FAQs for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers

If the Governor is moving Lancaster County from the Red to Yellow phase of reopening on June 5, what does that mean for public schools?
At this point, it does not mean anything new for us. The Governor’s description of the Yellow phase states that “Schools remain closed for in-person instruction.”

Schools are always closed over the summer, so that’s not new. But what about tutoring or other academic programs that we typically offer to our students?
The latest recommendation we have received from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) is to offer a virtual format for any summer programs we wish to provide. For Cocalico, this pertains to Extended School Year (ESY) instruction, academic support for high school credit recovery students, middle school tutoring and enrichment, and elementary Camp-Read-A-Lot sessions. Supervisors of those programs will be in touch with summer staff to discuss options and opportunities; in turn, this will be communicated to families, as appropriate. If we can move to in-person instruction at any point during the summer, we will update all staff and students who are involved.

What about summer band, sports camps, and other activities?
Though non-school-sponsored programs can be offered if they follow the Governor’s guidance, public schools are to await further direction from PDE before implementing any in-person summer programs. As of now, these programs are on hold until we receive further direction.

Will the meals that have been offered to students be available throughout the summer?
Yes. We plan to continue to offer grab-and-go meals for the entire summer. More information about when and where to pick up meals will be provided if there is any change from our current Monday and Wednesday schedule at each of the elementary buildings.

What can we expect when we move to the next phase of reopening?
In the Green phase, schools are subject to guidance from the Center for Disease Controls (CDC) and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. On May 19, CDC issued the following considerations for schools, dependent upon the degree of need to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the local community. It is likely that these considerations will also be included in the guidance that PDE plans to release to schools during the month of June.

Options for Programming
- Provide only virtual classes, activities, and events.
- Offer small, in-person classes, activities, and events. Keep groups of students together and with the same teacher throughout/across school days. Seat students at least 6 feet apart and avoid sharing objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures, or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- Establish full sized, in-person classes, activities, and events in which students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.
Given the limited information we have at this point, how should we plan for the fall?

Though we are hoping to establish full sized, in-person classes and activities as we have done in the past, we recognize we must also plan for other alternatives. If we are required to limit the number of students who are in the building at any given time so that we can space students six feet apart, then we will need to create staggered schedules in which students spend some days learning at home and other days learning at school. We must also be prepared to go fully online, in case schools are closed again for any part of the school year.

Who will supervise and support the children, if they can't be in school every day?

Families will have the option to keep their children at home on days when they are not scheduled to be in school, if they are able to effectively monitor and support the children while they complete the lessons that are provided by their teachers. If that is not possible, families may wish to consider other options for their children when they are not in school. The school district is working closely with the Northern Lancaster Chamber of Commerce and other local organizations to create a variety of options for parents who may need assistance with childcare and supervision. Specific details will be shared as soon as they become available.

What if I prefer to keep my child fully online for the duration of the 2020-2021 school year?

If your child was successful in an online learning environment during the last part of the 2019-2020 school year, you have the option of enrolling him or her in our Cocalico Connections program. This is a completely virtual online option that provides a full curriculum for regular education students and is supported by our Cocalico teachers. For further information, please contact our online learning coordinator, Mrs. Janelle Matz, at Janelle_Matz@cocalico.org.

When I do send my children to school for in-person instruction, how can I feel safe about their exposure to other children?

Here in Cocalico, we take our responsibility for student safety very seriously and will do all we can to avoid unnecessary risks to our community of learners. When we do bring students back to school for in-person instruction, we will be required to follow strict guidelines that are established by the CDC and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. In addition to safeguards for students and staff when they are in school, we will emphasize the need for them to stay at home if they exhibit the symptoms of COVID-19.

When will we receive more information regarding the 2020-2021 school year?

We will make every effort to share available information as promptly as we can. However, it is possible you will hear things on the news prior to hearing from us. We will sort through any pertinent information and outline its application to the Cocalico School District before communicating with everyone.