

Ashe County Schools Re-opening
Parent Townhall Questions and Answers 07.23.2020

Documents for Reference
NCDPI: Lighting Our Way Forward
NCDHHS: Strong Schools Health Toolkit
NCDHHS: Health Toolkit FAQ
NCDHHS: Screening Reference Guide

Since the children will be spaced 6 feet apart in the classroom, will they be required to wear masks in the classroom?

Yes.

How are kindergarteners going to wear a mask all day?

Students are required to wear masks while in the school building. However, students will be provided with mask breaks periodically throughout the day.

What about high school and classes? Are all classes available? If not, will those credits be voided?

Face-to-face instruction under Plan B should allow for all classes to be offered.

However, there may be some unforeseen circumstances that might limit the scope and sequence of classes. Course offerings through Ashe Online are still being evaluated.

Can you change your mind if you put Plan B on the survey to virtual?

We are asking for a semester long commitment once you have made a decision. The survey was for us to get an idea of who was interested. There is a form to sign-up if you want Ashe Online.

But if you answered on the survey is that final?

Families need to make a decision in regards to Ashe Online by Tuesday, July 28th.

Will we definitely follow through with plan B to begin with? I know some districts have decided to begin with remote learning.

At this point in time, the plan for re-opening schools will be under Plan B. There is a possibility that Governor Cooper may decide to put all schools under Plan C if cases in NC were to surge. In that case, we would move to Plan C as well.

Will the school provide Chromebooks for virtual learning?

Yes. All students enrolled in the Ashe Online may receive a mobile device on loan for the ACS.

What is the plan if children who attend school get covid 19 and the schools are closed down?

If we are directed to close schools due to Covid 19, we will immediately move to Plan C, which is remote learning for all students.

We will be allowed to remain on Plan B unless Governor Cooper moves us to Plan C?

We have the option to move to C locally, but if the governor moves us to C, we cannot move to Plan B. As of this moment we're planning on beginning the school year on Plan B. Devices will be provided for students in grades 3-12 for remote learning.

How will WIN Wednesday work for families that won't be able to do virtual work until we are home from work after 6pm? And same question for attendance?

WIN Wednesdays should offer students and families flexibility. Remote learning can be accomplished in a number of ways and does not necessarily need to be offered synchronously. Attendance will be tracked in a number of ways on remote days. Those details will be available under our Plan C guidebook.

They should have a day off Wednesday...

Per calendar rules, we would not be able to make Wednesdays a day off.

Will attendance be counted as well when we are able to complete the virtual work?

There are various attendance protocols for remote and virtual learning that are designed to provide flexibility for students and families. Those details will be available under our Plan C guidebook.

Could the governor still move to C before the first day? Does he have a cutoff, that makes it more difficult to plan.

Yes, the Governor could put us on Plan C. We have not been made aware of a cutoff date for this decision.

If we are doing the virtual academy and have 2 children in different grades, will we be allowed time during the day to be able to get assignments a certain time?

Yes, those details will be available under Ashe Online Virtual School guidebook.

Will kids go to Washington at the end of the year?

Students will not go on the 6th grade Washington DC or 8th grade Outer Banks trips this year. This is due to the unknown circumstances of Covid 19 as well as travel commitments and fund raising efforts that are required early in the school year.

What is the plan if a student tests positive in the school?

We will follow the screening and reporting process outlined in the NCDHHS Strong Schools Toolkit document at the top of this document.

Will the attendance policy change?

There will be daily attendance procedures as is required by the state. However, it is our goal to work with families during these times.

What about highschool classes?

Those should carry on under Plan B as normal.

Is there any way that we can just preview Ashe Online? A demo?

As soon as we have more information to put out about Ashe Online, we are going to do so. However, flexibility will be built into Ashe Online. There will be deadlines, but one benefit to the virtual academy is that the learning is designed for students to be self-directed.

When do we have to decide about Ashe Online?

We are asking that parents make decisions by Tuesday, July 28th so that we can begin to reassign staff members to Ashe Online.

Can we request Monday Tuesday vs. Thursdays Friday?

Those days will be set based on last names so that we can ensure that students go to school with their siblings on the same days and so that we can guarantee that we have the capacity in classrooms. Students with last names A-K will be attending in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students with last names L-Z will be attending in-person on Thursdays and Fridays. If you have children who live in the same household with different last names that would separate them from attending on the same day, please contact your principal.

With Ashe Online, how will we find out about what classes they have...?

Students attending Ashe Online will have a class schedule as would a student in a traditional class setting. That schedule will be communicated by Ashe Online teachers.

How will students be divided between days?

Students with last names A-K will be attending in-person on Mondays and Tuesdays. Students with last names L-Z will be attending in-person on Thursdays and Fridays. If your family has a special circumstance, please contact your child's principal.

When will a course list for Ashe Online be available?

Once we have a comprehensive student list for Ashe Online, we will generate course offerings for this year.

What is happening with ROTC?

ROTC will be available at Ashe County High School as a face to face class. JROTC instructors have been informed that they cannot do any events, teams, or clubs until further notice. The zero period class, Raiders, will not be offered this school year.

I have a rising Kinder. What will distance learning look like for her? That's a very hands on year, and I'm not sure what she will benefit from online.

Students are required to be socially distanced at 6 feet per the Governor's orders. However, we will do everything in our power to create an engaging environment for all of our students with built in times for socializing with their classmates. Remote days will help supplement in-person instruction.

Will we have the opportunity to switch back to regular school if we choose the virtual option the first 9 weeks? Also is the virtual learning 5 days a week or 2?

No. You will be allowed to switch back at the end of the fall semester. This is necessary so that we can adequately staff both at our school buildings and with Ashe Online. Ashe Online will offer virtual learning 5 days a week. Under Plan B, students will also learn for 5 days per week (2 days face-to-face and 3 days remote).

Plan C - what if a child needs one-on-one tutoring for a specific subject (i.e. reading for rising first grader)?

We will do our best to meet the needs of all students, regardless of which plan we are under.

Will schools have Open Houses this year and how will this be handled?

Schools will have Open House this year, however that will look different at each school. We may have to offer a virtual Open House so that teachers can meet virtually with their students and families in a one-on-one or group setting.

Will the Ashe Online will kids have live meeting/classes that they can attend?

That will depend on the type of class and the grade level. Synchronous and asynchronous learning and meeting opportunities will likely be provided so as to meet the instructional needs of students and to provide meaningful feedback.

How many hours of instruction will be expected through the all-virtual learning?

That will depend based on grade level and subject. However, Ashe Online will be module based, so students will be able to pace themselves in order to complete their assignments and meet their required deadlines.

Will there be any areas available through any programs/social platforms to encourage social interaction amongst friends/peers who otherwise haven't been able to communicate so far?

We want our students interacting with their peers and friends in developmentally appropriate ways. That will be worked out at the school level.

On the days they do online learning-if my daughter is in 5th grade will her teacher be a 5th grade teacher from Westwood teaching her online?

Ashe Online may offer opportunities for students from different schools to interact with one another and to be taught by teachers for neighboring schools. In contrast to that, under Plan B and Plan C, your child will be taught by her classroom teacher.

With the virtual academy, will a scope and sequence be released at any time? I would like to go more in depth with my children and add some more hands on learning. If a scope and sequence is released ahead of time it is difficult to plan what to teach when and how to provide enrichment. Basically, will there be planning time allowed for parents who want to add more to their child's experience?

Course sequencing will be released by assigned teachers once we have an idea of the need for Ashe Online. Parent involvement in the process is welcomed. Once your child is assigned to classes, then those teachers will release pacing guides and an outline for their class as well a syllabus.

Can we walk our kindergartener in on the first day?

Unfortunately, that does not look possible this year. You will be able to escort your kinder to the door where temperature screenings will be happening. Then a school staff member will escort your child to his/her classroom.

When filling out the application for Ashe Online its ask for students emails do you want school email or the family email?

Parent email addresses would be beneficial initially.

From what I understand currently, EOCs and EOGs are only administered in the building. Is there a plan to accommodate the virtual learning students whose parents are not comfortable?

Details on the administering of testing has yet to be released by the state. When those guidelines are final, we will inform students and parents.

Will there be devices for kindergarten - 2nd grade for remote learning?

To be determined...

You answered my first question on how students are divided - A-K and L-Z - what if the days assigned does not work for families?

Contact your child's principal and speak to them about your situation.

Will all students that need a device get one, for example K-2, or is it just 3-12?

Currently we can offer devices for students to use in grades 3-12. We are waiting to see if we have the capacity to offer devices for students in grades K-2.

Will there still be extracurricular activities available, specifically JROTC drill team?

JROTC instructors have been informed that they cannot do any events, teams, or clubs until further notice. The zero period class, Raiders, will not be offered this school year. JROTC will be unable to have before or after school practices and will not be able to offer support for athletics (color guards for games) until further notice.

I would also like to know about Drivers Ed?

The North Carolina Driving School is having to wait for the state to determine when and how they can begin classes again. As soon as they hear from the state they plan to start with what would have been the April class. Please contact Roy Miller with North Carolina Driving School at 336-877-0491 with any further questions.

When should we do schedule changes at ACHS? How will students taking CCP classes at the college manage their HS rotation?

Schedules are in flux currently. We will have to wait until all students have registered for Ashe Online to be able to determine what classes will be available for face to face instruction. There will be very limited schedule changes this year due to limited options. Many of the CCP classes have transitioned to an online setting for this semester. If you have questions about CCP please contact Mrs. Jennifer Glass here at the high school.

Are buses running like they had previously? Or with a lower amount of students on each bus?

Under Plan B, our buses will run at a reduced capacity because all students will not ride the bus on the same days. Many routes will be changed. Your child's school or bus driver will be in contact with you to give you specifics on your route as well as pick up and drop off times.

How will HS kids manage the different classes? Will they be changing classes?

Students at the high school will change classes. Staff will be disinfecting classrooms and surfaces between classes.

If all the schools has close to the same #s doing the online academy, is it possible we could go more then 2 days?

That is definitely a possibility that we are considering based on the number of students who attend Ashe Online.

For Plan B, will teachers only be teaching onsite Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri only, or do they have one class divided into 2 groups in which they teach onsite all 4 days? I ask to determine if the student's assigned teacher will be available in real time to assist while the students are remote.

Teachers will be on site every day that there are students in the building and on some Wednesdays. Teachers will be able to assist students remotely, but they will not be available at all times during the day. At the elementary level, teacher assistants may be able to help assist students while they work remotely. Each school will communicate the time teachers/staff will be available when students are home on the remote days.

When can we apply for the virtual academy?

Now. Please visit our website and register if that is the right option for your child(ren).

The registration form is also listed here: <https://nc02200844.schoolwires.net/Page/6194>

When will students go on plan A?

When and if Governor Cooper opens that up as a possibility.

What about benchmarks, NC Finals, and Read-to-Achieve?

We are waiting on guidance from the state about assessments. Once we have that information, we will communicate with families.

Do we know anything about after-school?

We are currently working with Western Youth Network (WYN) on a plan for after-school. Once decisions are made that will be communicated with families.

If COVID gets in school and our child is quarantined as a result is there a method to keep them from falling behind? Would the virtual option be a safer bet for staying on pace?

If students are quarantined due to COVID, they will immediately transition into working 5 days remotely from home so that they stay on track. Ashe Online students would not have to deal with that sort of transition. However, it is our goal that all of our students are kept on pace with their academics regardless of their placement.

What communication will be given to parents for attendance for children online? There was an issue with communication last year.

Parents and students will be given access to our Plan C guidebooks for remote learning. Guidance for attendance can be found in that resource. It is our goal to ensure that there is effective communication between students and their teachers, and teachers and parents as needed. If at any time you are concerned about your child's grades or attendance please feel free to reach out to the teacher.

My biggest concern is if we have to commit to a semester, and my son ends up having anxiety-like difficulties, will there be a penalty for switching to full online learning? He is already having anxiety and we haven't even started yet.

It is not our goal to penalize any student. We are committed to working with families to find the right placement for their child(ren). Please contact your child's principal for more specific information and guidance about your child's specific needs.

What about college classes offered at the high school?

Please contact Jennifer Glass, WCC Liaison, at Ashe County High School for guidance on college classes.

What about hearing impaired children? What kind of accommodations are being made on masks for their teachers?

Please contact your child's teacher(s) and principal at the school level to discuss their needs and accommodations will be made. Teachers will wear masks with clear window around the mouth area.

Will there be a date for incoming kindergarteners to come and have a meet and greet and see the school?

Please contact your child's school and they will provide that specific information as it may look different at each of our elementary schools.

Will a new commitment be sent that we will have to fill out to finalize decisions on Tuesday?

Families who have registered with Ashe Online will be contacted after Tuesday, July 28th.

For the EOCs and EOGs what is the plan for students whose parents will not allow them into the buildings? Some parents are choosing virtual because they believe that the exposure to a school building is not acceptable.

Those details will be released once we have more guidance from the state.

Questions on lunch, are children allowed to bring their own lunches? If not, are children allowed to have the chance for more?

Yes, children are allowed to bring their own lunch. Schools will develop a process to ensure that students have the opportunity to get what they need as it pertains to food.

Where do we go to submit our final decision?

Fill out the registration form that is on our website:

<https://nc02200844.schoolwires.net/Page/6194>

Will we be able to have access to hardcopy publications from dpi.gov or is there a way to get hardcopies?

Those are located at the top of this document. You can print them off or contact your child's school in order to get copies if you do not have a way to print.

When does the first semester end?

December 18, 2020 per our current calendar.

Julie has spoken at length about teacher preparedness and staff development. She shares that the online component will be much improved from the spring. What has been addressed this summer and what staff development has been expected for our local teachers?

Mrs. Taylor, along with an amazing group of dedicated teachers developed a new and improved remote learning plan for Plan C. In addition to that, Mrs. Taylor worked in cooperation with our dedicated teachers to develop a digital professional development flipbook to be shared out with all staff. In this flipbook, there are links, videos, and resources to assist all of our teachers with remote learning. Additionally, teachers have participated in a wide-variety of PD this summer that pertains to effective use of digital resources and how to teach content, communicate, and give feedback in a virtual setting. Teachers also completed a great deal of PD last spring that will enhance their pedagogy and instruction.

No one has spoken about the EC students and what the plans are for them. It is also very difficult to social distancing in those classrooms. I would like someone to comment on the EC students, the IEPs, the therapies.

Social distancing will be required in all classrooms. EC teachers and staff members will work with EC students to make sure that their needs are met according to their IEP.

Will all parents be contacted by the school they're attending, to be asked if they're doing virtual or in-person, or will people wanting to do virtual-only have to submit an application?

Schools are currently contacting families who did not respond to survey questions about the different plans for re-opening schools. All families who are interested in Ashe Online need to register on our website: <https://nc02200844.schoolwires.net/Page/6194>

Since temperatures will be taken at drop-off, will the drop-off line be opened earlier?

Each school will work out and communicate procedures for drop-off and pick-up.

I assume high school students will have to change classes and not stay in one classroom. Since my child may have Math 2, Biology, Spanish and an elective. There aren't going to be that many to know what honors and electives are available on Ashe Online before we make a final decision. We just want to give him the opportunity to know you all have had some difficult tasks.

Yes, students will change classes if they are in the building. We will not know what classes we can offer until registration for Ashe Online closes and we know the students' needs. Please contact Ashe County High School with specific scheduling and course offering questions.

Will the principals host sessions like this to talk to parents in their schools?

Principals will communicate with their families based on the needs of their schools. For more information, please contact your child's school.

Can students wear face shields? If so do they HAVE to also wear a mask? My student feels that he can breath better with a shield.

Students can wear face shields. However, the CDC does not recognize a face shield as a substitute for a mask. The StrongSchoolsNC Public Health Toolkit (K-12) states:

Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:

- *Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
- *Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- *Anyone who cannot tolerate a cloth face covering due to developmental, medical or behavioral health needs.

Will highschool transcripts reflect whether a child was in online or in person classes?

High School transcripts will simply note the classes a student has taken. Students enrolled in Ashe Online this year are still considered Ashe County High School students. The transcript will not note that it was a virtual class.

What if you only have one laptop available for two children regarding their virtual experience? On the days students are remote, do they work at their own pace or follow a routine with teachers as if at school?

Devices will be provided for all students in grades 3-12, so the issue with one laptop for two students should not be an issue. Students who are working remotely will need to follow their teacher's guidance for their specific class. Remote learning will provide some synchronous and asynchronous instruction along with set aside office times for students to receive meaningful feedback and assistance.