



ONLINE ACADEMY

NAVIGATING A NEW PATH OF EXCELLENCE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . ENROLLMENT DEADLINE

Q. If we enroll in online learning by the current deadline, can we switch back to in-person later? If we miss the online enrollment deadline, will there be opportunities again before the start of the school year?

- A. Due to the need to establish staffing levels and the process of moving teachers from in-person to virtual or vice versa, for both the Online Academy and the traditional schools, we must adhere to a deadline for enrollment. All classes will need to be finalized before the school year starts to allow ample planning for the district and teaching staff.

Q. Why do you need to know if my child will be virtual by May 24th? I would prefer to wait until the end of the summer to see what happens with COVID.

- A. The district needs ample time and a clear understanding of all the needs of the teaching staff while some may be moving from in-person to virtual and vice versa.

Q. If we miss the deadline by accident and our child is currently virtual and we want to continue, how does that work?

- A. The registration deadlines are being clearly communicated so families need to register according to the posted deadlines. Unfortunately, in order to establish classes, we will need to adhere to the deadline. Any student not registered for the Online Academy will be considered an in-person student.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . GENERAL OPERATIONS

Q. Can you offer a Hybrid Model for school next year?

- A. The district is not planning to offer a hybrid model. Through past experience, we have seen that this is very difficult for students. In order to offer students the best education possible we understand that the consistency of being virtual 100% of the time or in person 100% of the time is best for kids.

Q. Will there be any SOI teachers teaching at the Online Academy?

- A. The District follows the negotiated teacher's agreement and staff bidding rights for positions and teacher assignments will be made according to the contract. We can't guarantee what teachers will be at any school due to these procedures.

Q. If a child is at the School of Innovation (SOI) and we decide to enroll in the Online Academy for one school year, will the child lose their spot at SOI if we decide to go back in person the following year?

- A. If a SOI student chooses the Online Academy, they will relinquish their spot to the next student on the SOI waiting list. SOI students who leave SOI are not eligible to return.

Q. What happens if my child is ill and cannot attend classes?

- A. Students who miss class, for whatever reason, are expected to make up their assignments upon return. Just like in-person learning, parents must be report absences on the attendance line. Students should check Schoology for assignments.

Q. Will my child earn a Willoughby-Eastlake School District high school diploma?

- A. Students will earn a Willoughby-Eastlake City Schools Online Academy high school diploma if they have met the Ohio Department of Education and school district requirements for graduation.

Q. What is the school calendar for the Online Academy?

- A. The Online Academy will follow the same calendar as all the other Willoughby-Eastlake school buildings. The calendar can be downloaded from the district website at www.weschools.org, under "Calendar" at the top of the page.

Q. Can children in the W-E district attend a school that isn't assigned to the address where they live, as long as they still reside in the district?

- A. Yes, the district offers an in-district transfer option. Parents who wish to request a school other than their home school for their students can do so by filling out paperwork and submitting to the administration offices. This must be done annually and depends on school enrollment numbers.

Q. Will the virtual school cost the district extra money compared to having these students in class? What are the additional costs to taxpayers?

- A. Can go 2 ways. Kids leave = cost to district \$6,020 Kids stay = cost is neutral because classrooms will be right sized.

Q. Will the Online Academy be a permanent option going forward?

- A. As long as we have enrollment to support an Online Academy then it is our plan to offer this option long term.

Q. Will there be a minimum previous year GPA for admittance and what would that be if so?

- A. All district students are eligible to attend the Online Academy. There are no prerequisites or academic requirements.

Q. Will you offer meal pick-ups?

- A. Yes, we will offer meal pick-up for families. Details on this will be confirmed closer to the start of the school year.

Q. Since teachers have been vaccinated can students not be masked anymore, or at least be able to take them off once seated since that is what we do at restaurants?

- A. This does not apply to virtual students since they will be in their own home, however as a school district we are not able to make this determination until we receive guidance from the CDC, State of Ohio and Lake County Health District. We will share the district guidelines when any changes are made.

Q. Do you supply transportation?

- A. On days when we offer district or state testing, arrangements will be made to provide transportation to the testing sites.

Q. Why was there a change in time of the school day?

- A. We established the schedule to be more consistent for families who may need to transport students at the end of the day for sports or other activities, especially if they have students in several different grade levels.

Q. How will snow days and COVID shutdown work for brick and mortar students? With the current system all students can work from home, what will happen now?

- A. Snow days are calamity days. They will be handled the same as they are for in-person students.

Q. You mentioned splitting grades, for example, having one teacher teach both 2nd and 3rd grades. If my child is in this class, how would they get a full day's worth of grade level instruction when another grade level is being taught as well?

- A. We have explored a split class option in the event enrollment is low in two subsequent grade levels. This may be an option that we will utilize if necessary. This would be necessary to keep the cost of the virtual school manageable. Similar to an in-person classroom when a teacher has multiple reading groups or students are working at their seats, the virtual teacher would simply work with the other grade levels while the other grade level is completing work independently or in work groups with other students.

Q. What is the criteria to join?

- A. The Online Academy is a public-school option so any parent in the district can choose to look at this option for their student. The brochure includes some characteristics of students who are successful online for parents to consider.

Q. Will Kindergarteners who did online 20-21 year be able to keep their same teacher for 21/22 year?

- A. The teachers in the Online Academy will not necessarily be the same teachers who taught virtually during this past year.

Q. If my child goes virtual, can she return to in person another year, or virtual until graduation?

- A. Students may choose to return to in-person learning after the first year or at semester break.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . HOW WILL THE DAY LOOK?

Q. Will lunch be at a standard time or different times?

- A. Lunch times will be a part of the daily schedule and should remain the same, however, it will be different for students in different grade levels.

Q. How much time will students spend online?

- A. We are delivering instruction in an online format, so parents need to understand that students will spend a significant amount of time on their computers. They will spend time with their teachers and peers during live instruction and they will have independent assignments that will need to be completed online. We can not quantify exactly how much that time will be because it depends on factors such as grade level and the time it takes students to complete assignments, for example.

Q. Will my child have to have their camera on all the time?

- A. During live instruction and breakout discussion groups students are expected to have their cameras on. Students are expected to follow the classroom policies for learning which includes when they will or will not have their cameras and microphones on.

Q. Will the kids be independent learning or grouped in a classroom setting that involves bell schedules etc?

- A. The students will participate in whole group and small group instruction, and independent work time. All students will have a schedule to follow.

Q. Will kids have opportunities in online school for small group or 1:1 interactions with peers?

- A. Teachers will provide whole group, small group and individual instruction as needed.

Q. Are middle school and high school in-person teachers also teaching the virtual students at the same time? Or will it be different than the 20-21 school year and there will be designated virtual teachers for the virtual students?

- A. The Online Academy teachers are dedicated teachers for the online students. The teachers will teach the online students only.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . COMMUNICATION?

Q. What is the process or chain for concerns with a teacher or staff member?

- A. As with any concerns, a parent should start with the teacher first, and then contact the Online Academy Director if the problem hasn't been solved.

Q. How will the teachers communicate with parents if their child is struggling or failing?

- B. Teachers are required to communicate with parents regularly regarding student progress. Please contact the principal if you have concerns about grading or student progress. Whether it is at the Online Academy or in any of our schools, please reach out to a principal if you have concerns.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . TECHNOLOGY?

Q. Does a student have to use the provided district Chromebook, or can they continue to use a personal device?

- A. Students may use a personal device. However, when using a district Chromebook, the district pushes out updates for software and testing software that will be important for students to access all of the needed programs. If you are using a personal device we are not able to provide technical support, however, if there is testing software that you can not put on a personal computer, we can loan one to students for access to curriculum or testing.

Q. What happens if my Chromebook stops working?

- A. Contact the school district helpline for repairs or replacements as needed.

Q. What happens if we are having trouble logging in and gaining access to classes or programs?

- A. You should contact your teacher for assistance. If they cannot assist you they will direct to the appropriate support.

Q. Will there be training on the use of the Chromebook and software programs?

- A. We will provide some training and resources for parents and students on using the technology and the educational programs.

Q. What technology is needed for the Online Academy?

- A. The district will provide each student with a district Chromebook; access to a printer is recommended. Parents need to provide internet access. If the home internet access is interrupted, it is recommended that you have a back-up plan (a relative or friend's home, public library, etc.).

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . **TRANSITIONING TO VIRTUAL/IN-PERSON?**

Q. My kids were virtual all year (2020-2021) and we want to return to in-person learning for 2021-2022. Do we need to submit anything?

- A. All virtual students this year will be reassigned to their home schools for in-person learning. Parents do not need to DO anything for a return to in-person learning. Parents only need to fill out the registration form if they want their child to attend the Online Academy for 2021-2022.

Q. My student is doing better online than he ever has in-person but I hate to have him miss his first high school experience. If in-person does not go as well socially and/or academically as online can he switch back to online after a quarter or semester?

- A. Due to staffing and educational consistency for students, we will have to limit movement. You will however, be able to move your student at the semester break. In our district, this would be in January.

Q. Will students be able to switch from virtual to brick and mortar throughout the school year like they could this year?

- A. Due to staffing and educational consistency for students, parents who register their student(s) for the Online Academy will need to commit to this platform for an entire semester. Students will have the ability to move back and forth at semester break.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . **STUDENT FEES?**

Q. Are there fees to attend this school?

- A. Yes, students will be assessed fees for certain materials, based on grade level and the courses, just like in-person learners. These are the same fees that in-person students pay.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . **ASYNCHRONOUS DAYS?**

Q. Will there be an asynchronous day for students?

- A. There will not be asynchronous days for students. The virtual students will follow the same schedule as the in-person learners.

Q. During COVID if a teacher was ill, students did not have class. Will a substitute teacher cover class or will students have an asynchronous day?

- A. There will not be asynchronous days. Students will have a substitute teacher. If a substitute teacher is not available, students will have assignments to complete independently.

Q. Will in-person instruction be affected (eg teachers supporting online and in person students, requiring asynchronous Wednesdays to catch up on work)?

- A. The Online Academy teachers are dedicated teachers for the online students. The teachers will not teach in-person and online students at the same time. There will not be asynchronous days.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . **SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS & GIFTED STUDENTS?**

Q. Will differentiated instruction be provided for gifted students?

- A. Teachers will meet the needs of students by providing intervention or enrichment as appropriate based on student needs.

Q. Is this online school suitable for gifted students? Will it still accommodate those needs of children?

A. Yes, teachers will meet the needs of students by providing intervention or enrichment as appropriate based on student needs.

Q. How will students in high school with an IEP be taught? Will you have Intervention Specialist??

A. A student will have a special education teacher as described in his IEP. The high school team will meet with parents to prescribe an individual plan on how his/her services will be met.

Q. Will group therapy also be virtual for IEP students? Will therapists change? Will there be any in- person opportunities for students who have social goals on their IEP?

A. The IEP team will meet with parents to determine appropriate services. We encourage all families to read through our brochure to guide them on their student's individual education and what makes a successful online student.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . CURRICULUM?

Q. Can students take AP or CCP classes?

A. Yes, advance coursework is available to qualified online students depending on their schedule and class availability.

Q. Will teachers post videos for my student to watch instead of live instruction?

A. All teachers will provide live instruction every day. Videos can be used to supplement live instruction and reinforce concepts taught, but videos will not be used instead of direct teacher instruction.

Q. Can my child attend the Online Academy and the EXCEL TECC program?

A. Students will have the option to apply for and attend Excel TECC programs if accepted.

Q. What supplies and instructional materials does my student need and how will I get them?

A. A supply list will be provided prior to the start of school. Pick-up days will be established for parents to receive instructional materials and supplies from the school district.

Q. Another school district has been using Edmentum for their virtual learning implementation, this does not involve following a bell schedule but rather specific teachers that interact with virtual students only at scheduled times. Has there been any research into other programs being used by other districts? Also, will the kids be independent learning or grouped in a classroom setting that involves bell schedules etc.

A. We use the Edmentum courseware in our district. This curriculum is used by teachers in classrooms as an instructional tool, it is used by students, and we use it for credit recovery. For our Online Academy, most of the feedback we received from teachers and parents is that live instruction provides students with the most opportunity to succeed. Online courseware will be used in a variety ways as needed.

Q. Can my student stay online and get help with homework?

A. If any tutoring options are available we will share that information with parents.

Q. Do my students have to take the state tests?

A. Students are expected to participate in all local, district and state required assessments. Students are required to participate in the Ohio State Tests. The Ohio State Tests are part of the graduation requirement.

QUESTIONS ABOUT . . . EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & SOCIALIZATION?

Q. Can Online Academy students participate in a school club or team?

- A. Students will have an opportunity to participate in sports and clubs at their home school. Depending on student interest, there may be clubs specifically developed for the Online Academy students.

Q. For immune compromised students, can they do a hybrid version of online and in-person in order for them to get social interaction?

- A. The district is offering an in-person or online option to meet the different needs of our families. The Online Academy is a dedicated online educational school option and does not include in-person classes except for required testing options. It is our hope that we will have enough student interest to offer after school activities and clubs for our virtual students with fellow virtual students.

Q. Will the teachers for upper class be from South High and how does it work with extracurricular activities?

- A. Teachers will be assigned based on certification requirements. All assignments must comply with the teacher union's negotiated agreement for teacher assignments. Teachers may be assigned from any of our other school buildings to the Online Academy. Teachers will be assigned to extracurricular activities following the same supplemental assignment process as we currently follow based on the teacher's negotiated agreement.

Q. What about in-person meet ups for online kids interested in connecting with peers for socialization?

- A. Clubs may be developed for students. We plan to investigate this once we establish student interest.