



Exceptional Student Education FAQ for Parents and Guardians

As a parent of an ESE or SWD student, will my student have the option to continue in eLearning like other students?

Yes. BCPS assures all parents have the option of continuing in eLearning for as long as eLearning is offered as a learning modality.

Is the ESE staff prepared to welcome my special needs student back to campus?

The ESE team at each school is excited and ready to welcome those students that opt to return to school classrooms for instruction and to continue providing high quality learning for students at home. As such, the ESE staff is prepared to provide instruction, therapies and related services that need to be delivered to students, with modifications in place due to COVID-19 (such as physical distancing.) The educational program for each student with a disability will continue to be governed by their particular Individual Education Plan. Any modifications to the delivery of the specified accommodations due to public health protocols will be reviewed by the IEP team which includes you, the parent.

What tools are available for families of ESE students to familiarize themselves with eLearning?

[Parent University](#), an innovative training webinar for parents, provides a 90-minute introduction to eLearning for parents across four distinct modules – parents of primary school students, secondary school students, ESE students and English Language Learners (ELL). All four modules are available at [Parent University](#). Parents of ESE students should view both their child's specific grade-level-based webinar and a special presentation that is specific to ESE students that can be found at bit.ly/3a2oDWi. A PowerPoint presentation of the material is also available [here](#).

What services and accommodations are in place for ESE Students?

ESE students will receive IEP services and accommodations within the operational modality they choose, eLearning or in-person education. Parents will have digital access to their student's IEP and TDLP in both cases, and IEPs will continue to be held via Microsoft Teams with parental consent. Teachers will also be provided every student's IEP or 504 accommodations within Canvas via the SEPA app.

How will the District mitigate the risk of exposure to the coronavirus for students with disabilities (SWDs)?

All students with disabilities (SWDs) are included in the protocols and resource needs associated with the non-SWD population unless documented in their IEP or the Temporary Distance Learning Plan (TDLP). Some SWDs will require differentiated PPE due to the nature of their disability.

Determinations of the need for PPE, which varies from the general population, will be documented in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Temporary Distance Learning Plan (TDLP) and help ensure physical distancing. The District will provide differentiated PPE to employees to successfully perform their job duties commensurate with providing services to SWD in a safe manner. These differentiated PPE may include face shields, gowns, goggles, scrubs, and/or booties, as appropriate. Additionally, the District has developed protocols for staff under COVID-19 conditions. This includes the establishment of a common threshold for removal of students from being allowed to be physically present and subsequent assignment to home-based eLearning when student behavior(s) outside of the identified disability put their own or other community members health at risk. These cases associated with the disability will be referred to the IEP team for review.

Are SWDs and ESE students encouraged to return to on-campus learning?

The choice to receive instruction at home or to return to campus is a personal decision that each family will need to make.

BCPS is prepared to welcome early learning, elementary, secondary and adult grade SWDs to in-class instruction when school campuses open on the advertised schedule. The District will identify self-contained classrooms, special programs, Cluster and Center school students at all grades levels that will return on October 14. Students who are with their non-SWD peers for the majority of their instruction, also known as “mainstreamed” or “inclusion” students, will follow the return calendar of October 14 for students in K, 1st, 6th and 9th grades. Mainstreamed ESE students in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 8th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades will have the option of returning to campus on October 20.

How does the day look for SWDs who are in both gen ed AND a special program? Will they physically transition and how will this be supervised?

These decisions will be made at the individual school level based on the number of students who return and the staff in the classroom. It is best practice, whenever feasible, if the students in the building continue to engage in eLearning and limit physical interaction to the greatest extent possible while continuing to provide Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE).

Locations where classes will be held is a site-based decision that will be made based upon the numbers of students in a classroom that are returning to school and the number of staff in the classroom.

To the greatest extent possible, it is recommended that students continue to receive services through eLearning in the building and in the home. Students will be provided FAPE and receive their services, and how services will be delivered is an individual, case-by-case decision

How will students' unique needs be met at 6-ft. distance when working with teachers and Education Support Professionals. Some SWDs require toileting and diapering, hand over hand intervention, assistance logging on, staying on track, and other supports in close physical proximity. When the teacher has students in a classroom both virtually and physically, how will they juggle all these needs?

A 6-foot physical distance should be maintained whenever possible. In certain situations, such as toileting it may not be possible. In those situations, differentiated and appropriate PPE must be worn, and universal precautions followed. In most cases ESPs are available in classes needing assistance with these kind of student needs and will be provided PPE, guidance, and training to support student needs. Staff and families will regularly collaborate to ensure each student's IEP is implemented during eLearning Phase 2.

If the student cannot wear a facial covering due to a condition identified on their IEP, will the student be denied being able to return to campus?

No. However, an IEP review must occur between the school staff and the family to review what modifications to the student's entry, exit, and presence in the school building during instruction must occur to provide public health safety protocols to all students prior to the student's return.

If students have push in /pull out services, is the support facilitator or related service provider going into the homeroom/classroom or can they instruct virtually?

Yes, support facilitation and related service providers will be providing services to students in classroom settings or other school-based locations. It is best practice for students in the building to continue engaging in eLearning and limit physical engagement to the greatest extent possible while continuing to provide FAPE.

These decisions will be made at the individual school level based on the number of students who return and the staff in the classroom.

Locations where classes will be held is a site-based decision that will be made based upon the school configuration, numbers of occupants in specific classrooms and determined by public health and safety protocols.

It is recommended that students continue to receive services whenever appropriate through eLearning in the building and in the home. Students will be provided FAPE and receive their services. How services will be delivered is an individual, case-by-case decision.

If a student needs paper-based material in class, will that be accommodated?

Yes. If a student requires paper-based materials, as indicated on their IEP, this accommodation must be implemented and should be provided to the student—even though other students are not being given paper-based materials. No sharing of paper, or other physical resources, is allowed.

Will IEP meetings still be held via TEAMS to stay in accordance with CDC guidelines or do schools have to give the parent the option to come to the school in person?

To the greatest extent possible to limit exposure and cross contamination, IEP meetings should continue to be held virtually. In the event that a parent refuses to participate in a virtual meeting, schools may invite families into the school building to participate in a way that will allow for physical distancing as recommended by the CDC. This may mean that some of the IEP team members will still be participating through video conferencing while the parents are in-person in a room in the school. Further guidance for ESE Specialists will be forthcoming.

If a student decides to return, but their services or electives are held remotely and they are not technically with their non-disabled peers, is the TDLP still in effect and how will this impact the minutes with non-disabled peers on the IEP?

The TDLP is still in effect for all students who are engaging in eLearning (either remotely from home or in the school building). As annual IEP meetings are held, the IEP team should continue to determine the services needed to provide FAPE under normal circumstances for each student. The decision for learning to take place virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic is not a change in placement that has been made by the IEP committee.

Will parents be able to volunteer in the classroom?

No. At this time, all outside visitors into school buildings are prohibited during COVID-19 conditions to limit exposure until face-to-face learning resumes on campuses.