



**John English, Director of Schools**

100 Nolichucky Ave

Erwin, TN 37650

Phone: (423)743-1600

Fax: (423)743-1615

## **Frequently asked questions for 2020-2021 School Year**

### **What metric is Unicoi County Schools using to gauge the acceptable threshold criteria?**

One metric that Unicoi Schools will use is the Average Rate of New COVID-19 Cases per 100,000 County Residents over the last 14 days. We will also be in constant communication with local and regional health officials to make determinations.

### **How will we know the “current level”?**

Unicoi County Schools will monitor newly reported cases and trends each week and notify the public of our current level. **Families will be notified of school status through district communications only.** This will provide our students/staff a level of certainty for each week and prevent our teachers from making multiple changes throughout the week.

### **Will students and staff be required to wear facemasks to school?**

Under the current mandate for Unicoi County all middle school and high school students as well as staff will be required to follow Unicoi County Mask Mandate guidelines. While in classrooms, students will either wear masks or distance approximately six feet apart. Elementary students are currently encouraged to wear masks but not required. Elementary staff will be required to follow mandate guidelines.

All face covering decisions will be re-evaluated prior to school reopening.

### **What will learning look like if a school or the district shuts down?**

Should all of Unicoi Schools transition to remote learning, the expectations are to remain the same, and students will transition to remote learning with their classroom teacher.

### **What is the difference between the UCS Virtual Academy Option and Home-school?**

For students who enroll in the UCS Virtual Academy, the district will provide mobile devices, technical support, and all curriculum and instruction. UCS teachers will prepare lessons, create videos, provide some synchronous learning, assess student learning, adjust lessons to meet learning needs, and will be fully supported by all departments of Unicoi Schools including



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special education and EL services. Parents are vital partners in this work and will help make sure students are on task, completing assignments, and asking the teacher for additional help if needed.

If a parent chooses to home-school their student, the parent is responsible for all instruction as well as other parts of the student's education. Parents should notify Unicoi County Schools of their decision. Independent home-school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 are required to participate in TNReady assessments at their zoned schools.

### **What happens, truancy-wise, if a student or family member contracts COVID-19?**

Doctor notes will be accepted as excused absences in either virtual or traditional learning. COVID related absences will be excused and will not be in absence counts for truancy purposes.

### **Will remote students be able to participate in extracurricular activities such as sports, band, and the Arts?**

Yes, all students selecting the UC Virtual Academy option may participate in athletics and extracurricular activities for which they are eligible. When participating on campus, all students will be required to comply with school safety protocols.

### **The State Board of Education says that online learners must be engaged for 6.5 hours. Does that mean they will sit in front of a computer screen for 6.5 hours?**

No, the student will not be in front of the screen for the entire 6.5 hours. That time will also include other activities that include related arts, independent reading, and other assignments.

### **What is the grading process for Remote Learners?**

The grading process will be the same for remote learners as traditional students. They will receive progress reports and report cards through their school. Students will maintain a reasonable rate of completion.

### **If my child has 504, IEP, or ILP will it be followed if we choose the UC Virtual Academy?**



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Yes, students who have an active 504, IEP, or ILP will receive accommodations as stated in their most recent plan.

### **What happens if there are Internet issues?**

Wi-fi access will be extended into all school parking lots for student usage. In addition, three wi-fi capable buses will be parked in community locations to provide access to remote communities. Virtual learners have access to a school provided Wi-Fi hotspot if needed. Students who experience home internet issues from time-to-time should immediately report it to their course teacher so students are not unfairly penalized for the unexpected outages. If ongoing Internet issues arise, the teacher, student, and family will collaborate to determine how to proceed to ensure Internet issues do not become a barrier to learning.

### **What are the materials/supply requirements for the UC Virtual Academy? What will be the cost for those items?**

Virtual learners do not have any additional fees or supply requirements. Students might need paper and pencil if they prefer to draft their notetaking, calculations, etc. on paper as a tool to assist with completion of online work. We have an array of online tools that will assist with these tasks. (Microsoft online tools, Google Suite, etc.).

### **Will UC Virtual Academy students have different teachers for different subjects?**

All UC Virtual Academy students will be assigned a Unicoi Schools' teacher. Elementary students will not necessarily have a teacher from his/her home school. The number of students per grade who participate in UC Virtual Academy will determine how many teachers will be required. Teacher staffing will be balanced against the number of students who attend in-person learning. Middle and High School students will be assigned teachers from their respective school.

### **If a positive case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a classroom, does my child have to quarantine?**

No, your child will quarantine if they are designated as a direct contact which is defined as within six-feet of a confirmed case for more than 10 minutes. These determinations will be made in cooperation with the Unicoi County Regional Health Department.



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**If a child contracts COVID, may the student go to remote learning?**

Yes, the student will go to remote learning with his/her classroom teacher.

**How will we receive school related updates?**

All updates will be posted on the district website- [www.unicoischools.com](http://www.unicoischools.com). We will also push updates out on school system social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). When school begins, parents will have the opportunity to sign up for text alerts as well.

**If I begin as a student in the UC Virtual Academy, may I return to in person learning? As an in-person student, may I move to UC Virtual Academy?**

Students who begin school in the classroom may move to the UC Virtual Academy for the remainder of the semester. Due to staffing commitments, UC Virtual Academy enrollment commitments must be made on a semester basis.

\*\*Special education and ESL decisions will be made by the IEP or ESL team on an individual basis.

**\*\* All plans, protocols and procedures are subject to change based on guidance from health officials and the current situation \*\***