunity to train and prepare for new protocols and procedures put in place specifically for this school year.

### Q. What are the 3 school year reopening options available to students?

**A.** Very briefly, the three reopening plans approved by the School Board include a 5-day on campus instructional plan for parents who want their students to return to school full-time; a 5-day hybrid schedule where students mix on-campus learning with eLearning Manatee; and an option for parents who want their students to continue full-time 5-day eLearning. To select the best option for your student(s), contact the school your child is enrolled in.

### Q. Will Elementary students still receive *specials* during their day?

**A.** Yes, the lesson may look a little different for STEM and Art, but the district is working on specific details.

### Q. How will student schedules be distributed?

**A.** **Focus** will be the main communication channel to distribute student schedules. Parents can [sign up for a Focus account](#) on the School District website to monitor student schedules, attendance, assignments and grades. In addition, parents can download the [MySDMC Focus App](#) from the [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play Store](#).

For more information about Focus, visit <https://www.manateeschools.net/focus>.

## Option A: 5-day On Campus Questions

### Q. Can students return to full-time, on-campus learning when the 2020-2021 school year begins?

**A.** Yes. Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran's Executive Order 2020-EO-06 states that all school boards and charter school governing boards must open brick and mortar schools at least five days per week for all students' subject to advice and orders of the Florida Department of Health. That means that all parents who want their children to return to full-time, on-campus learning will have that option available to them.

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## **Q. Are all students required to return to full-time, on-campus learning?**

**A.** No. While Commissioner Corcoran's Executive Order requires all students to have access to full-time, on-campus learning five days a week, it does not require all students to return to full-time, five-day a week on-campus learning. Under the District's plans, parents have the option to have their children attend school five days a week; select a hybrid schedule where students mix on-campus learning with eLearning Manatee; or continue full-time eLearning through eLearning Manatee. All options are available to students in all grade levels.

## **Q. If a student attends 5-day on campus learning and the school campus needs to shut down, will the students transfer to eLearning with the same teacher(s) they have for on campus learning?**

**A.** Yes, the same teacher(s) would transfer to online eLearning during the temporary closure.

## **Option B: 5-day Hybrid Questions**

### **Q. What do you mean by a hybrid plan?**

**A.** A hybrid schedule is a five-day instructional schedule that integrates on-campus learning with eLearning. Across the district, this model will include 2 consecutive days of instruction on campus (face-to-face) and 3 days virtual learning online. A teacher's class will be divided in half. Half the class will attend on M/T and the other half on Th/F with Wednesday scheduled as an online day. On the e-learning days, students will check in to Schoology daily. Standards-based grading expectations will be posted on Schoology by the teacher for each course. Grading will be based on grade level and course standards. Specials will be offered during the regular school year.

### **Q. If the 5-day hybrid model is chosen by a parent, will the student have a consistent teacher(s) for both two days on campus and three days eLearning?**

**A.** Teachers will be provided with a district-developed curriculum content, allowing for seamless transition to distance learning. Student schedules will be determined based upon enrollment and capacity.

### **Q. Will 5-day hybrid students be scheduled with students who attend 5-day on campus instruction, or will they be in their own classrooms for 2-day instruction on campus?**

**A.** Final decisions to keep hybrid students scheduled separately from the five day on campus students will be based on enrollment and capacity. The number of students requesting each class will drive this outcome.

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**Q. If 5-day hybrid or eLearning student(s) wishes to return to on campus learning in the new quarter, will they have the same teachers?**

**A.** This will ultimately be determined by the school, based upon teacher availability and student enrollment.

## **Option C: 5-day eLearning Questions**

**Q. How does full-time eLearning work?**

**A.** eLearning Manatee is a model designed for families who want to maintain their connection to their enrolled Manatee County school, yet don't feel comfortable sending their student(s) back to campus in-person this August. Students will maintain their connection to their enrolled school. There will be live teacher instruction for daily lessons. Students will be assigned a teacher from their enrolled schools and those teachers will be provided with district-developed curriculum content. Assignments will be submitted according to instructional expectations. The teacher will post standards-based grading expectations on Schoology. Grading will be based on grade level and course standards. Specials offered during the regular school year will be provided. Students will be able to participate in all school activities and events. The School District of Manatee County may issue computers; however, home internet will be necessary for online learning. The 5-day eLearning Manatee is not an option for VPK

**Q. Will the eLearning option require students to sit in front of a computer for the entire duration of the school day?**

**A.** No, the students may log in at the time of each class period to see the LIVE lesson or view it later that day. Students will be able to complete assignments throughout the day and into the evening. It is important eLearning students stay on task ready for the next day. Teachers will set due dates for all assignments.

**Q. Will eLearning students have a consistent teacher(s)?**

**A.** Yes, there will be a consistent LIVE eLearning teacher(s) for the eLearning students. If the students receive additional services like ESE & ESOL or Tiered Interventions, then more teachers may be tied to a student's instructional plan. Teachers will be available daily and must respond to emails and phone calls within 24 hours. The teacher will communicate the daily and weekly schedule to the students.

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**Q. Will all eLearning students be assigned to a teacher who will instruct 100% eLearning students or will the class(es) be combined with on campus students?**

**A.** This will be a school-based decision based on enrollment but the eLearning students will only view the teacher and not the entire class.

**Q. How many students will be in each eLearning class?**

**A.** The number of students in each class will be determined based on enrollment.

**Q. Will there be gifted certified teachers for e-learning?**

**A.** In most cases yes, or gifted services will be provided by a gifted resource teacher.

**Q. When and how do I get my children registered for one of the three plans available?**

**A. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.** Parents need to let their children(s) school(s) know what plan they want their students to be on when school resumes. In order for our schools to set their schedules and complete their planning, they need to know what option you want for your student(s) by the end of the day **July 23, 2020**. Please call your schools now and let them know what option is best for your student(s).

**Q. Once a parent has decided upon the instructional plan for their child by July 23<sup>rd</sup>, can the decision be reversed before the start of school on August 17<sup>th</sup>, if the Covid-19 situation changes significantly before school begins?**

**A.** Contact your individual school administration with the request.

**Q: Can I change my child's instructional plan after the school year begins? For example: my student begins the school year on the hybrid schedule but wishes to change to eLearning full-time. Is that possible?**

**A.** Yes, on a **quarterly** basis. All instructional plans will follow the same curriculum guides, standards and pairings. Parents can move their student from one plan to another **quarterly**. To make such a change, parents must contact their school. Please note: any changes to the instructional plans will be made by the individual school and based upon enrollment and availability. There is no guarantee a student will continue with the same teacher if they switch to a different instructional option.

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## **Q. What happens if I don't inform the school by July 23, 2020?**

**A.** If parents don't notify their schools of their plan choices for their children by July 23, 2020, their students will be automatically placed into one of the reopening plan options. Elementary school students and students in sixth grade who are not registered by July 23<sup>rd</sup>, will be automatically placed into the five-day, full-time return to on-campus learning. That full-time return option will also be automatically applied to all students at Johnson K-8 School and Palm View K-8 School. Secondary school students (grades 7-12), who are not registered by July 23<sup>rd</sup>, will be automatically placed into the hybrid option.

## **Q. What will happen if there are not enough teachers to teach on campus, hybrid and e learning for a specific course such as AP or AICE classes?**

**A.** The number of individual requests will drive this option which is a school-based decision.

## **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Questions**

### **Q. If a parent does not wish their VPK child to attend on campus learning do they need to withdraw the student?**

**A.** Yes, VPK is a voluntary program and only available on campus. eLearning or Hybrid is not an option for VPK.

## **Testing and Assessment Questions**

### **Q. My son/daughter will be attending 3rd grade, will FSA's take place this year?**

**A.** Yes, currently there has not been a cancellation of state testing. Logistics and planning for hybrid or eLearning students will be made available at a later date.

### **Q. Will IEP/IST meetings with parents be held on campus?**

**A.** No, conference calls or video calls will be scheduled by the individual schools.

## **Transportation Questions**

### **Q. How will I receive confirmation that my child's *Register to Ride* registration was received?**

**A.** Parents are encouraged to download the "Where's the Bus" application to their cell phones or check the Transportation tab on **MySDMCFocus App** in August. Bus assignments will also be available to families who call the School District of Manatee County Transportation Department at 941-782-1287 (1BUS).

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## **Q. What safety procedures will be in place on the buses?**

**A.** All students are required to wear a mask or face shield on the bus. If any student does not have a mask one will be provided. The bus-aide or driver will screen the students and take temperatures before boarding the bus. Students with a temperature of 100.4°F will be asked to return home if their parent is present. If a parent is not available, the child will be isolated on the bus and taken to the school for pick up by the parent. School buses will be cleaned daily between school routes.

## **Personal Protective Equipment Questions**

### **Q. Will students with special needs or medical conditions be required to wear a mask?**

**A.** Medical conditions and IEPs will be addressed individually when it comes to face masks or shield coverings. Please contact your child's school for more information.

### **Q. How will the district enforce students who have sensory challenges to wear their mask in the correct way?**

**A.** Teachers and staff will do their best to encourage the children to keep their masks or shields on. Our V.E. classes are fortunate to have smaller class sizes which will help with the social distancing, and we will work with each student. The teachers will set the standard and make it kid friendly and fun. Usually if everyone is wearing one, it makes it easier for kids to follow.

### **Q. If students are learning in a classroom with Plexiglass partitions will they still be required to wear a mask?**

**A.** Yes, a face covering is required.

## **Safety and Security Questions**

### **Q. What happens if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed at a school?**

**A.** If a school has a confirmed case of COVID-19, the Florida Department of Health in Manatee County will be contacted. Parents and employees of the school will also be informed, although specific information pertaining to the confirmed case cannot be released due to HIPPA, FERPA and ADA laws. Any students or staff members exposed to a confirmed case will be notified and will be subject to 14-day isolation from date of the last known exposure. Exposure occurs when a positive case was in direct contact with a staff member or student for at least 15 minutes (within teaching and learning environments).

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Once a case is confirmed, a portion or portions of the school, or the entire school will be closed for cleaning and disinfecting for 2-5 days depending on the exposure and the parts of the school affected. Actions will be taken on an individual basis based on the circumstances at each school. An outbreak of multiple positive cases in a school may close the entire school.

The procedures above will be the same for confirmed cases in school support sites. When a school closure occurs, all students will be required to continue their daily instructional schedule and academic lessons through our eLearning Manatee platform. The full array of IEP/ESOL services will continue to be provided.

## **Q. What if a student or employee has symptoms, but is not a confirmed case of COVID-19?**

**A.** If a student or employee is not feeling well, and exhibiting symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or believes they may have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 72 hours, they should stay at home and not enter a school or district building. The employee or parent of a student should call the school, remain at home and call the Florida Department of Health Manatee County at 1-866-779-6121 and visit a county Covid-19 testing facility immediately.

## **Q. What safety practices or changes can students and employees expect when schools reopen?**

**A.** Health staff and other designated staff using Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) will conduct daily screening of all employees and random students prior to them being admitted to a school or district worksite. Once the district has the capability to screen all students prior to admittance to school campuses those practices will be initiated.

If an employee has a temperature of 100.4°F or higher, cough, or shortness of breath, they will not be admitted into the building. If a student has any of the above symptoms, they will be kept in a designated isolation room while waiting to be picked up by a parent or guardian. One-way hallway movement will be implemented with staggered lunches and dismissals. Logistics for the safety procedures are presently being implemented.

## **Q. Will visitors or volunteers be allowed on campus?**

**A.** No, Visitors or volunteers to schools or district support sites will be strictly limited until further notice.

## **Q: Will COVID-19 testing be a requirement for employees and staff?**

**A.** COVID-19 testing is optional and not a requirement for employees and staff.

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## Technology Questions

**Q. Will the district distribute computer devices to students for eLearning purposes?**

**A.** Yes, students who do not have a computer device and choose eLearning Manatee will be issued a device from their enrolled school. Home internet will be necessary for online learning.

## After-School Programs Questions

**Q. Will after-school programs such as Extended Day Enrichment Programs (EDEP) still be offered?**

**A.** Yes, extended day programs will be offered during the 2020-2021 school year. Guidelines and details will be available at a later date.

**Q. If my child is enrolled in the hybrid option can he/she attend the EDEP for the 2 days that he/she will be at school?**

**A.** EDEP will be provided on the days that the student is physically at school and will be pro-rated if the child does not attend 5 days per week.

## Food and Nutrition Questions

**Q: How will you ensure that students not attending 5-day on campus learning will still receive meals?**

**A.** Food and Nutrition Services is ensuring a plan is in place to accommodate all **School District of Manatee County** students. Information is forthcoming.

**Q. Will students be able to eat lunch in the cafeteria or will they have to eat in a classroom?**

**A.** Most classes will come to the cafeteria using CDC guidelines for social distancing. Students will be brought in by classes or in small groups and some may return to their classroom to eat their lunch.

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