



July 23, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we navigate this unprecedented time together. A great deal of thoughtful consideration continues to go into planning for the reopening of our schools for the 2020–2021 school year and providing all Lexington District One students with quality educational opportunities.

Please know that regardless of which of the two reentry options suits your family’s needs the best — the in-school or virtual option — IEP services will be available with both to the greatest extent practical and reasonable, given the circumstances.

To that end, consideration for the provision of specific services will depend on current required safety considerations and procedures, the structure of the school day for all students, and the available instructional settings, methodology, and delivery options.

I can assure you that IEP services for Lexington District One students will continue to include:

- Specialized instruction based on IEP goals
- Related services such as Speech and Language, OT, PT, AT, HI, VI, and ABA, in some format
- Implementation of accommodations and modifications
- Progress monitoring
- Case management by a special educator
- IEP Meetings

To be completely transparent, special education services may look different. They may be provided differently, and may not match the minutes and setting described in an IEP written for the full day, in-school schedules. IEP teams and services providers may need to get creative, prioritize, and problem-solve. We are up for the challenge!

To prepare for changes due to COVID-19, the Special Services Office is busy planning:

- specific student and adult provider health/safety precautions for face-to-face, pull-out, and push-in services.
- teacher, therapist, and LEA training for effective virtual IEP meetings.
- teletherapy options for Speech, OT, and PT related services.
- expanded use of Zoom and Google Meets for direct instruction (individual and small group).
- teacher/therapist push-in co-teaching practices.

- the development of “virtual push-in” models, which enable students in self-contained classes to participate in general classroom activities.
- effective progress monitoring methods.
- parent support and training for increased home-school collaboration and communication.
- training targeting effective use of instructional assistants (IAs) in in-school and virtual instruction.
- the development of a Contingency Learning IEP Addendum to aid in prioritizing individual student instruction and services without having to rewrite current IEPs.

With all that said, the first decision belongs to the family.

We understand there are many factors to consider when deciding whether it’s best for your child to return for in-school instruction or to start with an all-virtual model. Either way, be assured that special education services will be available to the greatest extent possible in both options. Lexington District One is committed to quality services. We care about each of our students!

We greatly appreciate your efforts to partner with us for the benefit of your child. If you have questions or concerns, I ask that you email me at [wbalough@lexington1.net](mailto:wbalough@lexington1.net).

Sincerely,

**Dr. Wendy Balough**  
 Director of Special Services  
 Lexington County School District One

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **If I want to ensure the continuation of special education services but feel coming to school is too much of a risk because of medical or safety needs, which option do I choose?** Choose the virtual option. Just so there is no misunderstanding - IEP services WILL be available, to the greatest extent possible, in both the in-school and virtual options. The Virtual Academy option will include special, and related services for students with IEPs as well as individualized programming for students served in specialized or self-contained programs.
2. **What if the requirement to wear masks is going to be a problem for my child?** Even though a great deal of instruction, support, and practice will be provided to students, masks may not be appropriate for some specific students. In situations where face coverings are medically contraindicated for a student in a special education class, we will utilize additional PPE for staff, decrease or eliminate transitions outside of the classroom during the school day, and utilize existing classroom staff to support physical distancing within the classroom and between students.

3. **Can I choose homebound as my child's attendance option?** Medical Homebound services will still be available through the existing Medical Homebound application process. This requires an application completed by a medical professional and the approval of the Lexington District One Medical Homebound Review Committee. However, Medical Homebound is not a "third" attendance option. It's important to know that before any application is considered, each student must already be enrolled in one of the two district attendance options.
4. **How will distance/virtual learning be different this year for students with special needs?** Last spring, the school district was closed by order of the governor. This fall, the school district will be open for students through two methods of participation. The expectations for instruction and for learning are different than in the spring. Student progress and achievement, the instructional focus for the new school year, will be grounded and guided by each child's IEP goals/objectives, accommodations and modifications, and services to the greatest extent possible. Special education teachers and service providers will provide direct instruction in-person or virtually, as well as provide "check-in" support and program oversight. Instructional materials and programs that can be used in-person and virtually will be available.
5. **Shouldn't students with IEPs be given the opportunity to receive more in-school time than our starting hybrid option provides?** The IDEA requires a Free Appropriate Education (FAPE) be made available to students with disabilities. FAPE is defined by what ALL students in the district receive. Therefore, specialized services will be provided within the structure of both general education options. Once students return and ALL students are assessed during the first two weeks, individual student IEP teams can review data and consider whether individual students in special education programs qualify for increased services, not just increased "time."