



## Frequently Asked Questions: Selection Process for Term 2 Learning Models for Elementary Students

As DCPS returns to in-person learning for elementary students in grades PK – 5th, seats will be limited to ensure student and staff safety. Since DCPS cannot guarantee a seat for all interested students and families, we will use a randomized selection process to equitably distribute seats. This document provides information for parents on this process. For comprehensive information on what to expect in Term 2 please visit <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/schedule/term2/>.

### What is the difference between in-person learning and a CARE classroom?

Beginning in Term 2, DCPS will offer two types of in-person programming for enrolled elementary students: in-person learning and CARE classrooms.

- **In-Person Learning:** Students will be assigned in small groups to a classroom teacher at their school for live, in-person instruction five days a week, with half-days on Wednesdays. The daily schedule will be similar to a typical school day. In-person learning for elementary students in grades PK3-5 will begin with the start of Term 2, on Monday, November 9.
  - In-person Learning for self-contained special education students: Students in self-contained special education programs will also be eligible for seats in in-person learning in self-contained classrooms in grades PK3-5th, and classrooms in all grades at River Terrace.
- **CARE Classrooms:** Students will be assigned in small groups with a caring adult who will support students with all-virtual learning five days a week, with half-days on Wednesdays. Students will have the opportunity to socialize with their peers while continuing to participate in the all-virtual program. CARE classrooms for students in grades PK3, PK4, Kindergarten and 1st grade will begin the week of November 16. CARE classrooms for students in grades 2, 3, 4 and 5 will begin on the week of November 30.

For more information on these models, please visit <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/schedule/term2/>.

### Will students in grades 6 through 12 be eligible for in-person programming in Term 2?

No, secondary students in grades 6 – 12 will remain on an all-virtual schedule for Term 2 (Nov.9 – Jan. 29) except for students participating in Student Support Centers. (For more information on Student Support Centers, please visit <https://dcpsreopenstrong.com/schedule/student-support-centers/>. Students in 6th through 8th grades receiving special education services with more intensive needs at River Terrace Education Center are the only exception, as they will also be eligible for in-person learning in Term 2.

**I am interested in sending my student to school for in-person learning or a CARE classroom. Do I need to apply?**

No, families do NOT need to complete an application or take any action to be considered. To ensure that all families are considered, DCPS will assume all families are interested in a seat and will then allow families the opportunity to accept or decline their seat, should that option be available to them.

**I am not interested in sending my student in-person. Do I need to do anything to keep my student in all-virtual instruction?**

No! All families have the option to remain all-virtual. You do not need to take any action to keep your student in an all-virtual instruction. You may get offered an in-person learning or CARE classroom seat, and, in this case, you should respond and notify your school that you want to decline the seat so that it can be offered to someone else, or email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov).

**If I accept a seat, can I change my mind later?**

Yes, if at any time you want to move your student(s) from in-person programming to learning at home you can make that shift by notifying your school. If a student does move to learning at home, they will not be able to return to in-person learning or CARE classrooms during the current term.

**What measures is DCPS taking to ensure that siblings who attend the same school will be selected together for CARE classrooms or in-person learning?**

DCPS knows the importance for families of having siblings in school together and will make efforts to assign siblings who attend the same school into the same schedule. To support this goal, DCPS will work with schools to identify siblings and give siblings within the same school a preference to keep them on the same schedule, where possible. However, DCPS cannot guarantee that all siblings in a family will receive a seat in in-person learning or a CARE classroom.

**How does DCPS define siblings?**

DCPS defines a sibling as a child who has at least one parent or legal guardian in common with a current DCPS student and resides in the same household as the student (*5-E DCMR § 2199.2*). This definition is the same as the one DCPS uses for the purposes of the My School DC lottery. DCPS will only prioritize sibling matches for those attending the same school as of October 5, 2020.

**Is DCPS considering the childcare needs of staff in the Student Selection Process?**

Yes. DCPS understands the challenge many of our staff have in finding childcare in order to be available to report in-person. For this reason, for all staff who will be both working in-person in our elementary schools and education campuses in Term 2, and have a DCPS student enrolled in PK through 5th grade by October 5, 2020, their PK-5 grade DCPS student(s) will be guaranteed a seat in a CARE classroom.

## In-Person Learning Classrooms

### **Who is eligible for a seat in in-person learning?**

All students who were enrolled as of October 5, 2020 will be eligible for a seat. DCPS is committed to prioritizing in-person learning seats for students furthest from opportunity. As such, students who fall within the following categories will get a preference for the available in-person learning seats.

- Students experiencing homelessness
- English Learners and Students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)
- Students identified as at-risk (This includes students in the foster care system and students who qualify for TANF or SNAP.)

The process will also give a preference to siblings. Siblings who are members of the groups listed above will be prioritized over siblings who are not members of these groups.

### **Does eligibility work the same for students in self-contained special education rooms?**

Students in self-contained classes are all eligible for a seat in in-person learning. Seats will be offered based on staff availability. Self-contained students experiencing homelessness would be given a preference for a seat above all other self-contained students in that class. River Terrace Education Campus is a special education program that only offers self-contained classrooms; therefore, this applies to all classrooms at River Terrace.

### **How will DCPS identify if a student meets one of the priority criteria for in-person learning seats?**

DCPS will leverage internal databases to confirm enrollment and English Learner status. DCPS will use data from the Office of the State Superintendent for Education (OSSE) to confirm housing, special education and at-risk status.

### **Will a school have discretion to select students for in-person learning seats?**

School leaders will be given the option to recommend selection of no more than two seats per grade for in-person learning. Only students in one of the priority groups listed above would be eligible for a school-level selection. School leaders will be provided guidance on factors to consider and how to make a recommendation. All recommendations will be reviewed and approved by DCPS Central Office. School leaders are not required to submit a recommendation.

### **When and how do I know if my student received a seat in an in-person learning classroom?**

Families will receive notification by email by October 23 followed by a call from the school if they received a seat. Families can also call their school after results are released, or email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov), to confirm their status.

Schools will call all matched families within the first two days of releasing matches. Once the school speaks to a family, the family has up to two school days to confirm their seat. If a family does not respond within that timeframe, they will lose their offer and their student will continue with learning at



home. If a school cannot reach a family, they will keep trying, but a seat will not be held for more than 5 school days for non-response.

**If my child is matched at my school for a seat in an in-person learning classroom, how do I accept the seat?**

If you are matched for an in-person learning seat, you must accept your space as soon as possible. Accepting your space requires calling the school and confirming that you want the seat. If no communication has been made with the school, a seat will expire five school days after the matches are released. For students with transportation in their Individualized Education Plans, school staff will also ask about transportation needs in order to submit a request.

Accepting a seat in in-person learning may mean that your child's teacher will change. Students on an all-virtual schedule will remain with the same teachers in most cases. However, there may be some changes to student-teacher assignments for students on all-virtual schedules as well.

**If my child is matched at my school for a seat in in-person learning but I prefer to remain all-virtual how do I decline the seat?**

No family will be required to participate in in-person instruction. All families have the option to continue learning at home. If you are matched for an in-person learning seat and you don't want to accept it, please call your school as soon as possible to let them know so that they can offer that seat to the next person on the waitlist.

**What happens if I miss the deadline to accept my child's seat for in-person learning?**

If you receive a seat, and you do not accept your seat within the timeframe allotted, you may lose your space for in-person learning. And, if you are extended a waitlist offer and miss the deadline that the school sets, then you may lose your in-person learning seat. If you think you are unable to meet the deadline for accepting a seat, immediately contact your school.

**I accepted a seat for in-person learning, but I would like my student to continue learning at home instead. Can I change my mind?**

Any family may switch to learning at home at any point by contacting their school. DCPS understands family circumstances and health conditions may change and will allow students to switch back to learning at home at any point. If a student does move from in-person learning to learning at home, they will not be able to return to in-person learning during the current term.

**If I decline my seat for in-person learning, can my student still participate in a CARE classroom?**

Declining or losing your seat in in-person learning does not remove you from a waitlist for a CARE classroom seat.



### **How will in-person learning classroom waitlists work?**

Students in the priority groups outlined above who are not initially matched with a seat for in-person learning will be put on a waitlist. Among priority students, siblings of students who have been matched will be at the top of the waitlist. After siblings, students in priority groups will be on the waitlist based on a random number assignment. Non-priority group students will be waitlisted last, based on random number assignment.

Schools will make offers off their waitlist in order. If a space becomes available in your child's grade at their school and they are next on the waitlist, your school will contact you by phone. If you provided an email address on your enrollment documentation, you will also be notified by email. If you are offered a seat and prefer to remain learning at home, you may decline your seat.

### **How will I know if and where my student is on the waitlist?**

All families will either be matched or on a waitlist. Some families may have a student on both the in-person learning and CARE classroom waitlists. We will only contact families when they have received a seat. If you have a question about your status, please email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov), or call your school.

### **How will I be notified if my child is called off a waitlist?**

All families will be called directly by their school if a seat becomes available for their student. Schools will make calls in waitlist order. If you are not sure if your school has your current phone number, please call the school to update your contact info.



## Student CARE Classrooms

### **Who is eligible for a seat in my school's CARE classrooms?**

All students enrolled by October 5, 2020 will be eligible for a seat. Enrolled students who are children of DCPS staff who will be supporting Term 2 in-person programming in our elementary schools and education campuses will be guaranteed a seat in a CARE classroom.

Of remaining seats, the first priority will be given to students furthest from opportunity in the following groups (also prioritized for in-person learning) and their siblings. Siblings who are members of these groups will be prioritized over siblings who are not members of these groups.

- Students experiencing homelessness
- English Learners and Students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)
- Students identified as at-risk (This includes students in the foster care system and students who qualify for TANF or SNAP.)

### **When and how do I know if my student received a seat in a CARE classroom?**

Families will receive notification by email by October 30 followed by a call from the school if they received a seat.

Families can also call their school (or email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov)) after results are released to confirm their status. Schools will call all matched families within the first two days of releasing matches. Once communication is made with the family, a family has two school days to confirm their seat. If a family does not respond within that timeframe, they will lose their offer and their student will continue with all-virtual learning. If a school cannot reach a family, their seat will expire after 5 school days for non-response.

### **If my child is matched at my school for a seat in a CARE classroom, how do I accept the seat?**

If you are matched for a CARE classroom seat, you must accept your space as soon as possible. Accepting your space requires calling the school and confirming that you want the seat. If a school cannot reach a family, their seat will expire after five school days for non-response. For students with transportation in their Individualized Education Plans, school staff will also ask about transportation needs in order to submit a request.

### **If my child is matched at my school for a seat in a CARE classroom but I prefer to remain at home how do I decline the seat?**

No family will be required to participate. All families have the option to continue learning at home. If you are matched for a CARE classroom seat, and you don't want to accept it, please call your school as soon as possible to let them know (or email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov)) so that the school can offer that seat to the next person on the waitlist.



**I accepted a CARE seat, but I changed my mind and want my child to learn from home. Can I change my mind?**

Any family may switch to learning at home at any point by contacting their school. If a student does move from a CARE classroom to learning at home, they will not be able to return to in-person learning or CARE classrooms during the current term.

**How will waitlists work for CARE seats?**

Students in the priority groups outlined above who are not initially matched with a CARE classroom seat will be put on a waitlist. Among priority students, siblings of students who have been matched will be at the top of the waitlist. After siblings, students in priority groups will be on the waitlist based on a random number assignment. Non-priority group students will be waitlisted last, based on random number assignment.

Schools will make offers off their waitlist in order. If a space becomes available in your child's grade at their school and they are next on the waitlist, your school will contact you by phone. If you provided an email address on your enrollment documentation, you will also be notified by email. If you are offered a seat and prefer to remain all-virtual, you may decline your seat by calling your school, or emailing [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov).

**How will I know if and where my student is on the waitlist?**

All enrolled students will either be matched or on a waitlist for a CARE seat and an in-person learning seat. We will only contact families that have received a seat. We will not notify families of their waitlist placement. If you have a question, please call your school, or email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov).

**How will I be notified if my child is called off a waitlist?**

All families will be called and emailed directly by their school if a seat becomes available for their student. School will make calls in waitlist order.



## Other Key Questions

**My phone number or email address has changed since I completed enrollment and I'm worried my school will not be able to reach me if I receive a seat or a waitlist offer. How can I update my contact information?**

Please contact your school to share your updated contact information.

**What happens if I enroll after October 5?**

Only students who enroll by October 5, 2020, will be included in the randomized student selection process for in-person learning and CARE classrooms. If you enroll after October 5, you will be on a learning at home schedule for Term 2.

**Who manages the student selection process for DCPS?**

DCPS has partnered with the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to develop the requirements for the algorithm that will assign students based on eligibility and preference criteria. OCTO is using the software program that the My School DC system uses to ensure a fair and equitable process. School staff will work with families to accept or decline a seat. As additional seats become available, school staff will also begin to make offers, in order, to the families on the waitlist.

**If I have questions about the student selection process who do I contact?**

If you want to know your student's status, please email [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov) or call your school. For general questions, please email us at [dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.planning@k12.dc.gov).