

CPS Remote Learning FAQ, Fall 2020
August 25, 2020

Welcome back to school (sort of)! The first day of school for Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is September 8, 2020, and the school day will be fully remote. The district's new [guidance](#) promises that instruction will be more effective, rigorous, and structured than it was during the Spring. Plans are still evolving, but here is what we know for now.

General Questions

How long will remote learning continue?

At least through the first quarter. The district will update its plans in November.

How will remote learning work?

- Every student must have their own device with a camera and a microphone. *If you do not have a separate device for each student in your household, contact your school's administration; they should provide you with a device.*
- Every student must have a high-quality internet connection. *If you do not have a good connection, CPS will provide one free to [eligible families](#). The families of these 100,000 students received a notification over the summer, but if you believe you should have been notified, you may contact 773-417-1060.*
- Students will "attend" on-line for a full day every day. Teachers in K-8 will take attendance twice a day, and high school teachers will take attendance each class period. The amount of time that students spend interacting with their teachers will vary by grade level. For example, K-2 students will have three hours of synchronous (direct, in the moment) instruction, and three hours of learning activities to do off-line or in small groups. Students in 6-8 will have a bit less than four hours of direct instruction with about two hours of learning activities. High school students should plan to be on-line 80% of the day.

Will my child receive letter grades?

Yes. Grades will be determined according to the standard grading scale.

What happens if my child or I have questions about a class?

Contact the teacher using his/her CPS email. Teachers are "in school" all day. They will have office hours as part of their teaching schedule. Addressing concerns early is always wise, and the teachers will appreciate it.

Will CPS provide meals for students?

Yes. Just as in the spring and summer, Grab n Go meals will be offered. You can pick up three days of breakfasts and lunches at a time for each student in your household. There are 270 meal sites, found [here](#). If you need meals delivered to your home, call 773-553-KIDS (5437) or email familyservices@cps.edu

My child cannot learn effectively in my household (for example, parent is an essential worker, there are no quiet spaces in the home, safety issues exist). What can we do?

At this time, not much. However, CPS is looking into the possibility of creating some supervised spaces where students can do their work and be fed. If you need assistance with child supervision during the first quarter of remote learning, please take [this CPS survey](#).

Diverse Learners Questions

How will my child get the services listed in his/her IEP plan?

Students should receive all of the services listed in their IEP, for the number of minutes listed in their IEP. However, the form of delivery may look different. Students will receive a *Remote Learning Plan* (RLP) if they did not receive one in the Spring. The RLP should not change services, but it will change the modality through which services are delivered. For example, some special education support may be provided through co-teaching rather than through a resource room, and some minutes may be provided as consultation with teachers or with parents. Social work minutes are another example where the social worker may be working together with the classroom teacher to provide services. Services that are supposed to be provided 1:1 should still be provided 1:1 except for paraprofessional minutes (see below).

What happens if I don't agree with my child's Remote Learning Plan?

If you believe that the RLP does not adequately support your child, you should contact your case manager to schedule a meeting of the IEP team.

My child has a dedicated aide (paraprofessional or SECA), and my child needs that constant attention. Shouldn't the aide be with my child all day, just like in school?

CPS policy says that paraprofessionals cannot be on teleconference with a student unless another adult is present. That adult may be the teacher, a related service provider, or an adult in the home. Paraprofessionals may take notes, provide prompts to students and check for understanding while the teacher is teaching, check in with students frequently and document progress, and communicate with parents. No staff, including paraprofessionals, are allowed to go to students' homes.

My child is supposed to work with the Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist, or Social Worker.

How will that happen?

It depends on the way services are listed in the RLP. If the services are direct and 1:1 or in small group, they will be provided through teleconferencing. Otherwise, services may look like a collaboration with the teachers. Parents must sign consent before small group social work services are provided on-line, because confidentiality in other students' homes cannot be guaranteed. Parents are not required to consent, but CPS will document the attempt.

Can my child continue to receive nursing services?

Yes. If necessary, a nurse will teleconference with you and/or your child to monitor your child's health and to help with instruction for things like blood glucose tests and counting carbs.

Are Assistive Technology and Alternative/Augmentative Communication devices available?

If your child requires one of these devices, the school should have provided it to you in the Spring. If it is still at the school, contact the principal. Parent instructional videos are also available. The warehouse for devices is currently closed, so no new devices are being provided.

My child cannot access on-line learning due to physical/medical limitations. What happens?

If students are not able to use technology and require non-digital formats, teachers will prepare lessons for pick up.

How do I know if my child is receiving the services listed in the IEP?

By the second week of school, schedules should be pretty well set. Ask the case manager to send you a copy of your child's weekly schedule that shows what time special education and related services will be provided. Then. . . document, document, document! Put all communication with the school in writing (e.g., email). Ask your child if s/he met with the service provider as scheduled. Make notes about your child's challenges and progress with remote learning. If you are dissatisfied, request an IEP meeting. Before the meeting, request a copy of your student's school records for this fall so that you can see what services the school recorded.

My child's annual IEP meeting is supposed to be this fall. Will it happen?

Yes, it must. All of the legal timelines and requirements for IEPs are still in place. Most IEP meetings will be held remotely, but you must be given an in-person IEP if you request one. If your meeting is held in person, the school will determine how many members of the team can attend based on the size of the room at the school. If the room is not large enough for all team members to safely gather in person, some staff will participate through teleconferencing. You should receive a draft of the IEP at least three school days prior to the IEP meeting, and the case manager is responsible for asking how you want it provided (mail, email, school pick-up).

Are evaluations for an IEP still happening?

Yes, but they may look different than they do in a normal school year.

- For initial and three-year reevaluations, you will still have a "domain meeting" to determine what information needs to be gathered. Once you sign consent for the evaluation, the team has its usual 60 school days to complete assessments.
- Team members will rely largely on records reviews, interviews and questionnaires, and remote observations.
- Some formal assessments may be administered, but valid testing poses many challenges. Some cognitive assessments have been approved for use, but only assuming a strong internet connection, no distractions, no interference, and adequate skills/maturity of the student. Similarly, some speech/language assessments are possible. Academic achievement seems to pose too many problems when assessed remotely, so teacher interviews, test scores, and work product will be utilized.
- If the assessment does not produce enough data to establish the need for an IEP, a new evaluation may be conducted with additional assessment tools once in-person instruction resumes.

What if I disagree with the school's decision?

You have the same options as always. First, try talking to the school administration. You might also contact the CPS [Parent Involvement Specialists](#). If informal efforts are not helpful, you can file for mediation, due process, or a state complaint. Links to more detailed information can be found [here](#).

If my child requires homebound services, will a teacher come to the home?

No, not during remote learning. All instruction will be on-line.

My child requires accommodations under a 504 plan. Will that still be provided?

In general yes, but it depends on whether the accommodation is still needed during remote learning. For example, students do not currently need permission to carry a water bottle, nor do they need a small space for testing. They likely do still need accommodations such as extended time and movement breaks. Speak with your case manager if you believe that the educators are not providing needed accommodations.