

Family Guide to Help Determine Learning Preferences

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will offer both virtual and in-person learning experiences as health metrics allow. MCPS will begin a phased-in return to in-person instruction beginning January 12, 2021, with a focus on specific special education programs and certain Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs. If health metrics continue to be met, larger groups of students will begin phasing in on February 1, 2021. This guide is to help your family determine your preference. The decision families make about opting for *all virtual learning* or *in-person instructional experiences* for their children is a deeply personal one. As you determine the appropriate option for your individual child(ren) and family, the following questions may help guide your decision:

Do I feel comfortable sending my child into a school building?	How does my child learn best? What has been our experience with virtual learning?	Is maintaining our current routine and schedule a priority?	How will I/my child feel about a potential teacher assignment change?	What kind of support can I continue to provide during the day?	Will I need and am I comfortable having my child(ren) ride a bus?	If I have multiple children in different models, how will that impact our family?
---	--	--	--	---	--	--

As you make your selection, please note the following:

- **All students**, at all grade levels and all schools and programs, will be provided with the **opportunity to remain virtual**.
- **All students**, at all grade levels and schools, will be able to **participate in school clubs, activities and sports teams**, regardless of their virtual or in-person status.
- **In-person instructional experiences** will be conducted in **small groups** that meet health and safety guidelines. In-person schedules may consist of:
 - In-person engagement daily, a few days a week, or alternating weeks in a **support model to their virtual classes**
 - In-person engagement daily, a few days a week, or alternating weeks in a **simultaneous instruction model** where some students are engaged remotely and others are in-person during the same class
 - In-person engagement daily, a few days a week, or alternating weeks in a **direct instructional model** where students receive in-person instruction with no virtual component
- These variations are dependent on student demand and staff availability. Students not engaged in in-person experiences will **still access their virtual classrooms**.
- After the initial selection, **changes may be made only under unique circumstances**.
- Any family that does not make a selection will **automatically default to the virtual-only experience** in order to ensure we consider and plan for maximum staffing and space use.

Parents who express an interest in an in-person experience should be aware there may be circumstances where the school and/or classroom teacher could change, depending on student demand for in-person instruction and staff availability. Parents should also be aware that schools may suddenly shift to fully virtual due to identified cases of COVID-19 in the classroom(s) or school, or due to overall negative changes in health metrics.

IN-PERSON INSTRUCTIONAL EXPERIENCES

Advantages	Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced class sizes to support physical distancing and promote risk reduction • Maximizes contact time with cohorts of students in school daily/weekly (depending on the schedule) • Teachers can shift to a fully virtual class when schools must close as determined by local health authorities due to COVID-19 cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As attendance increases, maintaining social distancing may be more difficult. • Employees and students have a higher risk of being exposed to and/or contracting COVID-19. • Classrooms may have to shift suddenly to fully virtual instruction if COVID-19 cases are identified and local authorities dictate a school closure is necessary.

Family Guide to Help Determine Learning Preferences

- Can maintain the current schedule/structure of the virtual schedule
- Provides an in-person experience to students for whom virtual learning is not ideal and provides important social/emotional connections for students and staff
- Students may stay connected to all clubs, activities and sports of the school community.

- Teachers may be managing both in-person and remote instruction simultaneously.
- School and/or teacher assignments may change based on student demand for in-person and staff availability.