Quakertown Community School District
Updated as of 7/16/20

COVID-19 Return-to-School
Parent Frequently Asked Questions

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School Opening Safety Guidelines

Since we did not receive any further or more stringent spacing guidelines from PDE or the state, but rather have gotten comments from the Governor doubling down on following county guidelines, will we be following the county’s guidelines across the board along with the new mandatory mask order?

No. The approved Health and Safety Plan incorporates guidance from the CDC, from the state, and from the county, and it is what outlines our QCSD requirements. See the Summary of the Health and Safety Plan and the Health and Safety Plan for additional information.

What is the status of the plans to get students as far apart in the classroom as possible and what does teaching in that class environment change about the way education is delivered?

With support from Schradergroup and our facilities team, every classroom space has been measured and a capacity analysis performed to determine the maximum students that can be assigned to that space while maintaining social distancing guidelines. Principals are working on room configurations, and will be able to finalize once registration is completed. To provide as much usable space as possible, furniture and unused cabinets, carpets, tables, etc. will be removed. Some classes might be moved to a common area or larger space to accommodate the students registered while
maintaining social distancing. Desks will be oriented towards the front of the room and other area marking strategies will be used in the classroom to help students remain at an appropriate distance. Students will remain in the same cohort for the duration of the day at elementary, with teachers rotating classrooms to teach departmentalized content. There will definitely be an impact on the ways teachers can teach while still maintaining social distancing.

**Can we accommodate all or most of the secondary students in the building full time using all of the subtractions for students in full virtual and Hybrid?**

We won’t have a definitive answer to that question until we complete the Powerschool Registration (InfoSnap) process and know how many students actually select each of the options. It is possible if enough students select the 100% virtual option. If the number of students registering for live instruction exceeds capacity, then a staggered A/B schedule will be used.

**If we need to hire aides to accommodate supervising students in common areas, how many would we need, and what would be the cost?**

Based on the capacity analysis, if ALL students selected live instruction, approximately 8 aides would be needed at the high school and 8 aides would be needed at Strayer MS. Keep in mind that this scenario would create an environment that is the least like typical school, since the overflow students would be seated in a common area and accessing their classwork virtually. If we hired 16 aides, the cost would be approximately $640,000 assuming we are able to hire enough people to fill those roles.

**It seems that there is a possibility for a good portion of the middle or high school students to be partially or fully virtual due to their ability to require less direct oversight by teachers or parents. Is it possible for some of the middle and high school facilities for the elementary students who need more guidance? Again this is all hopeful that this schedule is short term, and we can hopefully be back to some normal schedule after a term or two.**

Yes. This will be one of our strategies to accommodate larger classes if more students select live instruction than a classroom can hold with social distancing. A larger class might be held in a common area like the gym or cafeteria, or might move to a building that has a larger room. We will not be able to divide classes since we do not have extra teachers, but do plan to utilize larger spaces where available. We will also utilize outdoor spaces, weather permitting.
How will students who claim they cannot wear a mask for medical reasons be handled? What about defiant students?

Following all safety protocols, including wearing masks, will be required by the student code of conduct. For students who have a medical condition, a meeting will need to be held with the school team, including the school nurse, to review the medical information and determine when/if a mask can be worn by the student.

What is the protocol for communicating to parents if someone in your child's building tests positive?

The Bucks County Health Department will handle contact tracing and notify those in close proximity to the affected student. We will cooperate with the Health Department to identify other students or adults who were in close proximity and possibly at-risk. Our nurses will handle communication to a classroom or building consistent with how we communicate about other communicable diseases. In all cases, we are obligated to protect the identity and privacy of the student or adult who tested positive.

Registration

Can parents reevaluate their choice of modality at the change of the marking period?

A student can move from live or A/B to full 100% virtual at any time. A student will only be able to move from virtual to live or A/B if there is room in their class(es).

If A/B is chosen, and families have multiple children, will they be guaranteed to be scheduled the same day?

Yes, every effort will be made to schedule children in the same household on the same days if A/B is selected or utilized. If children are in different buildings, they can be scheduled for live instruction on the same day but transportation may not be available to one of the buildings.
If the option chosen by a family no longer works for them, are they permitted to change? If so, when would they be able to change?

A student can move from live or A/B to full 100% virtual at any time. A student will only be able to move from virtual to live or A/B if there is room in their class(es).

Will the students with IEPs and, or Tech receive priority registration for the full time, in-person option?

Once the PowerSchool registration process is complete, we will know how many students want which option and will be able to determine if we need to establish priority classes. Students who have IEPs will receive priority if it is determined that they cannot receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) virtually. The students’ unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered. Priority will also be given to students who do not have internet access at home. Tech students will not need priority since the schedule for the tech school and QCHS are independent of each other.

*If the A/B schedule is selected, will there be specific tech day? Will students spend the entire day at Upper Bucks County Technical School?

At this point in time, UBCTS has not finalized their Health and Safety Plan, so we do not know how they plan to schedule their students and whether all students can attend or whether they will need to utilize some kind of staggered schedule and/or virtual option. Once they have adopted a plan, we will know how we need to schedule our students to make sure they can attend tech at the designated times.

If we choose virtual, what does that mean for tech? Are they doing virtual?

Students attending tech on whatever schedule is permitted by the UBCTS’s Health and Safety Plan can participate at QCHS either live (or live A/B if needed) or virtual. We don’t know yet how the tech school plans to schedule their students and whether they will have a staggered schedule and/or virtual option. If virtual is an option at tech, students can participate that way if they choose for the tech school portion of their day.
Will there be consistency in what is being taught by grade?

Yes, the same curriculum maps will guide what is taught and when it is taught in every grade level class. The curriculum and pacing will be the same for the in-person and virtual environment to make it easy for a student to shift to virtual if sick or quarantined and then return seamlessly to in-person instruction when cleared to do so.

In-Person Instruction

What will the school day look like for kindergarten students? What hours will they be attending?

A half day kindergarten student’s day will be approximately two hours. AM Kindergarten will begin at the same time as grades 1-5. PM kindergarten students will leave at the same dismissal time as students in grades 1-5.

With regards to students in middle school going to the A/B hybrid model, will the school also still have their normal A/B schedule for electives (Art on A day period 1 and Music on B day period 1)? If students are only physically going to be in school two days a week they would miss all of one elective each week. How are specials/musical classes going to be accommodated (in both live and virtual modalities)?

In the A/B hybrid model, students will attend school “live” two of the five days and then receive asynchronous learning opportunities on the days that they are not in person. Both the middle school and high school will run a traditional seven period schedule ensuring that students will have scheduled courses.

There will be limitations to what is possible for the music program as well as health and physical education based on the Health and Safety Plan and national and state guidance. Our professional educators and administration will continue to work to find safe and reasonable solutions to these challenges.
Are senior pictures still being planned? Or should I schedule my own outside the district? According to last year’s list, they were scheduled three people for a 20-minute block. With social distancing, I wasn’t sure if this was going to happen or not.

Now that we have an approved health and safety plan we will look to schedule the senior pictures as we have in the past. Due to the calendar change we will communicate by August 1 whether this will take place at the end of August or during the first two weeks of September. We will review LifeTouch’ plan for safety prior to clearing them for use of our building. If we are unable to accommodate this in our school building, then the senior pictures may be taken in the offices of LifeTouch. Again, precise information will be communicated by August 1.

Would graduation be on June 21st with the revised calendar?

Graduation was already scheduled with Stabler for Friday, June 11. We are currently working with the venue to see if they are able to accommodate us the following week, on June 18 and are awaiting their answer. However, we have heard from many people about how much they enjoyed this year’s graduation. Since we will not enter into a formal contract with them until January we will be sure to collaborate with our students and families early this year to see what their preferences are in celebrating their achievements.

Virtual Instruction

Teaching online is a full time responsibility for experienced online educators. What is being done to make sure that the virtual learning that the Board approved is meeting the same rigor and standards as the face to face learning?

Our educators will be implementing a “blended” model in which many of the in class experiences will create opportunities for students both live and at home to interact with one another through collaboration tools and projects, participation in discussion boards, participation in virtual meetings, etc. While at home learning will primarily be through asynchronous instruction, synchronous opportunities will be available for our students as well. In this model, students are receiving the same curriculum, similar pacing, and interactions with their grade
level peers in the Quakertown community. Due to social distancing protocols, the live in person classroom experience will be different for students and teachers as well and by embracing the use of digital tools in the live classroom more frequently for collaboration, assessment, projects, etc, we can achieve a more seamless integration between the at home and in class experience. Students and families who wish to not participate in the synchronous learning on any given day have that option to move at their own pace daily and will have many of the same learning activities that students will in the live environment.

Can students move in and out between virtual and in-person learning at will?

A student can move from live or A/B to virtual at any time. This includes for periods of illness or quarantine. A student will only be able to move from virtual to live or A/B if there is room in their class(es).

What platform is going to be used for virtual learning?

Seesaw is the platform for K-5 and Canvas is the platform for 6-12.

How will virtual be delivered to keep in sync with live instruction?

Our educators will be implementing a “blended” model in which many of the in class experiences will create opportunities for students both live and at home to interact with one another through collaboration tools and projects, participation in discussion boards, participation in virtual meetings, etc. While at home learning will primarily be through asynchronous instruction, synchronous opportunities will be available for our students as well. In this model, students are receiving the same curriculum, similar pacing, and interactions with their grade level peers in the Quakertown community. Due to social distancing protocols, the live in person classroom experience will be different for students and teachers as well and by embracing the use of digital tools in the live classroom more frequently for collaboration, assessment, projects, etc, we can achieve a more seamless integration between the at home and in class experience. Students and families who wish to not participate in the synchronous learning on any given day have that option to move at their own pace daily and will have many of the same learning tasks that students will in the live environment.

How will real-time interaction occur for virtual students? Is there a possibility that they will be integrated into the live classes? Virtual cannot be just videos.
While the predominant methodology of virtual will be asynchronous instruction, there will be opportunities through virtual meetings for students to participate with the teacher and their peers in the live environment. This could be participation in morning meetings at the elementary level, to signing in to view a science lab demonstration or to listen to a read aloud. In addition, teachers will be available at specific times to respond to student needs and for re-teaching of concepts. Lastly, by “blending” the two environments, at home and in class peers will be able to engage in discussion boards, collaborating on projects, and sharing their thinking through the digital tools we have available. We continue to explore live streaming as an option but will be dependent on availability of resources and legal guidance.

**What is the feedback loop for work for virtual students?**

Students receive feedback on their learning in a variety of ways. Students will certainly receive direct feedback through their teacher via text, audio, or video. They may receive feedback from a teacher using a rubric. Students may receive feedback from peers or their own self assessment. Using the technology available, students may receive feedback through self-scoring quizzes or tests. There will be a variety of ways students can and will receive feedback for their learning.

**Will the virtual option for all grade levels be identical to what was offered at the end of the school year last year? Will instruction be streamlined and consistent among all teachers and grades?**

No, it is not the same model. See a description of the 100% Virtual Option [HERE](#). Some of the ways that the virtual option will be different from the spring are as follows:

- Student work is graded and strong accountability for learning is present.
- Attendance is mandatory and will be determined by a variety of measures including log-in data, engaging with the online platform (e.g., posting a comment, attending a virtual class meeting) and grades.
- More consistent use of QCSD curriculum and assessments.
- More universal and consistent usage of learning platforms (Seesaw, Canvas)
- More synchronous learning opportunities provided.

**How will attendance be taken in the virtual option?**

Different from the spring, attendance will be mandatory in the virtual environment, either for those families selecting that option or as part of the A/B schedule. Expectations will be established for elementary and secondary students and will include either participation in a
scheduled virtual class meeting or engagement with the online platform by a set time (e.g., posting a comment, submitting an assignment). Students that meet the expectation will be marked as attending for that day. Students who do not meet the expectation will receive follow up communication from the school, as would typically happen in a live environment. If a parent or guardian reports a technology problem as the reason for absence, the parent/guardian or student will have 3 days from the date of absence to submit a tech help ticket. This will act as your excuse note. Other reasons for absence will require a written note or email to be submitted to the school office. All other attendance policies will be followed.

How will it be handled for either all virtual or AB part-time virtual? Will it be “find it on canvas” (written or pre-recorded lessons) to be done whenever you'd like throughout the day, Zoom meetings at a specific time, or “live video” feed at a specific time.

Our educators will be implementing a “blended” model in which many of the in class experiences will create opportunities for students both live and at home to interact with one another through collaboration tools and projects, participation in discussion boards, participation in virtual meetings, etc. While at home learning will primarily be through asynchronous instruction, synchronous opportunities will be available for our students as well. In this model, students are receiving the same curriculum, similar pacing, and interactions with their grade level peers in the Quakertown community. Due to social distancing protocols, the live in person classroom experience will be different for students and teachers as well and by embracing the use of digital tools in the live classroom more frequently for collaboration, assessment, projects, etc, we can achieve a more seamless integration between the at home and in class experience. Students and families who wish to not participate in the synchronous learning on any given day have that option to move at their own pace daily and will have many of the same learning tasks that students will in the live environment.

Will we be offering synchronous classes and asynchronous for virtual instruction?

While the predominant methodology of virtual will be asynchronous instruction, there will be opportunities through virtual meetings for students to participate with the teacher and their peers in the live environment. This could be participation in morning meetings at the elementary level, to signing in to view a science lab demonstration or read aloud. In addition, teachers will be available at specific times to respond to student needs and for re-teaching of concepts. Lastly, by “blending” the two environments, at home and in class peers will be able to engage in discussion boards, collaborating on projects, and sharing their thinking through the digital tools we have available. We continue to explore live streaming as an option but will be dependent on availability of resources and legal guidance.
How will IEP students be managed in a virtual configuration?

Students with IEPs will have case managers, just as they do when they are physically attending school. Their IEPs will be implemented in the same manner as they would be if they were physically present. If it is determined that the IEP cannot be implemented virtually, the school district would recommend that the IEP be delivered in school in order for the student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The students' unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered. These decisions would be made through the IEP meeting process. It will be important for parents and case managers to be in constant communication.

How will parents know if their kids are doing their work virtually? Will they get regular updates?

A strong partnership with families is critical to the success of our students and effective communication is a significant part of that. Beyond the ability of parents to have access to Seesaw through the Family App, Canvas as a parent observer, and access to PowerSchool for student grades, our teachers do a wonderful job communicating through email and phone calls to families and parents and that expectation will be the same regardless of in person or virtual learning.

Can live classes be videotaped and streamed to virtual students?

We are exploring this option and will be dependent on the availability of the technology and on legal guidance. Our current guidance is that the predominant model is via asynchronous instruction with consistent synchronous opportunities provided.

How are specials/music classes going to be accommodated (in both live and virtual modalities)?

There will be limitations to what is possible for the music program as well as health and physical education based on the health and safety plan and national and state guidance. Our professional educators and administration will continue to work to find safe and reasonable solutions to these challenges.

Students in a virtual environment do not have the limitations of social distancing and would be able to record practice and performance and receive feedback from a teacher. Dependent on scheduling, this may be a “synchronous” opportunity as well.
*Will the students with IEP’s, and, or Tech receive priority registration for the full-time in-person option?

Once the registration process is complete, we will know how many students want which option and will be able to determine if we need to have priority classes. Students who have IEPs will receive priority if it is determined that they cannot receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) virtually. The students’ unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered. Priority will also be given to students who do not have internet access at home. Tech students will not need priority since the schedule for the tech school and QCHS are independent of each other.

If your child receives therapies like speech or PT, is there a way to have virtual school, but then have in-person therapy?

If virtual education is appropriate for the student and that is the parent/guardian choice, all of the IEP would be delivered virtually. The students’ unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered at the IEP meeting.

*How will IEP students be managed in a virtual configuration?

Students with IEPs will have case managers, just as they do when they are physically attending school. Their IEPs will be implemented in the same manner as they would be if they were physically present. If it is determined that the IEP cannot be implemented virtually, the school district would recommend that the IEP be delivered in school in order for the student to receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The students’ unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered. These decisions would be made through the IEP meeting process. It will be important for parents and case managers to be in constant communication.
If my child has a medical condition, does he/she need to wear a mask? Should it be written into his/her IEP?

Following all safety protocols, including wearing masks, will be required by the student code of conduct. For students who have a medical condition, a meeting will need to be held with the school team, including the school nurse, to review the medical/psychological information and determine when/if a mask and/or face shield can be worn by the student. Should the IEP or 504 team determine that a mask/face shield cannot be worn for all or part of the day, it would be documented in the IEP or 504 plan. If it is determined that the student can wear a mask/face shield for the entire school day, the Present Educational Levels in the IEP or the 504 evaluation would be updated to reflect the outcome of the meeting.

What if families can't afford school supplies, particularly if items cannot be shared at school and if students need to return to virtual instruction?

QCSD will ensure families that are in need of school supplies will have access to the materials students need. Items like pencils, pens, paper, crayons and other specific supplies based upon grade level expectations (e.g., learning manipulatives) will be available. In the event that students need to return to virtual instruction, procedures, like those used for breakfast and lunch pick up, will be developed to distribute these supplies so that students can meaningfully engage in virtual instruction. Community partnerships have been contacted and are willing to supplement the needs of students.

**Tech School**

*Will the students with IEP's, and, or Tech receive priority registration for the full-time in-person option?*

Once the registration process is complete, we will know how many students want which option and will be able to determine if we need to have priority classes. Students who have IEPs will receive priority if it is determined that they cannot receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) virtually. The students’ unique abilities, specific areas of deficit, and need for specialized programs, will all be considered. Tech students will not need priority since the schedule for the tech school and QCHS are independent of each other. At this point in time, UBCTS has not finalized their Health and Safety Plan, so we do not know how they plan to schedule their students and whether all students can
attend or whether they will need to utilize some kind of staggered schedule and/or virtual option. Once they have adopted a plan, we will know how we need to schedule our students to make sure they can attend tech at the designated times.

With QCSD starting two weeks later (most likely) than Pennridge and Palisades, will QCSD be providing busing to and from the HS and to and from the tech school for those two weeks for the tech students? If tech students do start on August 31st and the rest of the district starts on September 14th, does that mean the Tech students have to attend school two weeks longer?

Yes, to the extent we are able to provide transportation given capacity limitations and social distancing requirements, we intend to provide transportation for tech school students to and from tech on the schedule the tech school implements based on its own Health and Safety Plan. Based on the current calendars, tech students would start at tech on August 31st and attend that half day only. Beginning September 14th, students would attend tech and QCHS (or attend QCHS virtually) until the end of the tech school year on June 14th. Students would then complete their QCHS school year from June 15th until June 21st. Once the tech school adopts its Health and Safety Plan and advises us of the schedule they will be offering, we will be able to coordinate so that our students get what they need.

*If we select the A/B schedule, will there be specific tech days? Will the students spend the entire day at the tech school?

At this point in time, UBCTS has not finalized their Health and Safety Plan, so we do not know how they plan to schedule their students and whether all students can attend or whether they will need to utilize some kind of staggered schedule and/or virtual option. Once they have adopted a plan, we will know how we need to schedule our students to make sure they can attend tech at the designated times.

If the start date for schools is pushed back will that be coordinated with the other sending districts?

It will not be necessary to match the calendar of the other sending districts this year. Instead, once the Tech School has an approved Health and Safety Plan for their facility, we will plan transportation so that our students attend Tech School on the schedule that is permitted by their Health and Safety Plan.
If QCSD is the only district starting two weeks late, will the teachers stay to work those extra two weeks? Is that even available within their contract?

The revised calendar contains the correct number of student days and teacher days to meet the requirements of the teacher contract. No adjustment to the contractual requirements is needed for teachers to work the days in the revised calendar.

Have the shorter hours per day been coordinated with the tech school and the other two sending districts?

It will not be necessary to match the calendar of the other sending districts this year. Instead, once the Tech School has an approved Health and Safety Plan for their facility, we will plan transportation so that our students attend Tech School on the schedule that is permitted by their Health and Safety Plan.

Transportation

Can we provide Levy with assistance in planning routes?

Levy utilizes software to plan the most time efficient and safest routes. The District reviews and approves the final product but only Levy has access to and/or the training to utilize the software. Route planning and optimization is a very sophisticated process and we are fortunate that the Levy personnel that perform this function have many years of experience and expertise in this work. The District is supporting the timely development of routes by moving forward with the registration process after the approval of our Health and Safety Plan so that Levy has the raw data they need to begin the routing process.

If the busing option chosen by a family no longer works for them, are they permitted to change? If so, when would they be able to change?

They will only be able to change their selection if there is the capacity to do so. The District will create a request form which will need to be submitted to Levy for review. If it is determined that there is capacity on the bus then the request can be accommodated. If there is not capacity on the bus, they will be placed on a waiting list and provided transportation if capacity becomes available.
Before/After School Care

How will after and before school care occur? Will there be expanded before and after school care be offered?

LifeSpan will continue to offer before and after school care at our elementary schools as they do now. The District is working with Lifespan on extending those services however, the District may need the building vacated at certain times in order to fully sanitize the building. It is possible that before and after care may be relocated to a different location for this reason. We have been in regular communication with Lifespan, and once we have finalized our registration process and schedules, we will share that information with Lifespan so they can determine what needs they can meet and how.

My children are in the Lifespan Summer camp two days a week. This has been running for almost a month now along with several other summer camps in the Quakertown district. Have the camps reported any new cases or transmissions within the camps? It seems that the camps would be an excellent case study that we can use locally to see the spread among the children and the camp counselors/teachers. If there is no spread, then it is just reinforcing all the studies around the world that have schools open and have minimal spread.

QCSD does not have access to that information.

What is the reason for shortening the day at the K-5 school to five hours? It was hard enough to be a two parent working household with a 9-4 schedule. It will be impossible to do a drop-off and pick up from 9:45-2:45. It doesn't allow time to come and go to work. At best it would be better to change the time on just one end, not both. Paying for child care for this extra time is not an option and is not fair to force parents to pay for something they normally wouldn't need. I know that you have an association with Lifespan for before and aftercare. Has there been a discussion with them to help cover the care of children for the lost time from 9 - 9:45 and from 2:45 - 4 to help the parents who would need it?

For teachers to effectively instruct live and virtual students, adequate time for planning, collaboration, and interaction with virtual students must be built into the work day. That is the
reason for the shortened student day. Times are also adjusted to allow for district transportation to operate, if we are able to provide transportation within our capacity limits. We have been in regular communication with Lifespan, and once we have finalized our registration process and schedules, we will share that information with Lifespan so they can determine what needs they can meet and how.

### AP Classes / BCCC Co-op

**Will all high school AP and Honors classes be offered live, virtually or both?**

The high school schedule will run on a traditional 7 period model, so all AP and Honors classes will be available live and virtually.

**How will the proposed plans affect those students scheduled to take courses via BCCC or a Co-op?**

We do not have that information yet, and will update the answer to this question when we have the information to share.

### Quarantine Related Questions

**What happens if a teacher gets exposed to the virus? What happens to the students in the class or who have that teacher during the day? Who is making that decision?**

The Bucks County Health Department will handle contact tracing and notify those in close proximity to the affected staff member or student. We will cooperate with the Health Department to identify other students or adults who were in close proximity and possibly at-risk. Our nurses will handle communication to a classroom or building consistent with how we communicate about other communicable diseases. In all cases, we are obligated to protect the identity and privacy of the student or adult who tested positive. For exclusion and return to school/work protocols, please see this [chart](#) that is part of QCSD’s approved Health and Safety Plan.
Has a protocol been developed if an outbreak in the schools happens? Do staff and student quarantine for 14 days as recommended?

Please refer to this chart that is part of QCSD’s approved Health and Safety Plan for the protocols and requirements when there is a positive case.

If a teacher is out for a non Covid related absence what happens to those students given the shortage of available substitutes?

The District will still be working with ESS/Source4Teachers to provide substitute teachers. If a substitute teacher is not available, the building will utilize coverage strategies to cover classes such as pulling specialist teachers, pulling teachers from prep periods, principal coverage, etc.). The substitute, whether from ESS or internal, will provide instruction to all students in the class, whether live or virtual.

What about those professionals that provide services to students (speech therapist, occupational therapists) who come from the IU or other places? Will they still be delivering services in the buildings? If so, what safety protocols are in place to keep students and teachers safe from these people who are entering their building? If they are not coming into the buildings then what is the process for them?

All staffing and student services will be provided in accordance with the QCSD Health and Safety Plan. Building access will still be allowed, though staff will be asked to avoid and/or limit entering multiple buildings in one day. In situations where service providers cannot follow social distance guidelines, they will have the appropriate PPE and/or other resources (e.g., clear dividers) to maintain safety for the student and the staff.

Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health and Wellness

What is SEL or Social and Emotional Learning?

SEL is how children and adults learn to understand and manage emotions, set goals, show empathy for others, establish positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

What will the first few weeks of school be like?
During the first two weeks of school, teachers and staff will focus on acclimating students to the new school environment and building connections, community, and relationships. Emphasis will be placed on the following topics:

1. Review and train students in health and safety protocols
2. Create a safe and comfortable classroom environment through games and get-to-know-you activities
3. Train students in social-emotional learning competencies and mindfulness activities
4. Review online expectations, attendance requirements, and transitions
5. Support students with routines and organizational systems to maximize time spent learning at home
6. Share mental health resources available for students
7. Implement a tech orientation which will include training on how to use Canvas and/or Seesaw learning platforms, access resources such as online textbooks and other apps, how to participate in video meetings and other school-approved software programs
8. Offer opportunities for voluntary participation in clubs and activities

What does SEL look like in a live classroom setting as well as a virtual setting?

SEL is ingrained in the ways students and adults interact both in the classroom and out of it, and helps to provide children with equitable, supportive, and welcoming learning environments. One way SEL is developed in both a live and virtual instruction includes teachers facilitating morning meetings and sharing strategies focused on relationship building, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision making.

How will the mental health and wellness needs of students be met?

Quakertown is committed to professionally developing teachers and staff in trauma informed instruction. Our teachers and staff have had multiple opportunities to participate in professional development related to this area and we plan to provide more opportunities in the upcoming year. Mental health and wellness can be supported through participation in mindfulness activities, morning meetings, guided meditation, and counselor supports for students and families. One way counselors can support families is by co-building schedules for at home time that cultivate building healthy routines and managing time wisely.

How will my child(ren) feel a part of a classroom or school community if we are operating in a hybrid (A/B) or fully virtual model?

This has been and will continue to be a challenging time for all. We understand that our students have been isolated from friends, family, and organizations such as church and sports
teams for months. Connecting with our students and families is of utmost importance. During live instruction, elementary school students will have access to recess which provides time for students to connect socially. Many activities like brain breaks, games, crafts, and spirit days cultivate a sense of community as well. Virtual google meets, morning meetings, virtual clubs, story hours, virtual field trips, and teacher and staff videos are all ways for students and teachers to connect. Regardless of the learning model, teachers and staff are committed to connecting and cultivating relationships. The first two weeks of school at both the elementary and secondary level will be focused on reentry and renewing connections through activities such as get-to-know-you games, literature, listening to students’ voices, SEL lessons, with a focus on feeling safe physically and emotionally. We know that our students need to feel safe and secure before learning can occur.