

Shaler Area School District

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Shaler Area School District – Back to School 2020-21

It's hard to imagine that we are kicking off a new school year next week on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. We know that for many of you, the past six months have been filled with uncertainty and challenges. While the 2020-21 school year is starting off unlike any other school year, one thing remains the same, the entire Shaler Area School District has been working hard to prepare for the upcoming school year, and we are very excited to welcome everyone back.

Curriculum Changes

As you know, we are starting this school year in the 100% virtual model for all students through the first four weeks of school (through Friday, Oct. 9). This school year is going to look and feel different than our emergency remote instruction last spring. Our students will be following their traditional school day schedule and participate in synchronous (live) and asynchronous (prerecorded) lessons. Our teachers have been participating in professional development workshops this summer in order to learn the best practices for virtual and hybrid instruction.

While we are in a virtual school environment, the standards for attendance and behavior are as important as they are in the traditional school setting. Shaler Area expects all students to follow and all parents to support the district's guidelines for student attendance, grading and assessment, academic integrity, and digital citizenship as are outlined in the [SASD K-12 100% Virtual Student Guidelines](#).

Below are the school schedules for the upcoming school year:

- Shaler Area High School – 7:18 a.m. to 2:25 p.m.
- Shaler Area Middle School – 7:40 a.m. to 2:50 p.m.
- Shaler Area Elementary School – 8:12 a.m. to 3:08 p.m.
- Primary schools – 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

School Breakfast & Lunch

Shaler Area will continue to provide student breakfast and lunch service while the district is in the 100% virtual model. Breakfast and lunch will be packaged together and available for free to all school-aged children.

There will be three locations to pick up breakfast and lunch while we are in the 100% virtual model:

- Shaler Area High School, 381 Wible Run Road, (dock area on Paul Schweiger Way behind the school)
 - 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Christ Lutheran Church, 917 Evergreen Avenue, Millvale
 - 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 66 Grant Avenue, Etna
 - 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Safety

While we are starting the year in the 100% virtual setting, our district has been busy preparing our buildings to safely bring back students in the hybrid model. Precautions are being taken throughout our schools, classrooms, hallways, and cafeterias to maintain social distance, and our custodial staff is being trained in using enhanced cleaning equipment purchased to ensure a safe and clean learning environment. We will continue to focus on these measures in the coming weeks as we prepare for the transition to hybrid learning.

Diversity and Inclusion

We are navigating an ever-changing “normal” due to the COVID-19 pandemic and repeated, tragic incidents of racial inequality across the country have highlighted the importance of teaching acceptance, inclusion, and anti-racism. Shaler Area School District has a responsibility as we prepare the next generation of leaders and citizens. As educators, we will collectively stand to abolish racism and discrimination in our school district, community, region, and world. We stand together in our commitment to create a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment for all of our students and families regardless of race, color, religion, gender, etc. As a community, we look to embrace and celebrate the differences that make us unique as individuals and strong as a people. Our collective and intentional action is required and the next steps are what we do best – love and connect, care for, and serve those around us who may need our support the most.

Please join us as we work to educate, expose, and eradicate racism and discrimination within our community and build a culture where there is respect and love for all. Over the course of the last few months, we have been partnering together with a small group of alumni, students, parents, and community members to have honest discussions related to race, equity, and equality in Shaler Area. We have focused on truly listening with the intent to understand, and we are also looking to take some action steps this school year that will move us forward as a school district.

We hope you all enjoy the final days of summer break and return on Tuesday, September 8, ready to kick off another great school year with us!

Sincerely,

Mr. Sean C. Aiken
Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Bryan E. O'Black
Assistant Superintendent