

**Westmoreland  
County Public  
Schools**



**Return to  
Learning Plan**

# Return To Learning Steering Committee

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## ***The Day the County, State, Country and World Changed!***

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, every Superintendent in Virginia received a call that schools would be shut down for two weeks. At that time, no one had an idea that school, and lives, would be changed permanently.

Ever since that day, we have been adjusting to new routines, realities, and habits in the midst of a new set of realities.

After absorbing the shocks that reverberated for weeks, the administrative team of Westmoreland County Public Schools (WMLCPS), grimly and determinedly began the work on the WMLCPS Return-to-Learning Plan. Teachers, nurses, counselors, coaches, custodians, technology specialists, principals, program directors, and auxiliary service supervisors have been engaged!

As a result of hard conversations, creative and innovative thinking, prayer, and feedback from our community stakeholders, we have produced a very good plan to address all students of Westmoreland County.

This plan allows implementation of instructional delivery that can be 100% remote, 100% face-to-face, or a hybrid approach. Digital components of this plan will remain a permanent component of Westmoreland County's instructional program, just as they will in educational programs throughout the world. This will allow homeschoolers to homeschool and yet access a progressive and approved curriculum that they will not have to spend money to acquire.

This document provides information about our Return-to-Learning Plan. This resource, outlining the reopening of Westmoreland County Public Schools reflects the reality that we may have to change instructional delivery quickly. But, unlike March 13, 2020, we will not be caught unprepared. This plan allows flexibility to adjust to the unknowns of the coronavirus. Please know that because of the rapid changes we all will experience together as our country adapts to the new COVID landscape, this plan will, by necessity, change and adapt as well. That said, this is our best understanding at the time of this

writing.

Again, we hope you find this document to be a helpful resource. Should you have any questions about the contents of our plan, please do not hesitate to contact your school or the School Board office.

# February 28, 2021: Phase 3 Return to Learn Instructional Equity

Westmoreland County Public Schools (WMLCPS) has designed a plan for the upcoming 2021 – 2022 year that reflects a Phase Three Opening. The plan addresses Instructional Equity, Safety, and Support for Family and Staff. We believe strongly that instructional options are necessary for our students, parents, and staff because of the changing nature of the ongoing pandemic and the guidance and information that we receive. The school division will emphasize daily face-to-face instruction. This instruction will be supplemented with the following virtual components; the Canvas Learning Management System, Google Meet, division-issued Chromebooks, internet hotspots, and Virtual Virginia for students who meet required criteria and whose parents choose virtual instruction for the entire year (K-8) or semester (9-12).

## Regional Programs

Westmoreland County Public Schools partners with other local divisions to participate in two regional programs. These include the Chesapeake Bay Governor's School (CBGS) and the Northern Neck Technical Center (NNTC). Both regional programs will also emphasize face-to-face instruction. The NNTC will run an online non-certificate version of their programs for students who meet the criteria for full-time virtual learning. However, students must attend some portions of in-person learning in order to be eligible to earn industry certifications.

## School Schedules

WMLCPS students will receive in-person instruction provided by WMLCPS teachers. Students will follow elementary, middle and high school schedules that provide a minimum of 180 days/990 instructional hours over the course of the year. Students may enter the school buildings at 7:45 a.m. Instruction will begin by 8:10 a.m. and continue until 3:10 p.m., with a 30-minute break for lunch and, at the elementary level only, a 15-minute recess.

## In-Person Instruction

For the 2021-2022 school year, all grade levels (Pre-K - grade twelve) will return to in-person instruction five days a week, using a traditional school day/bell schedule. In-person, face-to-face instruction will serve as the primary method of instructional delivery. No extra action is required for students to return to in-person learning. WMLCPS will continue to listen to and abide by health guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and the Virginia Department of Health. Mitigation strategies will be adjusted to address up-to-date guidance to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Three-foot social distancing will be observed to the extent possible in all areas, according to current guidance.

## **Virtual Instruction**

WMLCPS will offer a virtual learning option for the 2021-2022 school year through the Virginia Department of Education's Virtual Virginia Program on a limited basis. Parents who desire full-time virtual instruction for their children during the 2021-2022 school year must make this request by completing a [parent/guardian virtual learning agreement](#) which must be returned to the school principal and RECEIVED by the principal by July 7, 2021. Parents who desire full-time virtual instruction for their children must ensure their children can meet the criteria listed in the agreement. Additionally, students will be expected to commit to full-time virtual instruction for the entirety of the school year (K-8) or semester (9-12). Each request received will be reviewed on an individual basis. Approval will be based on the parent/guardian's submission of a signed agreement, as well as the school's review of the student's attendance, active participation, and academic success in the virtual environment during the 2020-2021 school year. In order to be approved, students must meet the following additional criteria:

- The student must have earned a grade of "C" or higher in all courses during the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quarters of the 2020-21 school year.
- The student must have no more than three unexcused absences during the 2020-21 school year.

WMLCPS will work with Virtual Virginia to offer virtual instruction to approved full-time virtual students.

Although in-person, face-to-face instruction will be the primary mode of instructional delivery for most students, the division will maintain the ability to return to all-virtual instruction for periods of time, should the need arise. The division will continue to utilize the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) and Google Meet to supplement in-person instruction in all classrooms. Students will continue to utilize division-issued Chromebooks and hotspots. The continued use of the Canvas LMS and Google Meet will enhance and strengthen in-person instruction, as well as engagement with students and parents. It will also position the division and its students to seamlessly return to all virtual instruction when and if that is needed.

## **Addressing Learning Strengths & Needs**

At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, each school will assess the instructional strengths and needs of all students. Assessment of student learning needs will be accomplished through a combination of formal screening tools, such as the *Phonological Awareness and Literacy Screening (PALS)*, the *Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program (VKRP)* assessment, and the *Virginia Department of Education's Growth Assessments*, as well as more informal tools, such as teacher-made tests. Throughout the year, student progress will be monitored using a combination of formative assessments and division benchmark assessments. Each school will offer small group intervention, and extended learning time to address students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs.

# Safety – Phases 1-3

## Health & Safety Precautions

WMLCPS has developed a Health Plan in partnership with the Westmoreland County Health Department (WCHD). The plan has been submitted to the Virginia Department of Education. The plan outlines the mitigating strategies that will be taken to minimize public health risk and that comply with recommendations from the CDC and VDH. Some of the steps that will be taken to keep your children safe, along with the faculty and staff, are outlined below;

- 1) The students at the school will be in compliance with three feet physical distancing as much as possible. Physical distancing will be practiced in all areas.
- 2) Large gatherings of students will be kept at a minimum.
- 3) Students will eat breakfast in the classroom.
- 4) All students and staff will adhere to daily health screening, including temperature checks with non-contact thermometers, prior to entering the building.
- 5) Isolation room(s) will be provided for students and/or staff who develop potential COVID - 19 symptoms while at school.
- 6) If a student develops a fever or displays symptoms of illness at school, that student will be separated from other students and monitored until they can be picked up.
- 7) All staff and students will be required to wear face coverings according to CDC and VDH guidance (the 6<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> day of sickness).
- 8) The schools will promote healthy hygiene practices, frequent handwashing and use of hand sanitizers. The division will provide adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitizer, disinfectants, paper towels, gloves, and face coverings.
- 9) All schools and buses will be deep-cleaned prior to the first day of school. Each bus, classroom, common area, and bathroom will be thoroughly cleaned following use, daily.
- 10) All staff will receive all required COVID-specific training.
- 11) We will encourage staff and students who feel sick to stay home.
- 12) We will establish clear policies for when sick individuals can return.
- 13) We will reduce access to communal areas and allow access by appointment only.
- 14) We will reduce transitions in hallways by using building appropriate scheduling.
- 15) Students supplies will be kept and distributed to avoid sharing with others.
- 16) Visitors to buildings will be limited as much as possible. Appointments will be required, and visitors will be screened/temperature checked.
- 17) Facilities requests of outside groups will be monitored on a case by case basis.
- 18) There will be safety and logistical signage throughout the buildings.

For other steps and information on safety please go to the Westmoreland County Public School's Health Plan. It is posted on the website.

# Safety - Phases 1-3

## Health Screenings Before Going to School

Students and staff should assess themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to school; and/or may be asked the following by school personnel upon arrival:

Check all boxes that apply:

- A new fever (100° F or higher) or a sense of having a fever?
- A new cough that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New shortness of breath that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New chills that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- A new sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- New muscle aches that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity?

*If individuals answer YES to any of the screening questions before arriving, they should stay home and not enter the building.*

## Safety- Phases 1-3

### **Student or Staff Member Suspected of Having COVID-19**

- If an employee or student displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at school, he/she will immediately report or be taken to the school's isolation room at the direction of the school nurse.
- Upon arrival at the isolation room, individuals will immediately be provided with appropriate PPE. This is to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus.
- The nurse will consult with their supervisor and call the health department.
- The nurse and others attending the suspected infected person should also wear a protective mask and gloves while working with the suspected infected person.
- The nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent/guardian of the student to be picked up and sent home.
- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched.

#### **Student or Staff Member has COVID-19**

- *In the event that a student or staff member has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the school/office building will be closed for a period of 2-5 days (consultation with Virginia Department of Health). If possible, only the impacted school/office building will be closed*
- *If school has to be closed, Distance Learning for all students in that school will be utilized.*

# Safety- Phases 1-3

## Facilities and Auxiliary Services

WMLCPS's COVID-19 Team will develop practices and guidelines that support a healthy and safe physical environment for students and staff.

### Facilities

WMLCPS will operate in accordance with the guidelines from the Center of Disease Control to provide facilities that will be safe options for all users. This includes;

- WMLCPS will implement usage rules to reduce potential exposure to COVID-19.
- Measures will be used to minimize the sharing of equipment, technology, and learning materials.
- Air flow in facilities will be monitored. Operable windows will be opened when conditions allow to improve indoor air quality by increasing outdoor air ventilation.
- All current air filters in buildings will be replaced with the latest model.
- Isolation rooms will be established to care for symptomatic students.
- Signage will be placed in buildings to promote traffic patterns that limit contact between cohorts of students.
- Signage will be used to promote handwashing and appropriate social distancing.
- Water fountains will be taken out and replaced with bottle Stations.
- WMLCPS will place hand sanitizers, throughout the buildings.
- Communal spaces will be limited in usage.
- Restrict non-essential visitors and volunteers from entering our buildings.

### Transportation

Buses will operate in accordance with the guidelines from the Center of Disease Control to provide a safe transportation option for all users. This includes;

- Daily cleaning and disinfecting of all buses that are in use.
- Seats will be assigned to ensure physical distancing on our buses in accordance with CDC guidance.
- Students will be seated by filling seats in the back first and filling toward the front as a mitigating measure.
- Students will be dismissed from the bus by front-to-back.
- All buses will be equipped with hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes or spray.
- Windows will be lowered on buses, when appropriate, before students board, to improve ventilation.

# Safety- Phases 1-3

## Professional Development

WMLCPS's COVID Team will direct all custodial staff to participate in professional training provided by Michael Weiss, *Clean Start Road Map* and you can review some details about it at: [cleanstartroadmap.com](http://cleanstartroadmap.com). The training will allow employees to effectively do the following;

- Create Routines to clean and disinfect shared spaces and high-touch surfaces.
- Identify and remove furnishings and coverings that are impediments to proper disinfection.
- WMLCPS will create and implement established protocols for cleaning and disinfection of shared spaces and surfaces daily.
- WMLCPS will create schedules to increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting restrooms during the day.
- WMLCPS will use products recommended and approved by the CDC for cleaning and disinfecting.

## Food Service

WMLCPS's COVID-19 Team will develop practices and guidelines that support a healthy and safe physical environment for students and staff. Regarding cafeterias, we will:

- Have all breakfast meals eaten in the classroom to minimize sharing and cohorts mixing.
- Stagger meal schedules, to reduce the amount of movement in hallways and reduce the number of occupants in the cafeteria at any given time.
- Install hand sanitizer stations in the kitchen.
- Utilize the CEP to decrease wait time in cafeteria lines.
- We will follow all USDA regulations and guidelines to ensure food is prepared and served in the safest possible way.
- Serve high-quality nutritional meals to students and staff.

# Support for Family and Staff - Phases 1-3

WMLCPS is committed to offering a continuity of support to our families, students, and staff. The following initiatives will help to acquire knowledge and access resources needed during this time of reentry into schools.

## Family Engagement

WMLCPS will provide information through multiple methods to demonstrate how the Division is addressing the guidance and expectations of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE). Authoritative guidance and resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), will be provided through web links.

Division Plans that are required by VDOE will be posted for parents on the Division website. Social media will also be utilized to get information to families.

School Board meetings will be in-person and live streamed to provide parents options to learn information and to engage with the Board. The division LMS, Canvas, will be utilized in this effort. Web links will be posted on the school website for video tutorials on how to use the technology we are requiring the students to use. The division will also continue to utilize the instant alert call message system to provide information to families.

Teachers will establish set days/times for meetings with parents through the Learning Management System, Canvas. They will also schedule times with families who do not have internet access to engage via telephone call. Teachers will provide families with step by step technology training to assist their children with assignments. Videos will be provided.

## Physical Wellness Staff and Students

Safety measures will be put in place for employees. They include;

- Perform temperature checks with no-touch thermometers each morning to all staff and all students. These checks will be performed daily by trained professionals.
- Staff and students who show symptoms while at school will utilize the protocols developed for the Isolation Room.
- Staff members and students exhibiting symptoms will be sent home until they have satisfied the CDC requirements outlined in the WMLCPS Health Plan.
- The nurses will train Staff in health and safety measures. This mandatory training will occur before students return to school. Proper handwashing, hygiene, use of disinfectants, physical distancing, and face coverings are some of the agenda items.

## **Physical Wellness Staff and Students**

- A structured and intentional schedule for custodial staff will be implemented. This will include increased cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces (at least every 45-60 minutes for designated high usage spaces).
- Trash will be removed from the classrooms after breakfast and lunch.
- WMLCPS will provide cleaning materials, spray disinfectants and/or wipes, to clean desks and chairs prior to teachers leaving their classroom.
- Water fountains will be replaced with bottling systems.
- Electrostatic sprayers will be used throughout the buildings and on each bus daily.
- Deep cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted weekly.

Employees and students will be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for their specific job functions. Although risk cannot be eliminated, risk will be minimized by enacting several restrictions.

- Some special education teachers will receive gloves, and gowns based upon the requirements of their classroom. These products will be made available to other employees who demonstrate a need.
- Custodians will receive goggles, gloves, gowns, and shoe coverings.
- If training is necessary for the use of PPE it will be provided.
- Classrooms will adhere to the physical distancing guidelines in the CDC, VDH, and AAP guidelines.
- School buses will adhere to the physical distancing guidelines in the CDC, VDH, and AAP guidelines.
- High traffic areas will be restricted for use through strategic scheduling and signage.

## **Mental Health Supports for Staff**

Staff will be provided with resources that contribute to their emotional and mental well-being.

- Mental health resources will be promoted on the Division website and also in Division publications.
- The employee assistance program will be advertised or marketed to all employees.
- We will utilize our Social Worker to promote community health.

### ***Staff Leave Requests***

Employees will be advised of the options available to them if they can't work because they have COVID-19 symptoms, are in a high-risk category, or lack child care due to the closure or unavailability of school or child care facilities.

- Employees will be notified that they may use leave balances allocated by School Board Policy GCBD "Staff Leaves and Absences", or, if appropriate, they may apply for Family Medical Leave (FML).

- Employees will be informed that when all accrued leave balances are exhausted, they may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) without pay for 30 days according to policy (GCBEA).
- Employees will be informed that they may apply for accommodations that will allow them to work where possible.
- Employees will be informed of their options if they have trepidation about returning to work, but do not have COVID-19 symptoms, are not in a high-risk category, and for whom child care is not relevant.
- Employees will have access to learn about leave options available through FMLA, and WMLCPS. We will publish Leave Options for employees that list and describe available leave options, including qualifying conditions; rules for use, application and eligibility; and requirements.
- Employees will receive return to work guidance for substitutes and temporary employees.
- Substitutes and other temporary employees will be informed that they must follow the leave and return to work protocols described here and in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

## **Mental Health Supports for Students**

Students will be provided an array of supports for their reentry into school. Our Social Worker, Counselors, and Nurses will develop protocols and procedures to support the mental health and well-being.

- The nurses will provide training to all personnel that will be mindful of the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and public health restrictions on the mental health of our students and their families.
- WMLCPS will work with the Health Department, IEP Teams, FAPT, and the CSB to provide a continuum of school mental health services and coping mechanisms that address social, emotional and behavioral health.
- We will survey school families to assess overall needs as well as the social and emotional learning (SEL) needs of students.

## **Mental Health Supports for Students**

- School counselors will develop cohorts of students to talk to on a regular basis.
- While holding our regular all leadership team (ALT), the Lead Nurse and Social Worker will have a regular spot on the agenda to increase awareness of the mental health and well-being of students and to develop division-level supports.
- The COVID-19 Team will identify community resources to further support the mental health and well-being of our students. They will communicate with families about mental health services and supports.

Scheduling will include options to address the mental health of students and their families. WMLCPS will:

- develop scheduling options for students that address multiple learning environments.

- add a little flexibility to scheduling options so that students will have the option of changing if a schedule is not working for them.
- give special consideration to our youngest learners, English Learners, students with disabilities requiring adaptive curriculum, and medically compromised students when scheduling instruction.

## **Professional Development for Teachers**

Professional Development will be offered to prepare our teachers and staff to meet the new instructional challenges and needs of learners. They include;

- Distance/blended classroom strategies and protocols are being explored by administrators and teachers to determine best practices.
- Data meetings are being held by administrators and teachers to identify and determine the best practices to address learning gaps.
- Professional development is being determined on the “how-to’s” of addressing grading and attendance using best practices for remote learning.
- Canvas – Teachers are being trained to utilize the many capabilities of Canvas. Facets of Canvas include a new communications forum for parents, repository for lessons, grades, and other student information.
- Virtual Virginia – Teachers are being trained to utilize Virtual Virginia’s curriculum and to add new curriculum onto the platform.
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) will be utilized by our counselors and teachers to reach students.

# Support for Family and Staff- Phases 1-3

## Emotional Wellness for Staff

Staff will be provided with resources that contribute to their emotional well-being. WMLCPS will:

- be sharing resources to assist employees in keeping a balance in their lives.
- encourage employees to prioritize their health and well-being.
- encourage employees to continue pursuing hobbies that were taken up during the COVID-19 absence.
- encourage employees to pay attention to their eating habits.
- encourage employees to reach out to family, friends, and neighbors.

## Emotional Wellness Students

*Virginia's Tiered Interventions of Support:*

WMLCPS's COVID-19 Team will use current VTIS materials to address the needs of students who may need more support than the content delivered in the classroom.

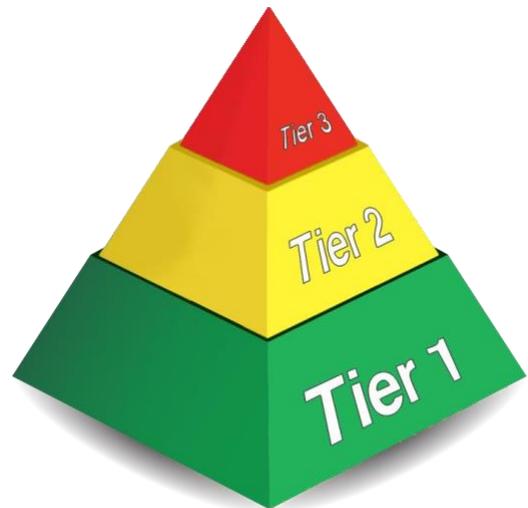
When students return to school, we will assess their needs in a variety of manners to quickly identify those students who need more support from our school based mental health professionals. Counseling, referrals, and classroom lessons will be used for students.

**Tier I:** All students have the majority of their academic, behavioral, social and emotional needs addressed.

WMLCPS will ensure that counselors address needs as needed. Counselors will render social/emotional well-being assessments when students return.

**Tier II:** Up to 20 percent of students may need supplemental instruction and supports.

WMLCPS will ensure these students receive small group counseling and individual counseling to support their social/emotional needs.



**Tier III:** Up to 5 percent of students may need intensive, individualized instruction and supports.

WMLCPS will ensure these students receive the outside help they need through mental health professionals associated with community based mental health organizations