

Park Ridge Schools Reopening Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why is Park Ridge opening in a hybrid model?

The Park Ridge School District did not choose to close schools in March of 2020, nor did it create the reopening plan on its own. We must comply with the safety regulations present in the New Jersey Department of Education's (DOE) guidance for school reopening, titled, "The Road Back." In order to comply with these regulations, we are forced to reduce the number of students in the building for Phase One of our reopening. Our plan delivers the most in-person instruction possible, while complying with social-distancing regulations and exposure reduction, accommodating full-time remote learning, and planning for responsible cleaning schedules for our classrooms. These are not easy factors to manage for any district!

Can these plans change?

Yes! Park Ridge will adapt its plans based on executive orders from the governor, guidance from the DOE, and the state of the public health emergency. In all buildings, a Phase Two and eventual Phase Three are planned to return all students to full-time, in-class instruction.

Please be aware the guidance from the governor and New Jersey DOE have changed significantly over the last few weeks, and may change again. If that happens, we will have to change our plans accordingly.

What has Park Ridge done to prepare for this change?

The Park Ridge administration, along with a team of teachers, community members, and the Park Ridge Office of Emergency Management have met continuously over the summer to develop the plan and discuss its implications for the coming school year. While we cannot plan for everything, we have tried to anticipate and plan for as many challenges as possible. Additionally, the calendar has changed to give us more staff training at the beginning of the year to prepare for the upcoming school year.

Have parent responsibilities changed?

Yes, they have. Since the District is required to take up Contact Tracing, parents need to be aware of common COVID-19 symptoms, exposure rules, and quarantine states. There is a new Parent COVID-19 Form in enrollment that requires that you inform the district if you or a close family member may be exposed to COVID-19.



At East Brook and West Ridge, parents/guardians will be required to accompany students that walk to school. The “walk-up” station will be located south of each school entrance. At all schools, students who arrive with potential signs of COVID-19 will need to be picked up promptly and must be symptom-free before returning to school.

What about students? Have their responsibilities changed?

Yes, they have also changed! At the elementary schools, the AM/PM model requires that we deliver part of the instructional day remotely to all students. This time will be dedicated to special areas (such as art and music), social studies or science work, extra support in reading/literacy, and any special/related services a student may receive, other than resource center. At the high school, students must follow an in-person day with remote instruction. They can also expect that the shortened day will require a little extra time spent at home each day to keep up with their studies.

What is the ‘Pandemic Response Team’ and what do they do?

According to “The Road Back,” each school building is required to have a team dedicated to decision-making regarding contact tracing, COVID-19 exposure, and how we handle safety at each school. Their role will be pivotal in the day-to-day operation of our schools. The membership of each team is listed in our plan.

Is there a protocol if someone is sick? Is that class the only one quarantined or will the whole school have to shut down?

At all schools, a sick child will be screened by the school nurse for symptoms of COVID-19. They will be placed in an isolation area (potentially outside) while they wait to be picked up. A confirmed case of COVID-19 might force the Pandemic Response Team and/or the local health authorities to suggest that we close the entire school building. Our hope is that Park Ridge staff is experienced enough that if we are forced to switch to remote learning on a quick basis, we can do so as easily as possible.

For how long will the schools close if there is a positive case? What happens if the Governor closes schools again?

These decisions are largely out of the hands of the local district. Park Ridge Schools will follow all guidelines from the Governor, DOE, and local health authorities in order to maintain a safe environment for our students, staff, and community.



Will staff be tested for COVID-19 before the start of the school year?

No, staff will be screened daily.

How will the school be cleaned between sessions? Is there adequate ventilation?

All custodial staff are being trained to sanitize surfaces and a schedule has been devised to clean all surfaces designated as 'high-touch,' daily. At the elementary schools, in-between sessions, extra custodial staff will be on hand to clean every used classroom desktop using an electrostatic sanitizing mist. The high school has allotted extra time at the end of the day to allow the custodial staff to deal with the large size of the building.

Every classroom is equipped with a uni-vent that includes outside air in accordance with regulations and current health standards. In those few spaces that lack such ventilation, class will not be held and/or windows might have to remain open.

Where will temperature checks take place? Who is doing them?

Students will have a temperature check as they arrive at each building for the day. At the elementary schools, temperature checks will take place prior to students exiting the vehicle. All parents will be encouraged to "drop and go" during morning arrival. In the event a parent does not have access to a vehicle, they will utilize a "walk-up" station for temperature checks at a separate entrance. A COVID-19 Parent Form will be completed in student enrollment or your principal's office, and a reminder message will be sent for parents to update their form if necessary. At the high school, these checks will take place at each open entrance.

A combination of administrators and other staff will conduct temperature checks each morning/afternoon upon arrival. Homeroom teachers will screen students for COVID symptoms and report any concerns to the school nurse immediately. All staff will be trained on the brief, universal COVID-19 symptom screener.

If a student temperature is 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or higher, that student will not be permitted to enter the school building. If a student temperature measures between 100.0 degrees and 100.4, that student will have a second check by the school nurse, using an ear thermometer. If that student demonstrates a temperature above 100.4 degrees on that second check, he or she will be sent home.



What happens if a student is sent home for COVID-19 symptoms or a fever?

If a student is sent home due to symptoms that appear to be COVID-19, or a fever, he or she will need a doctor's note clearing that student to return to school.

What happens if a student tests positive for COVID-19?

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, the district will notify the community while maintaining confidentiality. That student will have to quarantine for 14 days, from when the symptoms first presented. Members of the household, including siblings and parents, will also have to quarantine for that same period. If the student was in school with symptoms, the student's cohort and teacher will also have to quarantine for 14 days, from the onset of that student's symptoms. At all schools, the Pandemic Response Team will determine the size of the cohort, based on student interaction.

What happens if a member of a student's household tests positive for COVID-19?

If a member of the student's household tests positive for COVID-19, all members of that household must quarantine for 14 days. All students in the household will need a doctor's note to return to school.

So, when do I need a doctor's note?

Outside of normal illnesses, which may require a doctor's note according to normal school policy, during the COVID-19 health emergency, parents will need to provide doctor's notes for student return under the following conditions:

- The student was sent home for possible COVID-19 symptoms.
- A member of the student's household tested positive for COVID-19.
- The student tested positive for COVID-19.

If a student returns from a vacation from an area on the mandatory quarantine list, will they be permitted in school?

No. That is a question on the COVID-19 Parent Form, that all parents will complete prior to entering the school building.



How will you manage other students not ostracizing the individual if he/she “fails” a temperature check?

The Park Ridge School District takes seriously its obligation to protect student privacy. We will not release the names of students or families affected by COVID-19, or experiencing symptoms. Like with any other illness or health condition, families have a right to privacy regarding their health.

Will shared staff be going back and forth between buildings?

As much as possible, no. In order to reduce the amount of people entering the building each day, shared staff will choose one of the elementary schools as their home base. Administrators will limit their time spent travelling between buildings, and understand the need to schedule observations in one building, to minimize any district visitors.

Can students share books and materials with each other? What about lockers?

In short, no. Materials sharing of any kind will be prohibited. In the elementary rooms so equipped, classroom storage lockers can be used as long as teachers monitor distancing. At Park Ridge High School, students will not be able to use their lockers.

What face covering is sufficient? Will the school provide masks?

Each student, staff member, and administrator will be required to wear a mask (cloth face covering) at all times during the day. Shields alone will not suffice. Students will need to have a mask to enter the building when they arrive. The school will have extras available should a mask get broken, damaged, or lost during the course of the day.

According to supplemental guidance from the State DOE, schools should follow CDC guidelines on the appropriateness of masks. Any cloth mask deemed acceptable by the CDC will be acceptable to wear in school. Other masks, such as valve masks, should not be worn.

Will students be permitted to use the restrooms? How will you manage that?

Students will be permitted to use the restrooms. Hand washing will be enforced. Bathrooms in the hallway will be monitored to ensure that socially distanced, maximum capacities are not exceeded.



Can I choose which session my child attends?

At East Brook and West Ridge, yes you may choose the AM or PM session. However, the school reserves the right to make the final decision about students attending AM or PM: Special Education scheduling, teacher availability, and classroom balancing may dictate some placements. The school reserves the right to place students in their most appropriate setting. At the high school, the more complicated balancing of schedules means that the administration and guidance have to assign students to the 'Maroon' or 'Gold' group in order to make sure that we comply with social-distancing requirements. Once that is done, there may be room to move students between groups, but the school reserves the right to assign students individually in order to comply with regulations.

Will siblings attend the same session?

Yes. Except for rare cases involving special education concerns, students in the same family at an elementary school or at the high school will be in the same cohort.

If we start in the all-virtual model and decide we want to switch to in-person education, can we? What if we decide to go all virtual from in-person, can we do that?

Yes. However, scheduling for in-person instruction may require re-balancing classes. At the high school, parents will have to wait for the end of a Phase to switch their option. At the elementary schools, some time, set by the building principals, will be required to make the adjustment. Park Ridge Schools can accommodate a request to switch to all-virtual instruction more quickly.

If I am in the all-virtual model, what will that be like? Will my student interact with other students at all? Who will teach them?

Park Ridge School District is making every effort to make the all-remote option a viable choice for families. In our elementary schools, staff placement will depend on the number of students choosing this model, but such students will be on a schedule identical to those attending in-person instruction. At the high school, all staff will deliver instruction to those all-virtual students in their classes. We have reserved Wednesdays for all-class meetings in order to make sure that all students are on the same pace and have a chance to interact with the teacher and each other. Extra-curricular activities that are running will include a virtual component.

I still need more information. Where do I turn?

Start with your building principal. Each principal has been very involved in crafting this plan, and will likely be your best source of information.



Park Ridge
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Park Ridge School District FAQs

The entire staff and administration at Park Ridge value your input and questions, and are happy to help you with any questions you might have. Remember, though, there are many decisions that are still in the process of being finalized, and many of our decisions may change based on guidance from State and local officials. We look forward to returning to regular in-person instruction as soon as we possibly can, and hope to do that soon.

We get through this together, Owls!



Elementary-Specific Questions

Where will temperature checks take place? Will the parent remain with the child? How will health waivers be filled out?

Temperature checks will take place prior to students exiting the vehicle. All parents will be encouraged to “drop and go” during morning arrival. In the event a parent does not have access to a vehicle, they will utilize a “walk-up” station for temperature checks at a separate entrance. Waivers will be completed at the beginning of the school year and a reminder message will be sent daily for parents to update their form if necessary.

Will there be additional staff to execute full cleaning between sessions? What will the protocols be?

We will have additional custodial staff available during that middle portion of the day where all classrooms will be cleaned and sanitized before the arrival of the PM session students.

Will we be utilizing all entrances/exits to reduce volume at each?

We will be using multiple entrances/exits to help deplete the amount of people at each one. For entry into school, we will have stations set up for temperature/symptoms checks at each entrance.

Will drop-off/pick-up times be staggered?

We may stagger our younger students at the start of the school year. Other than that, we do not plan to stagger. We don't expect it to be necessary with only half the school coming (at maximum) for each session. Based on the fact all students will be temperature checked upon arrival, it will create a natural stagger.

Will there be hand sanitizing stations throughout the building? Can students bring their own?

Yes, every classroom and entrance will have a sanitizing station. Students may bring their own sanitizer.

How/when will you determine the teachers that will be delivering/managing virtual learning?

Once all data is collected from parents on their choice of AM/PM session or virtual learning, we will then begin formally assigning classes to teachers. Based upon numbers and grade level, teachers will be assigned to lead virtual classes.



When will I receive notice of the AM/PM selection?

We are hoping to have notification to all families during the last week of August. If you need a specific preference met, please email the school principal.

For the Hybrid option, will the physical movement be limited? Will there be any room switching, recess, play ground, etc?

Correct. There won't be recess or playground time built into our schedule. The time in session will be spent strictly on academics. The students will not transition to another classroom or space during the time they are in session. The only students who will leave the classroom during their time in session are those who receive Resource Center replacement.

Will students be grouped by their academic learning speed?

Students will be placed as they typically are each year. The lists are created by the teachers and reviewed by administration. You will most likely not find out your child's teacher until the last week of August, perhaps later, depending on survey responses.

What time would drop off start for the morning session?

At the beginning of the school year, you can anticipate extra time being allotted for drop-off. Once we know the number of students participating in each session, we will be able to estimate the time needed for entry into the school.

Will the students be keeping anything in their desks each day or will everything have to go back and forth?

Students will be required to bring things to and from school each day (ex. laptop computer, materials for home assignments). We are considering having an individual storage container for each student which would remain in the classroom (for day to day belongings).

Where will students go when they arrive and who will supervise them?

Students will walk to classrooms independently (except incoming Kindergarten), and sit outside their classroom on "physically distanced" floor spaces. Once our indoor routine is nailed down, we will explore outdoor line-up.

Students will be supervised by staff monitors while they are sitting outside their classroom on "physically distanced" floor spaces.



What will be the average class size?

We assume anywhere between 8-12 students, but the max space would allow for 14. It could be less during core instruction and/or if a parent chooses to keep their child home.

For students who attend school in person - what will be expected of them at home?

Virtual learning (specials) will add 40 minutes to the time each day. Additional home assignments should be given to achieve the remaining minutes (this can be in the form of homework, skill work, videos demonstrations, web quests). There will be some days when the students have DOUBLE specials. No additional assignments will be required on those days. Additionally, any special/related services a student may receive will be delivered remotely, while the student is home.

Will students switch classes in the upper grades (departmentalization)?

Teachers may switch, but students will not physically move from their classroom. For example, in 5th grade the math teacher would teach one class and then travel with his/her materials to the other classroom - limiting movement in the hallways.

Many classrooms have no desks (flexible seating). Are we switching out what they have for desks?

Guidance allows for tables and other flexible seating options as long as they are 6ft apart and one student is occupying each space.

If a teacher is sick or has to be quarantined for some reason, would we consider hiring a long term substitute?

Yes, but we are assigning designated "back-up" staff for each homeroom teacher, in order to try to cover each class as efficiently as possible.

Will my child eat lunch or have recess at school?

No. We have scheduled over an hour and fifty minutes of time in between our AM and PM sessions for our custodians to clean/sanitize the entire building

Will my child interact with students in other classes?

As of right now, students will only interact with other children in their homeroom. There will not be large student gatherings inside the school building.



What supplies will my child need to bring to school on the first day?

PTO Supply kits will be delivered to the children's homeroom. No other materials will be required on the first day except a mask and a book bag/knapsack.

Will students be given 'mask breaks' as part of their day?

No. According to rules set by the governor, 'mask breaks' will not be part of the school day. However, we will make every accommodation necessary to work with students who may find it difficult to wear masks for this prolonged period of time. Students will not need to wear masks while drinking water, and the teachers and administration will support those students who struggle to keep them on. At no time, however, will the entire class participate in a planned 'mask break.'

Will the students be permitted to drink water at any point while in school? Will they have to leave the classroom in order to do so?

We encourage all students to bring a reusable water bottle to school each day with their name on it. They will be allowed to drink water in the classroom at their desks. This will minimize action in the hallway.

If a teacher needs to stay home due to symptoms, how are substitutes being screened/identified?

Our first line of defense will be to use another existing staff member to cover the class or to identify where we stand with in-person or virtual instruction with that specific class.

Will there be a possibility of outdoor classroom space?

While the concept of using outdoor space or running some classes outside at times is possible, relying on it is difficult based on weather and the need for cleaning those spaces after each use. We will look into this after we develop our in-school routines.

Will desks face forward, towards the teacher?

Yes, every attempt will be made to have desks face the same direction. In all classes, classroom setups will maintain social distancing - six feet apart.



Will there be any collaboration/group work during in-school hours?

All students will remain with the students in their class/cohort. There will be no in-person interaction with other classes, outside of those students who may have to leave for Resource Center replacement. Within the classroom, students can complete group work, but in a model that remains socially distanced.

Can students ride a bike to school without being accompanied by an adult?

In the event a student has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, a parent/guardian needs to be present in order to bring the child to the doctor, and to minimize the amount of time the child is on campus. This protocol may be modified over time, but for the beginning of school, excepting those students who receive transportation for special needs, we require all students to be accompanied by an adult.

How will contact tracing among friends in both buildings work?

Nothing has been officially decided regarding close contacts that are in different buildings at this point. We expect this to be an important topic covered by our Pandemic Response Teams, and the local health authorities.

What are lockdown and fire drill protocols?

Lockdown drills will take place. Staff will train students on procedures which will include distancing. No other part of the plan will be discussed due to security reasons.
Fire Drills are no longer mandatory (until further notice).

What will dismissal from school look like?

We will utilize staggered dismissal times and multiple exits for student dismissal.

Who is teaching the virtual classes?

Every effort will be made so that parents who choose “virtual only” for their child will be assigned a teacher at their current grade level. For example, if there is a 50/50 split between parents wanting “virtual only” and “hybrid,” a teacher could run an AM session in person with the students who are present, and the same exact lesson in the PM for students.
All related services and special areas (gym, art, music) will happen opposite of the child’s core instruction period.



If we choose 100% virtual, who will be the classmates?

The classmates on virtual could be students in their assigned homeroom class; however depending on the number of students who choose virtual, they could also be mixed in with students from other classrooms at East Brook and West Ridge. Students will participate in special areas with their grade level classmates. Remote learning should look similar (if not identical) to in-person instruction. Again, much will depend on the numbers.

Will related services and special area teachers be teaching virtually from their homes or in person?

All staff members are expected to report to East Brook and West Ridge for LIVE virtual instruction.

Will all students be using Google Classroom/Google Meet for virtual instruction?

Yes, Google Meet will be the web conferencing platform for all students. Grades K-4 will use Google Classroom with lots of supplements and grades 5 and 6 will use Schoology, the learning system used at the middle school/high school.

If children are home on remote learning, how can you mandate that they work from 8:30-3:30 pm when parents have to work at home as well?

We will offer remote learning that aligns to the schedule presented earlier. All students will be equipped with a laptop and the learning links needed to participate in live core instruction and additional time for special areas and extra assignments.

Will there be a max number of kids per virtual class? If so, what are you anticipating the max would be?

We have not set any limits on virtual classes at this point.

Is there a possibility of students from East Brook and West Ridge being combined virtually depending on numbers?

Yes, depending on numbers this is a possibility.



Will there be live instruction by a teacher every day? If so, how many hours of live instruction vs online work?

We anticipate that there will be live instruction every day. While the exact number of hours would vary by grade level, it will be more than in the spring and will include the specials being all virtually taught, as opposed to the stationary assignments that were provided in the spring.

Will there be teachers assigned to virtual learning specifically or will there be a live feed into the classroom?

We don't expect to be having any live feeds into the in-person classes at either school. We expect virtual learning to be more made up of online live teaching.

Will virtual students "join" the hybrid students for their live specials? Will they be assigned to one specific in-person class or just join whichever they prefer?

Virtual students will be assigned to specific specials and we plan to have attendance taken at each one.

Will the virtual curriculum follow the in-person curriculum daily?

We plan to have them match up as succinctly as possible with obviously some limitations that the virtual learners will have without being able to do things as tangibly.

How will virtual students get classroom materials - books and other materials?

We do anticipate having a day when our K-3 students will pick up their laptops and for the rest of the population to pick up other materials.

What technology will be offered to support online learning?

All students from Kindergarten through sixth grade will receive a Macbook Air laptop computer. Additionally, they will have Google accounts so that they can access Google Classroom, Google Meet. Our students have access to digital textbooks and other resources such as IXL, Newela, Schoology, and SeeSaw.

Will students be able to email teachers while they are at home working virtually and teachers are teaching another group? What if they have IT questions?

Systems will be put in place for students to communicate with their teacher during their "on-site" time. They will be discouraged from emailing the homeroom teacher during their



“off-site” time as it will be difficult for the teacher to respond in a timely fashion. Families can always reach out to Tech Support (techsupport@parkridge.k12.nj.us) with any technology-related issues or questions.

How will my student access technology during off-site time?

All students will be provided a district laptop computer and a Google account. Teachers will use Google Meet to connect with students virtually. While our long-term plan is to have younger students leave their laptop at home each day, we may have them in school for the first few days to help teach them how to use it.

When will Kindergarten screenings be done?

Kindergarten screening is taking place in the school buildings. Please contact your building principal for more information if you require it.

Who will monitor the hallway bathrooms during class times?

A paraprofessional will be assigned as a bathroom monitor to ensure distancing and to limit capacity.

When and where will IEP/504 Meetings take place?

All IEP/504 meetings will take place virtually until further notice.

Will EXTRAs run in the morning/afternoon?

Yes, EXTRAs will run in the morning and afternoon. Afternoon EXTRAs will be available to students in the PM session, and morning EXTRAs will be reserved for those in the AM session. This limitation is required to minimize the mixing of cohorts.

If we didn't purchase the supply kit through the PTO, what will the children need? If we choose 100% virtual, will we still need to purchase supplies for our children? Can I still order school supply kits?

Supply lists are posted on the district website. All parents should purchase materials as students will need school supplies when they return to East Brook or West Ridge. The ordering has closed and school supply kits will be available for pickup at a date TBD in late August or early September. If you chose an AM or PM session for your child and ordered a school kit through the PTO, the kits will be distributed to the classroom.



Will students be returning library books and other materials from last year?

Yes, we will have a bin for drop off for materials from the 2019-20 school year.

Are you still accepting applications for the PreSchool Lottery Program?

The PreSchool Lottery was held in May. Both classes are full. Due to social distancing requirements no one will be taken off of the waitlist at this time and no one will be added to the waitlist.



High School-Specific Questions

Are there still only two open entrances for drop-off?

No, the current plan is to open as many entrances as possible, in order to reduce the amount of time students spend outside, waiting for screening. The final number of open entrances will depend on staff availability, which is still being determined.

Where will students go in the morning after they enter the building?

All students will report directly to their homeroom, which has been lengthened to accommodate the procedure.

Will students be able to store items in their lockers?

No. As mentioned above, no lockers will be used, district-wide.

Will there still be passing time? Will students move from class to class?

Yes. All floors will be marked to remind students of social-distancing regulations, and staff will monitor hallways between classes.

Has the curriculum changed? Will there still be Honors and A.P. classes?

Yes. Park Ridge High School is running its normal schedule of classes. This includes all electives and Honors and A.P. classes.

How will lessons be delivered on the day that students do not attend school?

All remote lessons will be delivered asynchronously through Schoology while there is in-person instruction going on.

How will Wednesdays be run? Will students be expected to be online at certain times during the day?

Yes, students will be expected to log on for conferences with their teachers. On these days, all students, from the 'Maroon,' 'Gold,' and Remote (Owls at Home) groups will all log in together to meet as a full class.



If I choose the all-remote option, is my child in the same classes, or will her schedule change?

Students will remain in the same class, although the method of lesson delivery will change.

How will PRHS run lunches?

No lunches are scheduled for Phase One of reopening. As the staff and administration monitor student movement and become more comfortable with our use of space, Phase Two will entail a lengthening of the school day, and social-distanced lunch. More information will be available as this option becomes viable.

How will the small classrooms accommodate social distancing?

The administration, along with building and grounds, has walked the building and checked each classroom to determine the maximum number of students for each class. In some cases, classes will have to be moved to larger spaces to obtain the proper amount of spacing. Some classrooms will not be utilized. Other spaces, like the cafeteria and Media Center, will have to be used for their classroom space.

Will there still be morning announcements? How about Owlwitness News?

Yes and yes. These programs will run. We are still considering ways to deliver the announcements, and the sense of community they bring, to students on the all-remote option. Owlwitness news will continue to be available through YouTube.

Will there be extracurricular activities like clubs? Will students who are all-virtual be able to participate?

Yes. Clubs will run, though they will have to be modified in the current environment. Every club that runs will have a virtual component for remote-learning students.

How will students be dismissed from the building safely?

Since the major 'pinch-points' are our doorways, at the start of Phase One, we anticipate dismissing the students in a staggered schedule, allowing for the first students to clear the entrances, before dismissing the next group. Once the administration is familiar with student flow, this schedule may be adjusted accordingly.