

Amherst Schools Restart Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for submitting questions on the Restart Feedback Form following the release of the Amherst Schools Restart Plan. We have prepared this list of Frequently Asked Questions as a way to address the most commonly submitted questions. We encourage you to **thoroughly read all of the documents** posted on our [Restart page](#), as some of your questions have been addressed in those plans.

Safety Protocols

How will the staff make sure students maintain proper social distance between one another?

Each building will have protocols in place to ensure as much social distancing as possible. For example, all hallways will be for one-way traffic when possible. Each building will have a schedule that will minimize student transitions to limit the amount of movement of students in order to minimize group interaction. Additionally, lockers will not be utilized at Steele, AJH, or Nord, and common areas will be limited to ensure student safety.

Social distancing will be practiced in all classrooms to the fullest extent possible. Each classroom will be different based on the number of students in the class and size of the classroom. Teachers are encouraged to take classes outside when appropriate. For lunch, students will eat in multiple areas to help maintain distancing, including cafeteriums, outside spaces, gymnasiums, classrooms, or other designated areas.

How can we expect students to keep their face coverings on?

Consistent with guidance from health officials, Amherst Schools are requiring that all students have a face covering that is available to be worn in school and on the bus when social distancing is not possible. We know that it will be difficult for some students to keep face coverings on at times, and will provide breaks from wearing them whenever possible. We ask that families help at home by sharing a positive outlook on face coverings with your children. Please explain why they are needed and help them try and experiment with different styles and fun designs. Consider breathability and comfort around the ears, nose, and chin as a way to help your child become more comfortable with face coverings as the school year approaches. Plan for each of your children to have 3-5 face coverings to wear and launder on a regular basis. Our schools will have disposable face coverings available for emergency situations when a student forgets to bring one to school or on the bus.

My child has a medical issue that makes it difficult to wear a face covering. Will you accept a doctor's note saying he or she is not to wear one?

Yes, please have your child provide a doctor's note verifying the issue and recommendation that he or she not wear a face covering.

Will my student's teacher wear a face covering?

Yes. All staff members will wear masks and/or face shields while in class with students and in common areas where staff and students are present.

My child has seasonal allergies that might be mistaken for COVID symptoms. Will they be sent home because of this?

We recognize that some students have other health issues that have similar symptoms to COVID. We are following the health department guidelines and will focus on the main COVID symptoms of **fever, cough, shortness of breath**, and **close contact** with a possible COVID case. Please make your school and child's teachers aware of chronic medical conditions or similar symptoms that need to be considered.

How will the district conduct deep cleaning? What products will be used?

The district will only use cleaning products that have been approved by our local health officials. We will use procedures that are in accordance with Lorain County Public Health guidelines. Our custodial staff will perform daily deep cleaning and sanitization of all high-touch surfaces. In addition, desks, chairs, doors, and other high-touch surfaces in classrooms, will be sanitized on a regular basis throughout the day.

Why will screening not be conducted at school? How will the district ensure that families are properly screening their students at home?

At this point, Lorain County Public Health has not recommended in-school screenings. We will continue to follow protocols established by our local health experts. Despite all of the differences between the upcoming school year and previous ones, education remains a collaborative effort between our staff and the parents/guardians of our students. We are counting on our families to make sure their children are screened every morning before leaving for school. Please refer to the Restart Plan for more information on what to look for when screening your child.

Will district staff have access to cleaning supplies, thermometers, and disposable face coverings?

Yes. District staff will have access to cleaning supplies, thermometers, and face coverings.

What happens if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19? Could my student's school close?

Each situation will be different, but in every instance we will follow protocols established by Lorain County Public Health. The LCPH team will begin their work to identify close contacts (persons who spent more than 10 minutes in close proximity of the positive case). Close contacts will be determined on a case-by-case basis. A 14-day quarantine will be required of any student or staff member considered a close contact as determined by LCPH. All confirmed COVID-19 cases would be isolated, monitored daily, and released by LCPH. The district will notify families and staff of a positive case in a classroom, positive case in a building, public health alert level updates, and local testing options and locations. Please view Page 9 of the Amherst Restart Plan for information about LCPH's procedures for close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Because the virus is unpredictable, a school may need to close at some point if LCPH or the Governor puts restrictions in place based on the color-coded, tiered COVID-19 warning system. Schools would move to remote learning in this instance.

onCampus & eCampus

Why is Amherst Schools offering onCampus and eCampus instead of only online instruction or a blended option?

Based on parent feedback, the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the social-emotional well-being of our students, we felt that providing a full-time in-person learning experience for our students was best. We believe that we can do this in a safe manner while still giving our families the option of online learning. Consistency and continuity throughout the week is important for students and families.

Why is AJH and Steele transitioning to a trimester schedule?

We made this change in order to develop a schedule that involves fewer transitions for students so they are not in the hallway as often as they have been in previous school years. We believe that fewer, yet longer, classes will help our effort to reduce gatherings, especially in common areas.

Will eCampus be available for students who have to quarantine?

Yes. In the event of a short absence, an onCampus student will receive instruction and homework through their onCampus teacher(s). In the event of an extended absence, the school will coordinate with the family to a possible transition to our eCampus.

How is eCampus different from the online learning platform we used in the spring?

The 'e' in eCampus stands for 'extended,' as Amherst Schools aims to make this program an extension of the curriculum that onCampus students will experience. The two curriculums will be the same or very similar, though the unique nature of online learning and some in-person courses means there will be some differences. Our goal is to match current student schedules with equivalent courses. In cases where this is not possible, school counselors will reach out to families with other options.

Teachers will deliver eCampus instruction via Google Hangout/Meet, classroom meetings, structured activities, projects, and independent work and homework. Teachers will communicate through district Gmail accounts and Google Classroom. Students may have one or two teachers as points of contacts who facilitate teaching or a small team of teachers, depending on their grade level. The Amherst Schools will maintain high expectations for eCampus learners, and families should continue to expect a high-quality education. [Click here](#) to learn more about the eCampus option.

If I enroll my child in eCampus, can I change my mind later?

Yes, but it will be expected that each family honors their commitment to participate in eCampus for the entire semester/trimester. Families who enroll their students in eCampus will only be permitted to request a change in enrollment back to the onCampus option at the end of the semester/trimester. Requests will be approved if there is space and class availability.

Can my student start onCampus and then switch to eCampus at any time or will they need to wait until next semester?

We are asking families to commit to the option they select for their student for at least one semester or trimester. This will help with instructional planning and will help ensure that Amherst students receive a quality education.

My student will attend school in person, do I need to fill out a form?

No. All students are automatically enrolled in the onCampus option. Families with multiple children may elect different options for each child. Families must fill out the eCampus enrollment form only for students who intend on learning for home. [Click here](#) for that form, and submit it by Monday, August 3rd.

When will we know what courses will and will not be offered on eCampus?

eCampus offerings should be available some time in early August. Many elements of eCampus will be contingent on how many students enroll into the program. We will know that information following the deadline on August 3rd.

My child has an IEP with numerous teachers. What overall support will you have for students on IEPs?

Special education services for students with disabilities will be fully provided. Services for any individual student will be based upon what is specified in his/her IEP. Such students will be assigned to an intervention specialist to ensure delivery of services. Team meetings will be held for students who will be participating in the eCampus option during the first few weeks of school in order to discuss how services will be provided. Additionally, school counselors will be available for questions regarding students who receive accommodations through 504 plans. Those plans will be communicated to all eCampus instructors and accommodations will be made through virtual instruction. Contact Sarah Walker, Director of Student Services, at (440) 988-1990 or sarah_walker@amherstk12.org with questions or concerns about implementation or access to services.

When will supply lists be available? Will students share supplies?

Families should expect to receive supply lists from their schools in early August. As part of our efforts to socially distance and minimize group interaction, school supplies and instructional materials will not be shared. eCampus teachers will communicate any needed supplies for at-home instruction.

Will advanced, honors and CCP classes be offered this year? Will eCampus students be able to take those courses?

Advanced, Honors, and College Credit Plus classes will be available onCampus just like in a traditional school year. As for eCampus students, our goal will be to give our advanced, honors, and CCP students the challenging coursework they desire online. The details of "how" we do that still need to be worked out because delivery will be based on enrollment. We are working with Lorain County Community College on how to best deliver CCP online and will update CCP students in the coming weeks. (Note: A Steele student whose entire schedule is made up of CCP classes at LCCC should enroll in the eCampus program.)

Will students be able to participate in band, orchestra and choir this school year?

We will attempt to provide as many musical or fine arts options into our onCampus schedule as possible. Music classes require additional precautions and safety measures. The amount of music instruction available for eCampus students will depend entirely on the final onCampus offerings. More information regarding band, orchestra, and choir in each building will be shared in mid-August.

Will the district offer open-house orientations this year?

In general, open houses will be conducted virtually. More information will be provided in early August for open-house orientation programs for families of students in kindergarten, fourth, sixth, and ninth grades.

Transportation and Additional Care

Will the district still offer Comet Kids before and after school?

Yes, we will have before- and after-school programs available at Powers and Nord. More information on those programs will be made available in early August.

Will busing be offered this school year?

Yes, the district will provide busing, K-12, for the school year. Please refer to the Restart Plan for transportation safety protocols.

What if I need to drop something off to my student at school?

Parents needing to drop off items during the day, should remain in their cars, contact the school by phone and wait in front of the building for a staff member to help you. Visitors will largely not be permitted in Amherst Schools other than exceptions, such as the police and fire departments, utility workers, etc.