

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS // FALL 2020

EDGEWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - CRUSADER COMEBACK RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN



We are grateful for your questions (shared to: ehscovid19questions@edgewoodhs.org or to the President's or Principal's email accounts). We're in a pandemic! Nothing is certain! We're constantly adjusting to changing conditions inside school and in the wider community. Your Questions and our Answers are here!

October 9:

- The Edgewood High School Board of Trustees owes the parents of your students and your students who want to return to in-school education an explanation. By failing to abide by Edgewood High School's own return to school plan, the Board of Trustees have broken faith with those who trusted them. So now that you have voided the original return to school plan, what is the Board of Trustees new plan? How does the Edgewood Board of Trustees plan to regain the trust of parents who wish to see their children return to in-class instruction?

As I mentioned in the opening paragraph, we must have faith and trust and work in partnership now more than ever in our history. We are all giving it our best and there is no playbook. Information, guidelines, orders and cases change by the hour. What was the focus one week ago may not be next week. We have realized there is much more to a decision than one metric. These are some of the contributing factors as we look to making a decision.

MEDICAL: We are consulting with a team of medical experts to assist us in reviewing County and State metrics, EHS specific metrics, and trends to allow us to make the best possible decisions based on safety for our students, faculty and staff. Our team consists of experts from within and outside the Edgewood Community.

ACADEMIC: Please believe me when I say that we all prefer in-person learning. We feel we have delivered an excellent virtual model and we have an equally excellent hybrid model. Our hybrid model does present a couple of challenges. Due to approved personal reasons, not all of our faculty members can be present in the classroom. We are in the process of hiring Virtual Classroom Supervisors to support student learning for those faculty who are unable to be present in the classroom. We are confident that the faculty is properly trained to manage the virtual students and the in-person students with synchronous learning. We are confident we have the technology in place to support students and faculty. We are confident our facilities are ready to provide a safe environment for students and faculty to succeed safely.

In-person teaching and learning will be very different from what the students are used to. That is why we brought the students in this week to walk the school and experience the new health and safety protocols. When we are able to open in-person, our continued ability to do so depends on our students' commitment to following all distancing, sanitizing, and mask requirements. Having assigned seats to allow for tracing and being 6 feet apart for social distancing is the hardest part for the students. Kids want to be close to each other, sit by their friends, and remove their masks when they talk. This will be a major challenge for them and us.

- In your email message, you referred to the "Edgewood Community." What do you mean?

Our use of the Edgewood Community refers to students, parents, faculty and staff, and family members of the high school.

- We think you should publish the minutes from the most recent Board of Trustees meetings and hold the next meeting on Zoom or Facebook. Can you offer this?

Like most other private, non-profit organizations in Dane County and throughout the State of Wisconsin, Edgewood High School's Board of Trustee meetings are not open to the public, nor are its minutes made public. We encourage those who have questions or want to provide feedback to the Board to email us at ehscovid19questions@edgewoodhs.org.

- Can you tell us where the most recent COVID-19 cases originated within the community?

We are very limited in what we can say due to personal privacy, confidentiality, and HIPAA guidelines, but we do want to keep you informed. We will be providing a weekly case history of active cases and close contacts on our website in our "Crusader Comeback" so you can see what the current status is and how it affects our decision making.

September 30:

- **Once EHS is open for in-person instruction, can a student who is ill but scheduled to attend in person attend virtually?**

We are working on how to support our 90 or so virtual students when online instruction resumes. As we confirm our system, we will consider ways to support students who are absent from in person instruction with the possibility of attending virtually, stay tuned!

- **How will EHS handle holidays? If students travel, will they have to quarantine for 14 days upon their return?**

There are a lot of predictions about the impact of colder weather on the spread of COVID. The pandemic is unpredictable and changes daily. Our goal is always the health and safety of our community. There are three weeks of school after Thanksgiving, including finals. We will continue to monitor national, state, and county COVID data, and two weeks before Thanksgiving, we will make a determination about the safest way to continue after the holiday.

- **Will you please share how Edgewood is analyzing the Public Health Madison Dane County data and provide an update about your reopening timeline?**

As we explained last week, we have been monitoring Public Health Madison Dane County data daily, looking at the percent of positive cases and the trend data. Please read this more explicit explanation for a comprehensive overview of our process and the data we have been and will continue to track.

- **What are your suggestions about protecting students from eye strain due to screen time during virtual schooling?**

Eye strain is a major concern across the world in a time of virtual school, business, and overall communication during the pandemic. Our School Nurse Sue Richards researched eye strain and wrote this week's Healthy News You Can Use to address it--see Inside Edge for her article. Some highlights: Focus on different objects: You've probably heard of the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, focus on an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Reduce glare from your computer screen: Glare is a big no-no on your computer monitor. Try to position your monitor so there is no reflection on your screen from a light or window. Another resource is : aao.org (the American Academy of Ophthalmology).

- **How does my child sign and submit the Crusader Covenant?**

The Crusader Covenant was shared with students as an electronic form via their school email address. He or she should open the document, read it carefully, and type his or her full name and hit submit.

September 22: Pandemic-related Questions & Answers:

- **Dane County stated that for school to open for high school that the average daily test county must be below 19 cases per day for FOUR consecutive weeks. Why is Edgewood not using THAT metric? Why are we following the now-defunct and arbitrary Dane County order?**

As you can see from the two previous questions, our community is divided and shares strong opinions about what metric to use, why to use it, how to use it, and when to use it. Public Health Madison Dane County is using the modeling of the Harvard Global Health Institute which has been the established model for states and nations to track COVID cases and rates of infection, as well as other variables related to pandemic management. Local public health agencies are the most informed and updated resources for public health crises. The PHMDC Order is still in effect, with the exception of the provision related to school closure. There are also specific requirements for policies, procedures and postings with which the school must comply.

- **Could you point me to what tool/website you are using to track the percent positives? I see so many different numbers online. I want to have the same view that you do on these numbers. I wasn't clear if your standard is a 5% or less report for each day, and therefore one day of a number above 5% will resent the count, even if other days have registered in the 2-3% range. Also, do you use the number that they initially report each day, or do you use the adjusted numbers as they go back in time to update testing percentages? If you go back in time, how long do you wait for the numbers to adjust?**

We are using the Public Health Madison Dane County [COVID-19 data snapshot](#). This snapshot is updated every Thursday evening, and we are also looking at the daily and 7-day average positivity rate trends on the same website, [here](#).

- **Is a 5% positive rate a realistic measure when the UW students are now back in Dane County? Is anyone else using that as a measure to go back to school? Where did that measure come from?**

That measure is from the Public Health Madison Dane County tools, shared above. This was the threshold the Board agreed to follow.

- **Will we receive regular communications about your assessment of the data? Or will communications only come as these standards are met? Is there a date for when we go back to school?**

We are watching the data every day, looking at daily cases and trends, as the links above lay out. Our plan is to send out email responses and post them on our website twice per week, answering the questions posed to the board and administration via email and voicemail.

- **My children still do not have their open mods replaced with study halls nor have they received any training on the requisite measures and rules for in-person instruction. At this point I am beginning to question Edgewood's commitment to in-person instruction.**

We are finalizing groupings for when in-person instruction begins, along with a communication plan to inform students and parents of the new schedule, when it takes effect. Because the in-person schedule expands the cycle, with two meetings for each cycle day (with half the school meeting each of the two days), it will look very different from the current schedule. We will share the in-person schedule along with directions about how to use it when we have confirmed the first day of in-person instruction, based on the data. We will hold an orientation day for all students, in socially distanced small groups and in masks, to learn safety protocols and routines to transition between virtual and in-person instruction (9th graders and transfer students in the morning and upperclassmen in the afternoon). We will share the logistics for the orientation day when the date for in-person learning is confirmed.

- **If the numbers EHS is using do not allow for in-person classes to reopen, will this impact fall sports? Will they have to close as well? I hope there are not two standards for education and for sports. The Crusader Comeback pledge asks all families not to travel. Does this mean athletes traveling to their sporting events for Edgewood's season will not be allowed at in-person classes for two weeks after their last outing?**

EHS athletics and extracurricular activities are designed to comply with federal, state and local guidance, orders, and best practices, as well as the Crusader Covenant. The nature of "travel" relevant to our athletes and other participants in EHS extracurricular is not the type of "travel" that is anticipated by Edgewood, CDC, or PHMDC travel guidance. Extracurricular travel is transportation to and from extracurricular events, maintaining a contact-traceable bubble. The travel to which Edgewood, CDC and PHMDC refer is recreational travel, generally overnight stays out of the area, whether in or out of state.

September 22: School-related Questions & Answers:

- **I am curious: why are the breaks between classes still only five minutes for virtual learning?**

Though we're in a virtual instructional model, the state Department of Public Instruction has mandatory minutes of instruction for the school year. We can't extend passing time without losing instructional minutes. However, we have worked as a faculty to incorporate breaks into classes, and we encourage you and your child to let teachers and counselors know if those breaks would be helpful.

- **My daughter is finding herself overwhelmed with work, after long hours on the screen. How can you help?**

We are working across the school to reduce, if not eliminate homework (except for during asynchronous time). Math teachers and Advanced Placement teachers have the need to assign some reading/problem solving outside of class, but if your child has a significant load of work, please have him or her contact her teacher(s) and counselor to problem solve. We know that school at home is work!

- **Once we return to hybrid learning, it was stated that the 6-day cycle will take 12 days to complete. Does this mean that less material will be covered during the year? How will the expectations change for the kids choosing to stay completely virtual? What will happen with students like mine who will not return to school for in-person learning this year? Will the teachers continue to offer synchronous learning for them?**

Instruction in virtual and hybrid models looks different than traditional school when all students and teachers are present together. Colleges and universities know that -- instruction is different on their campuses too. Content coverage, relationship-building, connecting, and pacing of instruction are all modified whether we're virtual or in-person, half the school at a time.

When the in-person instructional model begins, all students will be assigned to a group of students to “attend” school with -- for the students who remain virtual, they’ll “attend” virtually with a consistent group of students every other day. Teachers will repeat their lessons twice.

On the day that students are not “attending” school with their group (whether in person or virtual), they’ll be doing asynchronous class work at home to deepen their content knowledge of the course’s topics.

• If some faculty continue remotely, will you need supervisors in their classrooms to help manage the in-person class?

We have hired and are training surrogates to support students in classrooms for the teachers who can’t be in person. The surrogates will be trained in classroom management, student support, and technology problem solving.

• I see that parent-teacher conferences are coming up. Will there be in-person and virtual options for those conferences?

For the first conferences of the year, scheduled for October 8-9, we will plan for all virtual meetings with teachers. More information on how to sign up for conferences will be shared in Inside Edge Sunday and by email next week.

August 24:

• How will the 2020-21 school year begin?

The Edgewood High School schedule is on a six-day cycle. We will begin with online orientation and connection days on Monday, August 24 and Tuesday, August 25. Our virtual learning instruction will begin on Wednesday, August 26.

• What are the school health metrics used to determine when to pivot learning models?

Public Health Madison Dane County has defined school metrics to guide decisions for in-person instruction. In order to consider re-opening grades 6-12 for in-person instruction, Dane County must sustain at or below a 14-day average of 19 cases per day for four consecutive weeks.

• If you choose the Optional Virtual Learning Model when the school year begins, can you switch to the In-Person Learning Model at any time?

No, due to social distancing requirements and building capacity of students per classroom, you may not transition back to the In-Person Learning Model until the second semester begins. We ask that you make a commitment for the entire first semester.

• If we need it, can we use an all virtual learning option? Yes, if PHMDC allows us to open in-person, we will still provide a virtual option for those whose family situations require it. What does the all-school virtual plan look like?

Our staff and faculty have been working all summer to revise our virtual instruction model, based on feedback from parents and students in the spring. We will follow the six-day student class cycle. Please visit our website to watch our video with a detailed description of our plan, from one of the summer planners, Natalie Koblenski, English Department Chair.

• Can you explain the learning models?

Our 3 Learning Models are: All School Virtual Learning, In-Person (every-other-day) Learning, & Optional Virtual Learning. Please visit our website for detailed information on our learning models [HERE](#).

• What does “close contact of someone with Covid-19” mean?

Dane County states that if you have had physical contact or have been within 6 feet for 15 min. or more with someone.

• Will visitors be allowed inside Edgewood High School?

Non-essential visitors will not be allowed inside the school building. Parents picking up children will remain outside.

• Will there be a tuition adjustment for less than full time in-person school?

Tuition funds our faculty and staff salaries. If anything, our faculty and staff are working even more hours to prepare to teach in two different models of instruction. A tuition reduction is not viable as we are not reducing staffing.

• To clarify the Virtual / In-Person Learning video details, when are teachers meeting with their students?

If a class meets 6 days/cycle

- 4-5 days synchronous learning (teachers' choice)
- 1-2 asynchronous days during scheduled class time (teachers' choice)
- No off mods

If a class meets 5 days/cycle

- 3 days synchronous learning
- 2 asynchronous days during scheduled class time
- 1 off mod

If a class meets 3 days/cycle

- 2-3 days synchronous learning (teachers' choice)
- 0-1 days asynchronous days during scheduled class time (teachers' choice)
- 3 off mods

• What resources does the school nurse utilize to have the most current health and safety information?

We appreciate offers of support from the vast array of medical professionals in the EHS community. Our school nurse, Sue Richards, meets regularly with physicians, the school nursing association, and the state nursing association. School health and safety templates have been developed and underlie Sue's work.

• What is the protocol for students who are sent to the nurse with a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms?

A safe room and separate exit space will be identified for anyone who comes down with symptoms during the day.

• How will food services be provided for students and staff?

Lunch will be offered as pre-packaged meals and must be paid for using EHS swipe-card. No cash will be accepted. The lunchroom will be marked to meet requirements with seating limited to 4 per table with plexiglass dividers being used.

• What is being done to ensure a safe and disinfected facility?

Members of the Board of Trustees' Facilities Committee are continuing to work with our EHS staff on health and safety precautions throughout our building, including air filtration, hand sanitizing stations, facility disinfecting with EPA registered products, signage and arrows for traffic patterns and directional flow and space arrangements for proper social distancing.

• What will the athletic program look like in the fall?

Our plan is to begin low risk contact athletics on August 24th, with higher contact athletic programs being delayed until September 7th. EHS will continue to follow the guidance of the WIAA, the individual conferences, and the local health department for all matters related to Crusader Athletics. EHS plans to stream all on-campus varsity sports events.

• Will my child be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities if s/he is attending school exclusively online?

For students who are attending exclusively remotely, participation in extracurricular activities will be allowed along with athletics as well as skill development/strength training may also be exclusively remote. Opportunities will vary based on the sport, club, or activity.

• What is EHS providing for mental health support to both students and families?

Student Services is more committed than ever to reaching out and providing individual support to each one of our students and their families, offering a wide range of opportunities for wellness and counseling to meet specific and personalized needs.

- **What technology upgrades have been made over the summer to enhance the virtual learning model?**

New web cameras and microphones have been installed in every classroom to provide synchronous and recorded instruction. Internet and software upgrades have been purchased to ensure strong connections and successful streamline instruction.

- **Will Edgewood continue to give letter grades or switch to pass/fail?**

Edgewood High School will continue to give traditional letter grades, not switch to pass/fail grading.