Thank you for visiting the Cornell School District’s Frequently Asked Questions document where responses to inquiries will be addressed and shared. This is a fluid document that will be updated as more common themed questions are asked.

**Half-Day Rotation – Will I be able to select which session my child attends, morning or afternoon?**

At this time the district will be assigning groups of students to either the morning or afternoon session. We are limited with the capacity for each session. The District understands that working with families and being flexible is important, especially during this pandemic. However, although we’ll try and be as flexible as we can, we can’t guarantee that we can make any adjustments to the initial rosters. Please call and speak with your child’s principal if you have any concerns.

**100% Online Learning Option – How do I notify the school that I don’t feel comfortable sending my child to school and wish to do the online option?**

Families are asked to contact the elementary office or high school offices and notify them of your intent to do the online option. At this time, a lot of the programming details will depend on overall numbers of students who select the 100% online option.

**Online Learning Option – What will the online option look like while the hybrid half-day rotation schedule is being implemented?**

Families that choose the option of 100% online learning for the 2020-2021 school year will be enrolled in the Cornell Cyber Academy. The Cyber Academy has been operational in the District for the last 8 years and uses Edgenuity as the educational platform. Edgenuity’s courses combine rigorous content with direct-instruction videos from expert, on-screen teachers (recorded, not live) with interactive learning tools and resources to engage and motivate students. The online courses include core curriculum classes, AP®, elective and world languages, which are based on the rigor and high expectations of state, Common Core, NGSS, and iNACOL standards.

While course options and assignments are not the same as the courses offered in the building, all classes are monitored by Cornell School District teachers. Students and families will have access to the Cornell teacher of record assigned.

**Closing of Schools – What will happen if the district is asked to close schools for a period of time due to local or state directives?**
The Cornell School District has been told that the Allegheny County Health Department will assist with any recommendations for school closings. School closings are a possibility and they could last for a few days to a few weeks. The Allegheny County Health Department will be looking at community spread numbers in the local community, as well as throughout the county in making their decisions. If we were told to close our students would transition to a full remote schedule, similar to what the spring was like. Cornell teachers will be implementing and building a Google Classroom site throughout the school year. Students will have a familiarity with the online platform, and the Google Classroom site will be utilized during any required remote learning situation. If in a remote situation teachers will be conducting live sessions, which were not highly used in the spring closure. Details on the live streaming/connecting are being finalized now.

Students who are enrolled in the Cornell Cyber Academy will continue their work in the Edgenuity platform.

**Masks – What are the guidelines for students in regards to wearing masks?**

Students will be required to wear masks by the PA Mask Order anytime on school property, including buses, and when appropriate social distancing guidelines are not met. The social distancing guideline is 6-feet. All classrooms should have students seated at least 6-feet apart, so students will be given opportunities for masks breaks when working independently at their desks as long as 6-feet of distance is accomplished. These breaks will be brief, and strictly enforced.

When students are moving about the building, classroom, or on the bus they will be required to wear a mask or face covering. Students will also be required to wear a mask or face covering when talking to a classmate or teacher as well.

**Masks – Will the District be providing masks for students?**

The District did purchase a great deal of face masks and face shields that students can wear. If a family wishes to provide their own that is fine. Please clean/wash regularly. If a mask from home appears to look dirty we will ask the student to wear a school mask until the home mask can be washed.

**Masks – My son/daughter has a medical condition and they aren’t able to wear a mask what do I do?**

If your child has a documented medical, mental health and/or disability prohibiting them from wearing a mask or face shield please contact Pupil Service Coordinator, Mrs. Carla Antoniades (cantiades@cornellsd.org or 412-264-5010 ext. 113) to discuss. You can also reach out to the elementary principal, Mr. Jeffrey Carter (jcarter@cornellsd.org or 412-264-5010 ext. 241) or the high school principal, Dr. Szokoly (dszokoly@cornellsd.org or 412-264-5010 ext. 104).

**Masks – What are the guidelines for staff in regards to wearing masks?**

All staff members will be required to wear a mask or face shield during instruction. Similar to students, if 6-foot of distance is accomplished a teacher can take a brief mask break, but if 6-feet of distance can’t be accomplished, a mask or face covering will need to be worn at all times.
Social Distancing – What social distancing protocols will be in place throughout the day?

All classrooms will have 6-feet of social distancing between students and between adults and students. If there happens to be a classroom where that can be accomplished that class will be moved to a larger space to accommodate the 6-foot social distancing recommendation.

Social Distancing – Will my child be traveling between classes? For example, will my child who is in elementary travel to art class?

The District will try and eliminate as much travel as feasibly possible. For elementary specials, teachers will travel into the classroom (Art, Technology, Music, etc.). High school is more difficult to do that with the different subject and class periods.

Hygiene – Will students be required to wash hands at different points throughout the day?

YES! The Cornell School District will have hand sanitizer solution in each classroom. Students will be required to use hand sanitizer when entering the classroom, and before leaving the classroom. Students will also use hand sanitizer before entering the bus at dismissal. Parents are encouraged to have their child wash hands before entering the bus, and when getting home each day. Hand sanitizer and washing hands will become a major focus while we deal with this pandemic situation. Plenty will be available for students and staff. The Pennsylvania Pediatrics Health Network advised the District that hand sanitizer is easier on hands compared to soap and water.

Hygiene – Will the District be conducting any monitoring of students in terms of symptoms?

The District will train staff and personnel on COVID-19 symptoms and look-fors. The District will continually monitor students, but the District will not be conducting temperature checks of all students. It was recommended by a number of health agencies that this will lead to inaccurate rumors of people having COVID-19, long lines to get into school and learning spaces. In addition, fevers weren’t a universal sign that an individual had COVID-19 (one of the many symptoms). So parents will be encouraged to self-monitor their child, resources will be sent home to parents about what to look for, and the District will also monitor symptoms. Any child who may be suspected of having COVID-19 will be transitioned to an isolated spot and be sent home immediately. The District will work with families and all proper local health agencies and providers on any potential cases. All families are encouraged to keep their children home if they are sick. If they send their sick child to school, they will be called and asked to come get their child.

Possible COVID-19 Case – How will the District respond to a potential COVID-19 case in the school, whether that is a teacher or student?

The District is waiting for further specific, concrete guidance on this from our state and local health departments. We have been told we are going to get guidance on how to respond if a case is confirmed. We have also been told that the Allegheny County Health Department will be working in collaboration with districts on confirmed cases in schools. Positive cases will be isolated and investigated all with the
assistance of ACHD. In addition, Cornell School District has been receiving feedback and guidance from Children’s Community Pediatrics, which is associated with Children’s Hospital. CCP will be consulted with during this situation. Contact tracing will be required and Cornell SD will work with ACHD to provide any necessary information. Any individual determined to be in close contact will be notified. As far as deciding to close schools for a short to extended period of time, those decisions will be made with the assistance of the Allegheny County Health Department as we have been told.

Possible COVID-19 Case – What happens if a student or teacher becomes symptomatic during school hours?

First, the student or teacher will leave the classroom immediately and report to the nurse’s office. Again, face masks and coverings will be worn in the hallways. The nurse will assess the student/teacher, including more intensive symptom screenings such as temperature screen and questions about any pre-existing conditions that may explain the symptoms. As the situation warrants, the nurse will contact a parent/guardian to arrange for transportation off-site. While waiting for transportation the student will be isolated in a specific closed room, which is not used at all during the school day. That room will be deep cleaned following CDC cleaning guidelines. The student or teacher’s desk area will be sanitized prior to further usage, and the room will be deep cleaned as well. The student or teacher would then work with their health care provider to determine if a COVID-19 test is needed, a 14-day quarantine, or isolation. Medical clearance will need to be provided to return to school. The school will continue to operate as normally as possible until additional information becomes available on the student or teacher’s status. There are many common reasons other than COVID-19 that could explain someone not feeling well at a particular time.

Attendance – How strict will the District be on attendance this school year? If my child isn’t feeling well I am not going to send them, and I don’t want to end up at the magistrate because I am being cautious.

The District will be flexible with families and work through attendance issues on a case-by-case basis. Being small allows us to do that. The District understands we have to be flexible with our attendance guidelines this year, and we encourage families to keep students home if they aren’t feeling well. We don’t want to punish a family, or burden them because they are taking the proper precautions.

Transportation – How will students sit on the bus?

Students will enter the bus back to front, and have assigned seats. Students will be required to wear masks at all times while riding the bus. At this time the District is working on bus routes and children will either sit one per seat, or two per seat depending on bus route size. Windows will be open to increase ventilation weather permitting. Families who have multiple children on the same bus may be asked to have their children sit in the same seat (max 2 per seat). Two children per seat is permissible, and masks would be required because of the 6-foot distance not being feasible.
Transportation – Can I drive my child(ren) to school and pick up at the end of the half-session?

Yes. The District does encourage parents, if they are able, to drive their children to school and to pick them up as well. This will help with bus capacity as well. Information on how to notify the District of pick-up and drop off procedures will be coming soon.

Cleaning Plans – What is the plan to clean the building between morning and afternoon sessions?

The District will adjust our custodian’s schedules to maximize the amount of workers we have available.

Drinking Fountains – Will drinking fountains be on during the school day?

Students will not be allowed to use the drinking fountains. However, they can use the touchless bottle fillers that are connected to the drinking fountains. Students can bring in their own clear water bottle, and fill it up at different points throughout the day.

Essential Visitors – Will visitors be allowed at the school for an IEP meeting or class visit?

At this time, only essential visitors will be permitted in buildings and will be subject to further screening health and exposure questions. Virtual meetings will be facilitated whenever possible, and any essential visitor must wear a mask/face covering.

Academic Programming – What if my high school student is enrolled in Parkway West Career and Technology Center?

At this time Parkway West CTC is waiting to see what all sending school districts are doing. They are working hard to come up with a plan that would allow students to get face-to-face instruction at Parkway, but they also have online options that are available for students. If any family wishes for more information they can visit the Parkway West CTC website at: https://www.parkwaywest.org/ or call at 412-923-1772.