



January 4, 2021

Good Evening Upper Darby School District Families,

Welcome back to virtual learning and Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the winter break with your families and loved ones. We are writing to provide another update on our pandemic reopening of schools plan.

It remains our plan at this time to return students in grades K-3 and in identified special education programs to in-person instruction in a flexible cohort model on January 19, 2021. This decision will be based COVID-19 positivity rates and community transmission cases per 100,000 residents and our ability to staff schools. The District will provide families with a decision regarding reopening of schools in the flexible/in-person, cohort instructional model two (2) weeks in advance of any final decision to bring our students into our schools for in-person instruction.

I would like to again provide you with the [December 11, 2020 updated COVID-19 school guidance plan from the Chester County Department of Health \(CCHD\)](#). I am also providing you with the November 23rd [Instructional Model Recommendations](#) update regarding a decision making matrix we must follow. The guidance outlined in the Instructional Model Recommendation information linked above outlines moments when the District will have to move from in-person instruction to virtual instruction.

My decision to remain in a virtual learning instructional model prior to and after winter break was based on the following points:

- Staffing and substitute teacher shortages

The District has had over 150 staff out on the Families First Coronavirus Act Response Act (FFCRA) and working from home as a result of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). As of 12/31/20, FFCRA is no longer an option. We have

asked our staff to take two weeks following winter break to get their affairs in order to be able to help us bring students back to school for some in-person instruction. As we work through our plan to reopen schools, we will continue to evaluate the constant stream of information and guidance we receive from local and national medical and healthcare experts, the Chester County Health Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the State Department of Health.

Please note the following important updates to the pandemic reopening of schools plan:

- **In-person instruction for students in K-12 low incidence programs** of life skills support, autistic support, multi-disability support at Hillcrest Elementary, Westbrook Park Elementary, Primos Elementary, Drexel Hill Middle School, and Upper Darby High School **will resume on January 19, 2021.**
- Our goal is to return students in **GRADES K-3 ONLY** to the cohort/flexible/in-person instruction model on **January 19, 2021**. Prior to the Winter Break, we provided our staff with an opportunity to **RESET**, that is, to put their affairs in order so that they successfully quarantine in preparation for a return to in-person instruction following winter break. We are also enacting an all-hands-on-deck approach in order to execute this plan for our K-3 students, low incidence special education programs, and their families. This will require that we use our resources strategically as we work through staffing schools appropriately for the January 19th start.

Please see the below links for videos regarding the elementary plan:

[K-5 Elementary Flexible Schedule Presentation](#)

[Kindergarten Center Flexible Schedule Presentation](#)

- **ALL STUDENTS IN GRADES 4-12 (exception of low incidence special education programs) will remain in a VIRTUAL LEARNING Model from January 4, 2021 until further notice.**
- All teachers and staff in grades K-12 are required to return to their respective school buildings on January 15, 2021, as we are still required to meet state-mandates around standardized testing.

Dates	Event
January 4 - January 15	Virtual/at-home learning learning resumes for all students K-12.
January 15	All teachers and staff report back to buildings.
January 18	NO SCHOOL; OFFICES CLOSED - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 19	<p>K-3 students and K-12 Low Incidence Programs in Autistic Support, Life Skills Support and Multi-Disability Support return for cohort/flexible/in-person instruction</p> <p>Grades 4-5, Middle, and High Schools Students continue in virtual/at-home learning.</p>

We are reminding families and staff to continue to follow best practices regarding social distancing, mask-wearing, and proper hygiene as we make decisions about the reopening of schools. We will continue to provide updates as needed.