

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Diverse Learner Supports and Services during CPS Reopening

*Updated January 2021*

As we continue to support our Diverse Learners in the remote and in-person learning environments, the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) is following the special education guidance issued by the [Illinois State Board of Education](#) (ISBE) and the [United States Department of Education](#). For the most up-to-date information regarding the district's response to COVID-19, visit <https://www.cps.edu/school-reopening-2020/>.

**This document is organized by the following topics:**

[Cloth Face Covering](#)

[Opt-In/Opt-Out of In-Person Instruction](#)

[Student Academic Progress and Scheduling](#)

[Health Questions](#)

[Services and Evaluation](#)

**What if my child has a medical condition and is unable to wear a cloth face covering (mask) throughout the school day?**

Parents are able to complete a form along with a medical provider's approval to request this accommodation for their child. The outline of this process including the form can be found on the [CPS Reopening webpage](#) on page 10 of the [Reopening Guide for Parents](#).

**If someone in my child's class/pod has a medical mask exemption, will parents of the pod be notified?**

Although we will not be able to share which members of the school community have an accommodation due to privacy and confidentiality laws, each school will take necessary precautions to promote the health and safety of all students and staff, including maintaining social distancing and access to the approved Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

**Will families be able to opt out of in-person learning through the end of the school year?**

Parents who have selected in-person learning for their child can elect to move their child to the learn-at-home option (remote learning) at any time.

**When is the next opportunity for families to opt in to in-person learning?**

Although the opportunity to opt in for the February 1 reopening date has passed, families will have the opportunity to choose in-person services for the fourth quarter. Families should consult with their child's principal to inquire about an exception if capacity allows.

**Is there a plan to provide students with tutoring to support any skill regression that may have happened during remote learning?**

We are currently working on a process that will allow school teams to review student progress and provide the appropriate additional support needed. When finalized, this information will be shared on the [ODLSS webpage](#) under announcements.

### **Are schools making an effort to keep students' special education teachers consistent to minimize adjustments and transitions?**

Schools and related service provider managers are making every effort to maintain consistency in scheduling students with their normal service providers.

### **How are special education minutes going to be met for remote and hybrid students?**

All instructional minutes for students who are learning at home and in a hybrid model will continue to be met as outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Students' minutes will be met through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities. Pre-k students learning at home will receive a minimum of 60 minutes of synchronous instruction daily and students in K-8 learning at home will receive a minimum of 150 minutes of synchronous instruction daily.

### **Do schools still need to follow the ISBE 70/30 rule even with some students receiving in-person instruction and others in remote learning?**

Yes, schools are still required to follow the ISBE 70/30 rule, which sets the ratio of students without and with IEPs scheduled in general education classrooms. In at-home *and* in-person general education classrooms, no more than 30 percent of students on the class roster should have IEPs. Note that students with speech-only IEPs are not included in the 30% of students with IEPs. For more information, see the **Illinois Administrative Code 226.730**, and the link to **ISBE deviation information** is [here](#).

Accordingly, for a general education classroom with some students learning in in-person pods and some students learning at home, the group of students in an in-person pod may have more or less than 30 percent students with IEPs, so long as the class as a whole does not have more than 30 percent students with IEPs. However, schools should make every effort to distribute students with and without IEPs across general education classroom pods so that each pod has 30 percent or fewer students with IEPs if possible.

Example: A general education classroom includes six students learning in person and 22 students learning at home. Of the total 28 students on the classroom roster, there are eight students with an IEP and 20 students without an IEP. Of the 22 students learning at home, four students have IEPs while the remaining 18 do not have IEPs. The remaining two students with IEPs are learning in person. In this scenario, 28.6 percent students in this classroom have an IEP and 71.4 percent of students do not have an IEP. This classroom is in alignment with the 70/30 rule and would not require a deviation form to be filed.

### **How will I be notified if my child is exposed to COVID-19?**

To help reduce the transmission of COVID-19, CPS has created a contact tracing team to support the intake of COVID-19 cases and notify close contacts and school communities as needed. CPS is working in coordination with CDPH to ensure that those identified as close contacts have rapid contact tracing and are connected to city resources, such as monitoring and testing. If your child is identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, you will be notified via an email to the email address on file and a follow-up call from CDPH contact tracing. More information about the district's contact tracing program is available [here](#), and our health and safety protocols can be found [here](#).

**My child has both visual and auditory impairments and relies on clear speech and looking at faces/lips to understand speech. What should I do if my child is having trouble understanding teachers wearing masks?**

The district is working to ensure that students with specific needs related to speech and hearing impairment and their service providers have access to a mask with a clear section around the mouth. Clear masks allow the best possible access for students while still providing a safe environment in the classroom.

**What's the process for a parent to request an evaluation for their child if a parent believes or has concerns that grades are falling behind in reading or writing? Is a doctor's note needed for that evaluation?**

A request for a Full Individual Evaluation must be submitted in writing to the principal or the case manager. The request should be signed, dated, and include an explanation of educational concerns and any supporting documentation. You will then receive a written notice of the school's decision within 14 school days. For more information about this process, please visit our [special education process website](#).

**If you would like to provide feedback to or receive updates from ODLSS, please complete this [form](#).**