South Fayette Township School District
Frequently Asked Questions for Families
Regarding Procedures and Policies During the Era of COVID-19
March 26, 2020

On Sunday, March 15, 2020, the Pennsylvania Department of Education announced that school districts in Pennsylvania may continue to provide education to students using digital/online instruction. South Fayette created a digital/online education plan that we are implementing for our students and families. In an effort to communicate closely with you we have created this list of frequently asked questions, which we will continue to update as needed.

If my child left personal belongings at school may we enter school to pick up these items?
No. We know many of you hoped to retrieve items from your child’s classroom; however, in order to help prevent the spread of the virus in our community, that will not be possible. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but we have to consider the safety and welfare of our families first. However, if your child left items in his/her classroom that are necessary to enable your child to participate in distance learning, you should contact Dr. Ken Lockette, Superintendent of Schools, at kflockette@southfayette.org. The buildings will not be accessible to students or their families until further notice.

How will students access digital/online lessons?
Primary/Elementary
Grades K-2
If you have children in grades K-2, teachers will share assignments through parent email.

Grades 3-5
All learning assignments for students in grades 3-5 will be communicated through Google Classroom. Any new assignments will be posted by 9:00 a.m.

Middle/High School
All learning assignments for students in grades 6-12 will be communicated through Google Classroom. Any new assignments will be posted by 9:00 a.m.

What should we expect regarding online/digital assignments?
We are adopting an asynchronous approach to learning, which means that students will work at their own pace and not all together as a class or at a specific class time. Students will have a reduced workload (not 7.5 hours on the computer). Work will be meaningful and elicit critical thinking, since students will have the time to dive deeper into material.

So as not to overburden students and families, students in grades K-4 will be assigned three lessons per day. Students in grade 5 will have one lesson per subject area. Expect that lessons should take approximately 10-15 minutes for students in K-2, and 20-30 minutes for students in grades 3-5. In addition, special area teachers will share assignments for students to complete throughout the week.
Students in grades 6-8 may begin project-based assignments or research projects that are broken down by steps to simplify the process. Each specific course will require no more than one assignment per day, which will take no more than 15-20 minutes.

Students in grades 9-12 may engage in more detailed research or project-based assignments. No specific course will require assignments that take more than 25 minutes per day.

Families can expect to receive regular updates from teachers each week. We are making every effort to keep communication between home and school open and available. Our families are our main concern.

**How will the work my child completes online be assessed?**
Students will receive feedback for their completed assignments based upon the guidelines and criteria for the assignment. Students will receive a Pass/Fail grade. Please know that in this online learning environment grades are not a priority; but learning is. Our goal is to give students every opportunity to be successful.

Grading in this new environment is different than our students have experienced thus far. We have modified the calendar, so that the third quarter has an end date of March 13, 2020. Students will have every opportunity to send teachers assignments that are necessary to close out Quarter 3. All new student assignments will be recorded in Quarter 4. Grades will be calculated by Pass or Fail. Pass/Fail grading will be assigned by the teacher in PowerSchool, the District’s student information system, at the close of Quarter 4 and not after every assignment. A Pass will represent 100%, and a Fail will represent 64%, in PowerSchool. For students in grades 9-12 a Pass will also represent a 4.0 GPA, and a Fail will represent 2.0 GPA.

**Will my child need to be online working on their assignments from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every day?**
Since we have implemented an asynchronous approach to learning, students can complete their assignments at times when it is most convenient for them and their families. We realize that the COVID-19 outbreak has placed an extra burden on families and that many homes have different childcare arrangements.

**What if our family does not have in-home Internet service?**
We ask that any families without Internet service please call 412-221-4542 Ext. 862. You will receive a voice message asking you to leave your name, telephone number, and mailing address so that we may contact you. This will enable us to provide learning materials and resources so that all students will have access to the curriculum.

**How will my child receive support if they have trouble with online/digital assignments?**
Teachers and professional staff will be available for “office hours” via email and/or Google Classroom from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Will my child continue to receive free/reduced breakfast or lunch service?**
South Fayette Food Service Department will be providing meals (curbside) to students of families that qualified for the School Breakfast Program and/or National Lunch Program. Parents may drive to the back area of the high school to pick up their meals. The meals will be
distributed curbside. No appointments are necessary. The times for meal service pick up will be from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. If you have any questions, please feel free to call this number: 412-221-4542 Ext. 277 or 276, or email foodservice@southfayette.org.

What if we need to contact school services, such as a nurse or counselor?
Your child’s school counselor and nurse will be available during the same times that our teachers are available. Please contact them via email. To access the district email addresses please click on this link: https://www.southfayette.org/sfsd-staff

What should I do if my child experiences any technical issues with their iPad or laptop?
Technical support for students and families will be available during the hours of 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. via email (details found below). Students should first contact their classroom teachers in the event the issue is related to curriculum.

When parents/students need to contact the technology department for technical support, please use the following email: TechSupport@southfayette.org. When communicating with the department, be sure to include your child’s student name, student ID number and grade level.

What should we do to make certain that student laptops are prepared to begin online/digital learning?
We ask that families charge the student laptops the weekend before March 30, 2020, to prepare for online instruction. It is always a good idea to have the computers fully charged to begin each day. We also ask families to remember that only school approved software can be loaded on student computers.

Please refer to the help guide entitled Best Practices for Students which can be found on the South Fayette Township School District website under the COVID-19 Preparedness section found at this link: https://www.southfayette.org/Page/1129. This guide has been prepared for you by the South Fayette Technology Department to help you troubleshoot while you work from home.

What will happen with important events that occur at the end of the school year, such as Prom and Graduation?
The situation regarding the pandemic continues to evolve, so we do not know currently how this will impact future events. Rest assured that we are gathering information and making informed decisions every day, while continuing to communicate with you on a regular basis. These events are extremely important to our students, our families and to our community. We have implemented online/digital learning to ensure that our students are able to complete their graduation requirements as expected in June 2020. Please encourage your students to complete their assignments. We will keep you updated as we learn more.

Where can I find information from the District related to our school policies during this online learning experience, and where might I find resources regarding COVID-19?
We have created a page on our website to post communications from the District regarding our practices and policies, as well as resources and information about COVID-19. This page can be accessed by clicking on our South Fayette Township School District homepage at https://www.southfayette.org/. Next, scroll down to Quick Links and click on COVID-19
Preparedness. The information is found here: https://www.southfayette.org/Page/1129. This site is updated regularly.